

**Kingdom of Cambodia**

**Mid Term Review**

**Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain**

**Phase 2**

March 2019

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# Abbreviations

**ADB** Asian Development Bank

**AFD** Agence Francaise de Developpment

**AQC** Aid Quality Checks

**BOT** Build-Operate-Transfer

**C1** Component One - Productivity and Diversification

**C2** Component Two - Irrigation and Water Management

**C3** Component Three - Milling and Export

**CARDI** Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute

**CAVAC** Cambodia Agriculture Value Chain Program

**CWBF** Cambodia Women Business Federation

**CWEA** Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association

**DCED** Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

**DFAT**  Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**DP** Development Partner

**FPWP** Australian Foreign Policy White Paper

**FWUC**  Farm Water User Committees

**GEWE** Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

**I&W** Irrigation and Water

**IDD**  CAVAC II Investment Design Document

**ISF** Irrigation service fee

**KEQ** Key Evaluation Question (in the PMIE)

**KMOS** Knowledge Management and Outreach Strategy

**KRQ**  Key Review Question (for this MTR)

**M&E**  Monitoring and Evaluation

**MAFF**  Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

**MSD** Market Systems Development

**MSMEs** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

**MTR**  Mid Term Review

**MoWRAM** Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

**NSC**  CAVAC II National Steering Committee

**O&M** Operations and Maintenance

**ODE** Office of Development Effectiveness

**PDAFF**  Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

**PDWRAM** Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology

**PMIE**  CAVAC II Performance Monitoring and Impact Evaluation

**RGC** Royal Government of Cambodia

**SCU** CAVAC II Strategic Coordination Unit

**VfM** Value for Money

**WEE** Women’s Economic Empowerment

# Executive Summary

Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain (CAVAC) is funded by the Australian Government aid program through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and has a total budget of AUD 89.7 million. The program is managed by Cardno across Phase one from 2010-15 and currently in Phase two. This report outlines findings of an independent mid term review (MTR) of CAVAC II. The review was commissioned by the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh. The MTR was undertaken by a four person team, including in-country field work across a five day period in late February, 2019.

Significantly, the review followed closely on the heels of an internal CAVAC strategic review process that aimed to revisit the program’s approach in response to a significantly changed implementation context. This internal process resulted in a ‘Program Narrative’ that aims to more clearly articulate the program’s revised strategy. Encouragingly, the findings and recommendations of this review align closely with needs and the direction proposed in the Program Narrative, with much that is recommended within this review already conceived or being set in motion at the time of the MTR.

CAVAC II is the latest iteration of Australian agricultural programming assistance to Cambodia, which commenced in the mid 1980s. What differentiates CAVAC from earlier assistance is that it was conceived as a market systems development program, focused on strengthening Cambodia’s agricultural private sector. CAVAC’s approach also recognises limitations posed by inadequate infrastructure, addressing this through substantial investment in irrigation and water (I&W) infrastructure.

This progression also aligns closely with a key theme of the Australian Foreign Policy White Paper (FPWP), since CAVAC II is now well placed to graduate its approach from ‘delivery’ to ‘influencing delivery’ given the breadth of data and evidence that the program has been able to generate across its implementation period. Already, CAVAC is cited within parts of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) as being a key contributor to changed perspectives regarding the critical role to be played by the agricultural private sector in growing the rural economy. These changed attitudes are facilitating a transformation of attitudes– towards one where agriculture departments and the private sector increasingly see each other as complementary service providers rather than distrusting competitors.

## Summary of findings

### Relevance

The RGC’s recently updated Rectangular Strategy highlights the importance of development of the rural economy; rural infrastructure upgrading; the important role to be played by the private sector in advancing economic growth; and the need to strengthen Cambodia’s export orientation. CAVAC’s dual focus on broad based strengthening of capacity for market driven agricultural development and support for irrigation infrastructure development with specific focus on ensuring their sustainable management are both relevant to Cambodia’s current needs, and also priorities set out in the Australian FPWP.

Over the course of implementation to date, CAVAC has made a critically important contribution to shifting perspectives within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) regarding the importance, value and contribution of the private sector to enhancing agricultural productivity and diversification. This shift is helping facilitate complementarities and options for enhanced cooperation between the public and private sectors interested in agricultural development. CAVAC relations with the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM) have been more challenging. This relates in large part to the focus of CAVAC I&W activities being at Provincial level where the program has been working to achieve ‘proof of concept’ of its systems for irrigation scheme rehabilitation and management. Strategically, CAVAC is now adapting its approach to more strategically inform and involve MoWRAM Phnom Penh based staff in monitoring and knowledge development, to help raise awareness and confidence in CAVAC’s I&W approach. As confidence grows in the efficacy of CAVAC’s irrigation approach, opportunities for closer collaboration with MoWRAM are now emerging, especially in relation to helping inform thinking around future irrigation investment, including that of Development Partners (DPs).

Importantly, CAVAC is respected within the RGC as an important source of knowledge in each of these areas. This positions the program to help shape thinking, future directions and investment moving forward. However, for these opportunities to be optimised, there is a need for greater capacity within CAVAC II to more strategically communicate its knowledge and achievements to a wider range of specifically targeted audiences. This should occur through development of select strategic partnerships, as well as through CAVAC continuing and strengthening its practical, face-to-face transfer of knowledge and skills amongst key audiences. This is particularly the case in relation to I&W infrastructure investments, where both the RGC and DPs express interest in better understanding CAVAC’s approach and the evidence base underpinning achievements and claims of ‘proof of concept’.

### Inclusion

A strategic priority of the Australian aid program is to advance gender equality and women’s economic empowerment (WEE). CAVAC is looked to for support by both MAFF and MoWRAM in strengthening their own strategic approaches to gender through mechanisms such as establishment of a Gender Taskforce within MAFF and support to implementation of MoWRAM’s Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan.

However, CAVAC’s external successes at influencing gender performance of key partners is not entirely reflected internally, where a siloed approach exists between CAVAC’s components in their approaches to gender. In line with the CAVAC II design, CAVAC has been mostly responsive to options that arise within the prevailing agricultural market construct - which are predictably reflective of entrenched gender norms.

Despite this, CAVAC holds significant data and knowledge related to women in agriculture through typology studies undertaken through Component One, which examine gendered decision making and roles in selected value chains. Under this Component, actions have been taken to enhance women’s participation with the intent of increasing the adoption of innovations (rather than to intentionally change gender norms). At the time of the MTR, Component One was initiating work to more purposefully empower women, for example through selecting value chains where women predominate.

In Component Two, CAVAC has sought to consult both women and men in the design of its irrigation schemes to ensure they serve both women’s and men’s needs. While MoWRAM seeks support to strengthen its gender approach and has a target of 30 per cent women’s representation in Farm Water User Community (FWUC) committees, no women were elected to committee roles in the FWUCs that CAVAC works with in Component Two. This highlights a lack of proactivity within CAVAC and represents a missed opportunity to strengthen understanding (at both community and government levels) of the potential contribution to be made by women FWUC members, and to encourage (transform) women’s representation and leadership. Support for development of more gender responsive selection criteria for FWUCs and efforts to influence community members’ opinions in relation to women’s leadership are required moving forward.

In Component Three, case studies related to mechanisation in the agriculture sector are helping raise awareness of how such innovations can affect and/or support WEE. Support to women agricultural entrepreneurs has also been initiated with the aim of strengthening women’s role and status in the sector.

Having both knowledge within CAVAC and interest from the two key ministries to collaborate on gender issues presents significant opportunities for CAVAC II moving forward. To best take up these opportunities, there needs to be more clearly articulated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for ensuring gender mainstreaming within the CAVAC II team, and also mechanisms that allow access to high quality technical assistance in relation to gender and WEE. The addition of an international gender specialist is a timely opportunity to address these needs.

In relation to disability inclusion, irrigation related construction work aligns with universal accessibility standards. However, more generally speaking, efforts to meaningfully include disabled people in program activities appear to lack rigour and deliberate focus.

### Utility of CAVAC’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

While monitoring of individual component activities is of high quality and meets the day-to-day management needs of activity implementation, the MTR team’s overall assessment is that CAVAC’s system of monitoring struggles to adequately capture and reflect whole of program performance and outcomes. This scenario restricts CAVAC’s capacity to disseminate knowledge regarding the nuance and detail of tis approaches. Development of the Program Monitoring and Impact Evaluation (PMIE) Plan in late 2018 is an important step forward for the program, but the M&E system is still in need of further strengthening – especially in light of the shifts in approach demanded by the Program Narrative.

Revising the Program Logic, the outcomes expected and its targets will help to resolve current confusion and discrepancies – and is already slated by CAVAC management as an important priority need emerging from the Program Narrative process. This process should result in:

* more clearly defined outcomes that specify the extent of the changes, and by/for who, which are supported by a description of ‘what success would look like’
* inclusion of an end-of-program outcome which articulates policy influence aspirations, including the extent that these go beyond the domestic policy sphere
* outcomes at all level of the program logic that provide a more deliberate focus on equitable development outcomes.

### Progress towards end of program outcomes

Overall, the evidence suggests that progress across CAVACII has been reasonable. As noted above, there is a disconnect between the Program Logic, PMIE, and uncertainty in the performance reporting against outcomes. This has contributed to a situation where end-of-program outcomes have come to be narrowly defined by numerical program targets, and component teams see these as the main measure of their achievement. In summary, the performance has met expectations:

* Component One – There is an emerging body of evidence of a changed dynamic in agricultural retailer-farmer relations, based on a growing sense of mutual advantage: building capacity of agro-enterprises to provide better services to farmers while demonstrating a causal pathway between quality of service provision, increased market share and farm profitability (including labour and cost saving and some environmental benefits from better input use). This is evidenced in 108,210 farmers changing practice in relation to a combination of improved seed variety utilisation, pesticide use, improved irrigation, and mechanisation. In addition, there are promising signs that the RGC is realigning its own role in terms of better understanding how it can better facilitate the important role to be played by the private sector in providing such extension services.
* Component Two – CAVAC has completed 10 irrigation schemes that were irrigating 48,750 hectares of land at the end of 2018, helping demonstrate ‘proof of concept’ of its irrigation approach, including its support for FWUCs. A recent evaluation of Phase One I&W schemes indicating a 333% increase in rice production. MoWRAM is now expressing support and an intention to adopt and adapt CAVAC’s approach. If promoted strategically, the model has the potential to be a long term legacy with influence and impact within and beyond Cambodia.
* Component Three – Working closely with the Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), eighteen seed producers have been supported to produce 449 tons of four improved seed varieties, contributing to production of higher quality paddy with an estimated value of $247,425. CAVAC is also working to reduce the amount of seed used by farmers by partnering with the private sector to develop affordable direct seeding technology. At policy level, CAVAC is working to strengthen the enabling environment for agricultural exporting through support to production related strategy development within MAFF and through collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce in support of better integrated trade strategy.

### Capacity to influence the actions of key stakeholders

Over the course of phase two, CAVAC has consolidated its position as a highly regarded centre of expertise in the areas of private sector led agricultural growth, I&W and export-orientated agriculture. Importantly, it now holds an enormous amount of highly valuable data, which has a sound analytical basis through adaptive research and on-farm testing to guide forward planning.

CAVAC’s increasing success in influencing high level RGC thinking is based in achieving real results in overcoming barriers to progress faced by smallholder farmers. Much of the transmission of knowledge to influence has come through face-to-face relationship building, in particular, through joint field visits, partnerships, and strategic dialogue. Evidence of CAVAC’s strong position to influence can be seen in the increasing frequency of RGC requests for assistance in policy and strategy-related work, and a general desire from the donor community that CAVAC become more active in information sharing.

Notably, its irrigation work is widely regarded as having ‘proof of concept’ for smaller irrigation systems where the water source is reliable. Part of CAVAC’s success has been its procedures, assessment and design standards, and drawings for its irrigation projects. Moving forward, adoption by MoWRAM of these ‘Procedures’ would be a beneficial step forward for the sector and an important legacy of CAVAC given a surge of interest within the RGC and DPs in funding irrigation infrastructure.

Despite this, current strategies for influencing at the time of the review were under-developed and lacked sufficient focus. To capitalise further on this potential for influence, there is a need to develop a series of focused and realistic influencing strategies. Members of the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) have set out a sensible framework to progress this, and the MTR team noted CAVAC’s immediate plans to undertake this work. Moving forward, efforts will be made to further strengthen this approach through strategic alliances with entities such as the ADB, who have plans for significant investment in I&W over the next decade. In addition, there is also a need to elevate leadership and integration of the Knowledge Management and Communications teams to ensure they have strengthened capacity and authority to undertake and support this important work.

### Sustainability of investment

Sustainability considerations are central to CAVAC’s theory of change and its private sector focus, where it works with different market actor types to drive systemic change. An important feature of CAVAC has been its facilitating role in raising awareness of the important role to be played by the private sector in reshaping the agriculture sector as the Cambodian economy undergoes significant structural change. While not solely the achievement of CAVAC, the program has contributed to a considerably changed dynamic whereby the RGC now sees the importance of a capable private sector providing much needed extension services.

By building awareness of agro-enterprise capacity to provide better services to farmers, while also demonstrating a causal pathway between quality of service provision and increased market share, strengthened relationships have been achieved that help set the stage for longer term relationships. As retailers develop a genuine client base, they recognise the need to expand the range and quality of their services if they are to hold on to those clients. By strengthening awareness of roles and comparative advantage of different value chain actors, more reliable and complete systems are now in place that help progress growth and sustainability in targeted value chains. CAVAC efforts to foster greater collaboration and a sense of mutual advantage between the public and private sectors is therefore assessed as an important contribution to longer term sustainability.

CAVAC II irrigation schemes enjoy many of the characteristics of sustainable irrigation by being well selected, designed and constructed and by investing heavily in facilitating and building the capacity of FWUCs, particularly through self-financing and provision of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) support. While progress is encouraging to date, it is still felt that longer term sustainability of FWUCs should be assessed as uncertain due to general risks commonly experienced by such groups elsewhere, such as the loss of initial enthusiasm and institutional memory and capacity as support reduces. In particular, the ability of MoWRAM to continue support FWUCs to a similar level as CAVAC II is likely to be problematic. It is therefore important that sustainability indicators are closely tracked by CAVAC and that strategies be put in place, where possible, to avoid typical problems faced by similar I&W schemes.

More significantly and specific to the CAVAC context are concerns related to whether Irrigation Service Fees (ISFs) fully recover costs for ‘regular’ O&M, the degree that the RGC O&M budget will provide for ‘non regular’ maintenance, whether this division of financing is clear, and then whether an asset renewal fund should be established centrally or in each FWUC. These risks to sustainability are exacerbated as CAVAC’s model for FWUC governance has not yet been fully embedded in MoWRAM. While generally problematic in the longer term, there appear few alternatives to the FWUC model and it is encouraging to see that the RGC’s 2016 FWUC Sub-decree incorporates several aspects and principles of good irrigation scheme governance taken from the CAVAC model. However, in-line with international experience of government provision of on-going support and financing; new innovations such as piped and automated systems of water management which reduce O&M requirements and tampering opportunities, and help ensure ISF collection; as well as a long term private sector operating agreements, or even concessions, are relevant and should be considered.

Moving forward, it is important to acknowledge that CAVAC has demonstrated that improving the generally poor performance of irrigation systems in Cambodia is a relatively straight forward way of improving rural livelihoods. Given the plans of other DPs to make very large investments in I&W infrastructure in future years, there is very real potential for Australia to support this through co-investment or parallel investment, further consolidating progress achieved through CAVAC.

### Efficiency of investment

CAVAC II efforts to promote the role of the private sector as an agricultural service provider are strategic and offer the potential of an important longer-term efficiency dividend. An aspect of CAVAC’s approach is to strengthen the evidence base that explains cost effectiveness, profitability and synergies between different market actors. However, application and communication of this important information to wider audiences is in need of further strengthening and needs to be more strategic.

Currently 72% of program resources are allocated through CAVAC’s I&W component. While irrigation investment per household is high, CAVAC’s model has genuine potential to not only directly impact its target area for a long period to come, but also has the potential to influence a wide range of actors interested in irrigation infrastructure investment. This potential will be further strengthened should it achieve true ‘proof of concept’ as a model capable of resolving longstanding O&M sustainability issues and with application more widely in Cambodia beyond the very specific bio-physical locations where it has been used.

### Conclusion

CAVAC has played an important facilitating role in raising awareness of the important role of the private sector in reshaping agriculture in response to the profound economic transformation that Cambodia is currently undergoing. This has contributed to shared understanding of the benefits and synergies that can be achieved by there being both a strong public and private agriculture sector. Similarly, CAVAC has helped foster a changed dynamic in agricultural retailer-farmer relations, strengthening service delivery, and thereby raising awareness of there being mutual advantage in sustained longer term relationships between farmers and agro-enterprise being built. The program has also helped energise thinking in relation to the potential of irrigation investment, due to its high quality, sustainability focused efforts.

CAVAC’s revised scope, as described in the Program Narrative, is acutely relevant to the current context of Cambodia’s rapidly changing rural economy. It is also well positioned in terms of potential aligning CAVAC’s approach with the direction outlined in the Australian FPWP. This is particularly the case in relation to its irrigation work which has the interest and attention of both the RGC and key DPs as they develop and commence irrigation investment plans of their own. Importantly, CAVAC is increasingly respected as a knowledge centre. This presents an important opportunity for CAVAC to broaden its reach through strengthened approaches around knowledge management, communications and development of a more purposeful influencing agenda. Efforts in relation to inclusive development and WEE also require more deliberate focus.

CAVAC’s primary weaknesses are structural, and well identified within the Program Narrative. In particular, there is ongoing uncertainty around what the end-of-program outcomes are beyond very general terms. In particular, there is confusion around whether the program is accountable for goal level outcomes (increased incomes and improved ‘competitiveness’), and for whom or how much, with conflicting perspectives even within the team over whether the targets for changed farmer practice (135,000 households) are the same as those for increased productivity and increased incomes.

Importantly, these weaknesses are understood within CAVAC and are beginning to be addressed as needs related to roll out of the Program Narrative are being actioned. An imminent ‘design refresh’ offers a timely opportunity to tighten the program logic, the reform agenda, and program M&E framework.

## Summary of Recommendations

**1. Revise CAVAC’s program logic to better reflect the Program Narrative and its enhanced focus on supporting policy reform.**

In undertaking the revision, CAVAC should take into account the following considerations: the revision process should be inclusive of all program staff, and where practicable, key stakeholders, in order to foster joint understanding and ownership. The revised program logic should ensure that: the end-of-program outcomes that the program is accountable for are clearly articulated; realistic targets at goal and end-of-program outcome levels are developed and described; a more detailed narrative description of the program logic clearly articulates the expected coherence, complementarities and interactions between components; and the language of the logic reflects the achievement of equitable outcomes for women, men and people with disabilities in line with DFAT policy.

**2. Review the documents which make up the M&E Framework to ensure they align with and will collect the data required to report on progress towards the revised end-of-program outcomes.**

In undertaking revision of the M&E Framework and Manual, CAVAC should take into account the following considerations: information needs of CAVAC’s key stakeholders – particularly DFAT’s – are re-confirmed and clearly reflected; the overall M&E Framework describes the monitoring processes of all components, and clearly articulates which monitoring data will be utilized for reporting against key evaluation questions (KEQs) and whole-of-program monitoring; the KEQs and their indicators are relevant to the revised program logic, including consideration of the evaluation criteria of Relevance and Efficiency; six monthly and annual reporting formats are substantially revised to report against end-of-program outcomes in a more coherent, integrated and succinct manner; the feasibility of measuring income increases at scale is rigorously tested to inform DFAT’s decisions on the utility of collecting this data; more prominence is given to assessing systemic changes attributable to CAVAC through its interactions with the private sector; and the toolbox and resources used by the M&E team to track and provide evidence of policy influence is significantly broadened, including sourcing additional SAT expertise.

**3. Refresh CAVAC’s WEE Strategy to better align with DFAT’s expectations in relation to gender equity and women’s empowerment.**

This can be progressed by ensuring that: clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for inclusion and women’s empowerment are assigned – including consideration of a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Advisor in the SAT; opportunities for collaboration within CAVAC around gender mainstreaming and programming are explored; immediate action is taken to improve women’s representation and participation in FWUCs; Component One and Three’s intervention plans and impact logic formats are updated to state gendered beneficiaries clearly; and a plan to undertake further pragmatic actions on four of the seven primary drivers of women’s economic empowerment is developed in the longer term.

**4. A series of comprehensive influencing strategies should be developed which clearly articulate key reform areas of interest to CAVAC, stakeholders needing to be targeted for change to be actualised, the manner/medium through which CAVAC expects to influence them, and expected outcomes.**

In undertaking development of the strategies, CAVAC should take into account the following considerations: respective roles and expectations of CAVAC and DFAT in the spheres of information sharing, policy influence and dialogue are formalized; CAVAC staffing structure is reviewed to assess the need for additional advisory resources and CAVAC staff capacity development; the strategies build on and enhance CAVAC’s ongoing practical transfer of skills and knowledge-to-attitude/practice change through forming implementation partnerships, relationship building, dialogue and face-to-face dissemination of lessons learnt

**5. Progress already achieved in relation to strengthened private-public sector cooperation should be consolidated and further promoted through targeted, high quality data gathering and dissemination that demonstrates a causal pathway between quality of extension services, increased market share and improved outcomes for agricultural value chain participants.**

An aspect of this progression will be to further strengthen famer capacity to undertake cost-benefit analyses and develop the skills necessary to assess the comparative virtues of different interventions. Such an approach is likely to enhance confidence of farmers in the private sector as a source of high quality extension services. Strategic support to the RGC at central and Provincial level is also needed to help them more effectively support and monitor private sector performance. An important learning opportunity also exists to better understand sustainability features of irrigation schemes through systematic, detailed analysis of Phase One and Two I&W schemes.

**6. DFAT and CAVAC should work collaboratively to develop an approach for ensuring and building on the legacy of irrigation schemes during the final post-CAVAC II.**

The elements of this include (i) the issues involved and approach in having irrigation modernisation implemented by the RGC and DPs in sub-basins where water is insecure and including management of the impacts on all sectors; (ii) options and opportunities for improved Management, Operation and Maintenance of small systems to improve service provision and financing, including alternative innovative irrigation systems and alternative service providers. Some of these systems offer scope to strongly influence and strengthen RGC water policy and its implementation, (iii) full documentation of procedures, assessments and design standards, and drawings for its irrigation projects, and water security assessments and control in insecure sub-basins for adoption by MOWRAM. (iv) consideration adding an international water resources and irrigation policy and water planning specialist or international consultant to the CAVAC team for the purpose of water resources policy, water security activities, and DP influence.

# Introduction

This report outlines findings of a DFAT commissioned independent mid-term review (MTR) of the Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain program – Phase Two (CAVAC II), to be implemented across 2016 – 2021. CAVAC II is a successor program to CAVAC I, which was implemented from 2010-2015. The program is funded by the Australian Government aid program through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and has a total budget of AUD 89.7 million. The program is managed by Cardno, who also managed CAVAC Phase I.

The purpose of the MTR is to assess performance against end-of-program outcomes; propose measures to ensure strong performance across its remaining years; and provide advice on how the program could achieve greater alignment with priorities and themes set out in the Australian Foreign Policy White Paper (FPWP).

The four person Review team undertook data gathering from 25 February to 1st March 2019, with one member having been made available to the team through the DFAT Gender Equity Branch to help ensure high quality consideration of gender issues and CAVAC II’s performance in relation to Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE).

## Context

### Background

Australia has been providing agricultural programming assistance to Cambodia since the mid- 1980s. This support has followed a logical continuum, aiming to keep in step with constantly evolving changes in context. Commencing from an urgently needed focus in the late 1980s and early 1990s on improving food security, as Cambodia’s economy began to grow at a rapid pace in the early 2000s, agriculture began to transform and restructure, notably through increasing yields and surpluses, a growing export orientation, improvements in produce quality and increasing mechanisation. Despite these highly significant changes, the most significant structural shift in the agricultural economy has been the rapid reduction in the number of households primarily reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods to less than half in 2015, and potentially less than one third by 2030. Improvements in productivity and agricultural diversification therefore are critical to restructuring of the Cambodian economy, since they present opportunities to stimulate rural economies and rural incomes, while also offering a safety net during down turns in the non-agricultural economy.

In response to this context, Australia supported establishment of CAVAC in 2010 - the first Market Systems Development (MSD) program funded by DFAT. Recognition of ongoing structural transformation was central to the design of both CAVAC I and II. Both have used an MSD approach, based on the logic that improved markets can provide goods and services that better serve poor farmers, while supporting changes in farming practices that facilitate increased productivity and incomes. Integrated within CAVAC’s efforts to promote agricultural growth and diversification has been development of community run irrigation schemes that aim to increase yields and levels of market engagement by ensuring target communities’ year-round water access.

While CAVAC I achieved some notable results in relation to improving access of farmers to irrigation, higher quality agricultural inputs and strengthened value chains, it also experienced challenges in terms of being a private sector focused program that in large part worked around government. This was a dramatic shift from implementation approaches of earlier Australian agricultural programming and contributed to scepticism and some frustration within the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). It also demanded significant effort to raise awareness and gain acceptance for the concept of private sector-led approaches to agricultural development and growth. CAVAC II therefore allowed consolidation of progress in strengthening the agricultural market place, while also providing an opportunity to adjust the strategy to the still rapidly changing context of Cambodian agriculture.

The aim of CAVAC II is to ***increase the productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers and trade in milled rice and other crops by strengthening market systems and investing in irrigation infrastructure*.** To achieve this aim, CAVAC II works across three components:

1. **Component One (C1)** - Productivity and Diversification (14 per cent of Program Costs)
2. **Component Two (C2)** - Irrigation and Water (I&W) Management (72 per cent)
3. **Component Three (C3)** - Milling and Export (14 per cent)

As designed and currently contracted, CAVAC II aims for:

* 135,000 farming households to have access to improved farming knowledge
* 18,000 farming households to have access to improved irrigation, and
* Five new or improved rice varieties are introduced and adopted.

Program governance occurs through the CAVAC II National Steering Committee (NSC), which is co-chaired by senior officials of MAFF and Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM). The Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Embassy, Phnom Penh is the third co-chair.

### Review Context

Since its inception, CAVAC II has received input on its performance from a variety of sources:

* an extensive, independent evaluation of CAVAC I performance undertaken by the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) - occurred during Year Two of CAVAC II
* various input from the CAVAC II Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) which was constituted to provide “strategic advice that assists the Program to develop, implement and modify plans”
* support and input from Cardno (the CAVAC II contract holder) in their management role and also through specific efforts to respond to the findings of the ODE report, and
* an iterative process of program realignment resulting in the late 2018 ‘Program Narrative’ which outlines how CAVAC works, the results it is achieving, and how it is responding to a changing environment (including alignment with the FPWP).

This history was a factor in limiting the timeframe provided for the MTR. It also led to the Review Team being tasked with being forward focused with its enquiry and recommendations, given that considerable time had already been given to consideration of past performance.

In order to avoid duplication and build from earlier analysis, the MTR team initiated consultations prior to field work with ODE review team members, SAT members and Cardno representatives – as well as initial communications with senior management and key staff within CAVAC II. With this approach, it was hoped that the MTR could add further value to prior analysis by considering findings reached through earlier reviews, while placing particular focus on opportunities and challenges presented by the reorientation described in the Program Narrative.

# Methodology

The review methodology was significantly guided by the team having been tasked with both assessing CAVAC II performance to date, as well as proposing measures to ensure strong performance in light of the proposed new direction for CAVAC II outlined in the Program Narrative. To fully address both aspects, the Review team needed to comprehend and synthesise a broad range of strategic documentation and CAVAC II reporting to determine program cohesion and effectiveness in a limited time period.

Preliminary reading, interviewing and review planning occurred over five days in the lead up to five days of in-Cambodia data gathering over the period 25th February to 1st March 2019, with the four team members mostly operating independently to maximize reach. The Team Leader remained in-country for three further days to provide feedback on the MTR to CAVAC and DFAT.

## Methods

The MTR team used a mixed-method approach, consisting of the following components.

1. **Document review** **and synthesis** - was conducted to scope existing knowledge against the Key Review Questions (KRQs); identify gaps; triangulate existing data; identify further documents, individuals and informants for the review; generate sub-questions.
2. **Semi-structured interviews** - were conducted with a strategically identified sample of key informants to ensure input to the review from different stakeholder groups. These included CAVAC staff, government officials, value chain actors, non-government organisations and farmers. Annex 1 contains a list of these consultations.
3. **Field visits –** were undertaken to two provinces, with each visit primarily focused on activities occurring within one particular component. These visits involved meetings with government, agro-enterprise, Farm Water User Committees (FWUCs) and farmers.

Review team members took comprehensive notes during interviews. These were assembled against the review sub-questions within a data analysis framework, which has formed the basis for the preparation of this document. Preliminary findings were presented to CAVAC and DFAT in separate meetings on 4th and 5th March in Phnom Penh.

## Limitations

The primary constraint faced was the limited time made available to the process, given the scope and complexity of CAVAC II – especially in light of the significant change in approach the program was undergoing. This in many respects required the review team to consider and measure performance against alternate approaches, adding a further dimension of complexity.

Limited time also demanded a circumvented process of data gathering in country, and severely restricted the review team’s capacity to undertake analysis in rural areas to verify and validate data reported by CAVAC II, and to analyse and discuss findings together as a team.

# Analysis

## Introduction

The Program Narrative jointly prepared in late 2018 by CAVAC and DFAT aimed to respond to a significantly changed operating context and a perceived lack of clarity regarding CAVAC’s purpose and relevance to that context. The Program Narrative has helped focus expectations around the program’s potential to play a more strategic role in the sector, supporting robust policy development, investment decision-making and program implementation. The CAVAC team is very much aware of the need for further revisions to the program logic to reflect these changes, and plan to work through a ‘design refresh’ process that will fine tune weaknesses in program documentation, and also lay out a vision and strategy for CAVAC II’s remaining three years.

It is therefore acknowledged that the MTR came at a complex point in time for CAVAC given that a significant change in direction had already been agreed upon and outlined in the Program Narrative, yet actions required to adapt to that new direction were for the most part still in the planning stage. The sections that follow do their best to acknowledge that the program is already in the process of developing strategies to address many of the weaknesses identified.

It is also noted that there is a pressing need to consider management and reporting lines within CAVAC II. As presented in the current CAVAC II organogram, the Team Leader has twelve direct reports while also needing to manage relations with the SAT, Cardno and DFAT. It also appears likely that gender, knowledge management and communications will emerge from the design refresh as teams in their own right. Given this scenario, it is important that lines of reporting be diffused across senior management and not solely be the responsibility of the Team Leader. Clarification of the role and function of the SAT will also be important in these considerations, since at the moment, it is in many respects functioning as a shadow SMT.

The analysis and findings that follow largely correspond with the KRQs and Sub Questions presented in the Review Plan and agreed to by DFAT. These are attached at Annex 2. Where there is overlap between questions, the team has done its best to present findings where they most logically fit with the aim of presenting overall assessment in a coherent, easy to read form.

## Relevance to strategic priorities of the Australian Government

### Alignment with Australian strategic priorities

Central to Australia’s FPWP is a vision for the Indo-Pacific as a secure, open and prosperous region driven by open, functioning markets, to which Australia provides support through investment in quality, sustainable infrastructure. Consistent with that ambition, Australia’s development assistance program in Cambodia aims to alleviate poverty and promote economic growth by supporting approaches that offer progress towards both these outcomes.

The FPWP also explicitly highlights the role of agricultural productivity as a key contributing factor to stability and prosperity, and the central role of women in increasing productivity. Objective Two of the current Aid Investment Plan is to increase agricultural productivity and farmer incomes. In Cambodia, the agriculture sector remains key to inclusive growth given the large number of people whose incomes rely on agriculture. The sector also plays a safety net role for those close to the poverty line or those affected by economic shocks.

CAVAC II’s focus on strengthening market driven agriculture and irrigation infrastructure fits well with these ambitions. Within its private sector-led growth approach, CAVAC aims to strengthen value chains in ways that offer opportunities for all sections of the community to participate and benefit from that growth. By building irrigation infrastructure and trialling innovative schemes for Operations and Management (O&M), beneficiary households can now consider a range of new livelihood approaches based on assured, longer term access to water.

While CAVAC aims to focus on inclusion of women and the vulnerable within program approaches, it is the conclusion of this review that this is an aspect of performance requiring considerable strengthening (discussed in Section 4.4) if it is to fully align with FPWP ambitions in relation to gender and WEE. This is partially explained by the CAVAC II IDD having been finalized prior to the FPWP and release of key DFAT documents on gender equality and WEE[[1]](#footnote-1). Given this, the IDD does not reflect current DFAT expectations for gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE), especially as the FPWP now identifies gender equality as a guiding value of the Australian aid program.

It is also noted that CAVAC’s private sector focus has at times been seen as working ‘outside government’, primarily because its implementation approach is significantly different to that of preceding Australian-supported agricultural programs. While this is an unfair characterization given widespread engagement of MAFF at national and provincial levels, it highlights a need to better communicate and raise awareness within the RGC of CAVAC’s approach and the importance of strong and viable agricultural enterprises to longer-term growth. This is especially the case given the FPWP emphasis on a shift from ‘delivery’ to ‘influencing delivery’.

### What opportunities exist for closer alignment with Australia’s strategic priorities?

CAVAC II is in theory well placed to graduate its approach from ‘delivery’ to ‘influencing delivery’ given the breadth of data and evidence that the program has been able to generate over its lifetime. The program is particularly well placed in relation to component two (its water and irrigation (I&W) component) to help shape and influence RGC policy and to further progress innovative approaches that improve irrigation system performance, notwithstanding the urgent need to address shortcomings in its gender equality and inclusivity arrangements. Increased levels of engagement by CAVAC II of MoWRAM and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) demonstrates a shift in strategy that aligns well with Australia’s strategic priorities.

Similarly, there is interest in CAVAC II achievements amongst Development Partners (DPs) who place high value on including innovative approaches within pipeline programming. This context provides a doorway for CAVAC/DFAT to significantly influence thinking in relation to development of Cambodia’s water infrastructure pipeline. Specific opportunities exist in terms of Agence France de Developpement (AFD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, who all plan major I&W investment projects in coming years. It is also noted that the ADB is currently preparing a Cambodian National Irrigation and Water Resources Management Investment Program. Despite this, the MTR team foresees a risk in terms of securing an attentive audience within the RGC for ‘influencing’ around irrigation and water resources (sub-basin) management if there is not also some ‘doing’ i.e. ongoing actual DFAT investment in irrigation.

While less obvious and tangible than the water and irrigation space, CAVAC’s work in components one and three (C1 and C3) also has potential to impact strategic thinking within the RGC. Already, CAVAC is cited within parts of the government as a key contributor to changed perspectives regarding the potentially key role of the agricultural private sector in growing the rural economy. These changed attitudes are facilitating a transformation of attitudes– towards one where agriculture departments and the private sector increasingly see each other as complementary service providers rather than distrusting competitors.

However, CAVAC II efforts lack a clear strategy for communication of results and policy relevance to key audiences – notably the RGC and key DPs. There is therefore a timely need for the program to be better backstopped by clear, sophisticated communications strategies that draw on knowledge generated by the program to motivate the RGC and DPs on targeted policy issues.

An opportunity also exists for CAVAC and DFAT (possibly coordinating with AFD) to work further in unison to help reinvigorate the Cambodian Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water and, more particularly, its ‘Strategy on Agriculture and Water’ sub-group which historically brought together DPs, MAFF and MoWRAM. A more active sub-group could advance policy thinking, help better harmonise different water and irrigation investments, and also help gain leverage for the innovations achieved by CAVAC through its C2 work.

Opportunities also exist for CAVAC to better align with DFAT’s values and approach to advancing gender equality and WEE. This could occur through a twin-track approach that more truly mainstreams gender and identifies specific relevant activities, actions and efforts with a dedicated primary purpose to tackle persistent challenges and barriers that are holding women and other marginalised groups back from achieving their full potential.[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Relevance to the rural development priorities of the RGC

### CAVAC II relevance to Cambodia’s current rural development context

While agriculture’s share of the economy dropped to 24.7% of total GDP in 2017 (down from 33.5% in 2012), the agricultural sector remains a significant source of income for the majority of Cambodia’s poorest and most marginalised people. According to the RGC, 42% of Cambodians still rely on agriculture for employment or income. However, this is down from 73% in 2008, highlighting the rapid and dramatic transformation underway in the rural economy.

Through its recently updated Rectangular Strategy, the RGC places strong emphasis on: rural development; the urgent need for rural infrastructure upgrading; the important role to be played by the private sector in advancing economic growth; addressing gaps in service provision in rural areas; and the need to strengthen Cambodia’s export orientation. The RGC also looks to CAVAC to support its ambition with regards to agricultural diversification. CAVAC to a greater or lesser extent responds to all of these priorities.

Similarly, CAVAC focuses on delivering improved rural infrastructure through irrigation schemes that overcome the weaknesses of predecessor schemes, where failed O&M systems have undermined large investments. Through application of a ‘whole of system’ model for sustainable irrigation, CAVAC is working to help ensure scheme designs meet farmers’ needs and give them incentive to adopt and take responsibility for functioning O&M systems that have greater potential to be sustained in the longer term.

While this is encouraging, MoWRAM officials and several key DPs have noted that CAVAC II has been selective in only working with small irrigation systems where water is supplied directly from the Mekong River (or its anabranches), and with communities where there is thought to be a higher likelihood of success. It has also been unconventional in undertaking its work semi-independently from government. However, this has also been the foundation of its success as it has been able to evolve a system that works effectively and which has a relatively high, but not assured, likelihood of continuing good performance after project completion

Despite this challenging political dynamic, there is confidence within CAVAC in the O&M model they have established, and also widespread interest in the model across the RGC and DPs. Accordingly, CAVAC II is now adapting its approach to more strategically inform and involve MoWRAM (and also PDWRAMs) in monitoring and knowledge development.

While the above suggests general alignment with Cambodia’s most pressing needs, CAVAC II relevance is undermined by its gender performance which has been insufficient and fails to adequately recognize that women and men experience agriculture and rural development issues differently. Relative to men farmers, women farmers experienced greater workload challenges and barriers to community leadership. Women farmers also have more limited access to productive resources.[[3]](#footnote-3) Similarly, in the agri-food processing sector, women entrepreneurs face heavy workloads, poor networks and have limited knowledge of business services.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Despite strong intent outlined in the IDD, CAVAC II’s approach to gender and WEE is to date largely focused on research aimed at better understanding systemic constraints to WEE as a basis for further action. Rather than consider options for transformative approaches that strengthen and empower women’s role in agriculture, CAVAC is mostly responsive to options that arise within the prevailing agricultural market construct - which are predictably reflective of entrenched gender norms. At the time of the MTR, CAVAC was initiating work to address gender-specific barriers for smallholder women or women-led MSMEs.

### Opportunities for Australia’s future investment in the rural development sector

Within CAVAC’s area of focus, opportunities exist to further consolidate synergies and complementarity between the public and private sectors to better support positive rural development outcomes. This could occur through targeted support that builds off learning achieved through CAVAC in relation to specific value chains; opportunities (and risks) presented by contract farming and farming cooperatives; and efforts focused on further strengthening the capacity of those agro-enterprises that focus on socially and commercially sustainable approaches.

Improving the generally poor performance of irrigation systems in Cambodia is a relatively straight forward way of improving rural livelihoods, as shown by CAVAC II through its Irrigation Impact Evaluation. Given the plans of other DPs to make very large investments in I&W infrastructure in future years, there is very real potential for Australia to support this through co-investment or parallel investment. This is particularly the case given that large investors are commonly limited in the Technical Assistance and lower level support they can give - particularly to FWUCs and their secondary and lower canal water supply systems.

Australia has a good deal of experience with water resource management, addressing water insecurity and the sharing of water between sectors, and the technical and administrative mechanisms that go with that. Additionally it has experience in involving the private sector in managing irrigation networks and in providing Management, Operations and Maintenance services. This expertise could benefit the irrigation sector, but also other sectors by enabling a more secure and transparent water supply as well as planning and adaption to climate change – with options to contribute at national and/or regional levels.

A potential gathering point for future rural development programming could be better understanding and responding to issues emerging from ‘migration’, which overwhelmingly involves movement of rural populations to urban areas or other rural areas. While labour shortage and mechanization trends are already felt and increasingly discussed, their detail is only superficially understood. A labour study planned by CAVAC, as well as CAVAC’s experience with addressing labour shortages will help inform future programming options.

## Approaches to inclusion

### CAVAC’s work in relation to inclusion

CAVAC’s performance in gender equality and WEE varies by component, with its strongest efforts undertaken by SCU and Component 1. Gender has not been adequately considered in Component 2 and 3. As a whole, CAVAC II efforts in relation to gender and WEE are inadequate and out of alignment with the ambitions for good gender programming articulated within the FPWP, DFAT’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy and other guidance notes. This situation stems from a complex range of factors related to: an absence of leadership for transformative approaches to gender and inclusion within CAVAC II; the lack of traction achieved by consultants brought in to strengthen gender strategy and WEE performance; and staffing and capacity limitations. It is also noted that DFAT, through its Aid Quality Checks (AQCs), have in the past, de facto endorsed CAVAC’s gender approach as acceptable, with gender performance having been given an AQC rating of 4 or 5 across the period 2009-15. In 2015, DFAT’s expectations increased in ambition, and in 2019, CAVAC was rated inadequate at a 3 rating.

Due to data collection shortcomings, it is difficult in the current context to determine if women and people with disabilities have equitably benefited from CAVAC activities. This relates in large part to outcome-level data on changed agricultural practices and increased income having only been collected at the household level. Up until the January to June 2018 semester, sex disaggregation of results assumed a 50:50 woman/man split. Starting July 2018, the CAVAC M&E team began to more meaningfully assess and sex-disaggregate outcome indicators. While it is difficult to determine if women *benefited from* CAVAC II, it is clear women were *included in* many program activities. Encouragingly, a recent irrigation impact study did work to specifically disaggregate benefits for men and women, showing that while women do benefit from irrigation schemes, their increase in income is less than for men. Women’s inclusion issues are described in more detail in Section 4.4.2.

Disability inclusion was not addressed in any form in the CAVAC II IDD, and the review team saw limited evidence of efforts to support disability inclusion in program activities.

### Gender equity and women’s empowerment strategies and actions

CAVAC II’s GEWE planned actions were set out in its WEE and Gender Strategy (hereafter referred to as the ‘WEE Strategy’) which was finalized in January 2017, a year after project commencement. The consultants developing the WEE Strategy also developed work plans for each component. Acceptance and implementation of the WEE Strategy varied by component. Some CAVAC staff felt that they were not consulted during the WEE Strategy’s development and have never used it. Other CAVAC staff feel frustration that it is underutilized.

C1 most readily adopted the WEE Strategy’s work plan, and work undertaken has included:

* Incorporating a WEE checklist into the intervention plan format.
* Research on rice and cassava typologies where women (only) were surveyed on the role of women and men in key parts of the production cycle, such as who decides what type of fertilizer to buy, who buys the fertilizer and who applies the fertilizer.[[5]](#footnote-5) This research guides whether women or men should be targeted for outreach activities
* Research on women-led versus men-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in agro-processing sector (in general) and cassava value chain (aggregating and processing)

Other actions in the WEE Strategy work plan have not been undertaken, such as triple burden of work assessment or analysis of women-headed households. However, C1 is planning to:

* support the CWBF to build networks and capacities for women in agri-businesses; share experiences by women business leaders in the rice sector; and expand their services to reach provincial agricultural input businesses;
* hold events linking agri-food processing MSMEs with services in Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham and Battambang to encourage women entrepreneurs to attend, working alongside the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA); and
* conduct research to map out gender roles and the WEE potential of working in value chains of high value minor crops.

Overall, C1 has made admirable efforts to undertake analysis. However, these have not been without challenges. Most of the research has been contracted to local consulting companies with the intent to build their capacity and experience in conducting gender research. As a result, low quality analysis has presented challenges in terms of identifying clear intervention entry points.

C1’s approach to gender and WEE has been to use typology studies to better target interventions by gender. The intent here has not been to empower women or transform gender power relations. Instead, it is to increase adoption of innovation. For example, adjustments have been made to interventions to enhance women’s participation, such as supporting the mentoring of retailers at their individual shops, thereby shifting training attendance from predominantly men to both women and men. There have also been what the C1 team refers to as ‘happy coincidences’. For example, the chilli value chain was selected due its high returns and coincidentally, women are strongly represented in this value chain. At the time of the MTR, C1 continues to develop activities aimed at purposefully empowering women. C1 is also considering purposefully selecting value chains that have high potential for empowering women. That is, instead of having ‘happy coincidences’, engineering ‘happy convergences’.

Interviews with CAVAC staff indicate that only limited progress has been made with the WEE Strategy for C2. The work plan included: an assessment of the root causes of the lack of women in FWUC committees, a pilot strategy to increase women in FWUCs, and tracking women’s and men’s involvement in irrigation schemes.

CAVAC sought to consult both women and men in the design of its irrigation schemes to ensure they meet women’s and men’s needs. An evaluation of the irrigation component reported benefits for both women and men beneficiaries, although the evaluation does not disaggregate the impacts by gender. In interviews, three women farmers told the MTR that the irrigation schemes and their associated access roads led to changes in their lives, such as saving time for women and men to walk to the rice fields (because of access roads), improving perceived safety and security for women (because of easier access to the fields), increasing women’s ability to work independently (especially from husbands) in the rice fields as heavy pumps and pipes no longer have to be carried, and improved access to schools, markets and towns. It appears that while the irrigation schemes were not designed with the intent to empower women, they do lead to WEE changes, such as a more manageable workload and increased opportunities. Some of these changes in women’s lives have been documented in case studies, and the CAVAC M&E team are considering how to more systematically track these positive outcomes so that they can be better understood and enhanced.

At the time of the MTR, there were no women represented among the FWUC committees and leadership that CAVAC engages with, despite women comprising 14 % of FWUC committee members and block leaders nationwide[[6]](#footnote-6). FWUC committees are elected by the FWUC membership, and CAVAC plays a role in developing selection criteria for committee members and interviewing candidates for the elections.

Based on discussions with women farmers and staff from PDWRAM, MoWRAM and CAVAC, there appear to be pre-existing barriers to women’s participation in FWUC committees. These include: a lack of physical strength to open or fix water gates; inability to work full-time during the growing season due to unpaid care work; reluctance to work at night due to concerns of safety; inability to travel overnight for training activities; and restrictive social norms that mean that women are less likely to be elected. This narrow perspective on women’s potential contribution to FWUC leadership ignores women’s suitability to the many other leadership roles needing to be performed, such as dispute resolution, planning, budgeting, communication and awareness raising, accounting – and representing the perspectives of women community members in decision making. The MTR Team concluded that in efforts to enhance the short-term success of FWUCs[[7]](#footnote-7), women’s representation was compromised. This example of tolerance of gender norms and absence of transformative gender approaches is reflected more broadly across CAVAC II in terms of a passive approach to inclusion that lacks proactivity, and is primarily reliant on taking up opportunities as they arise within the constraints of existing gender norms. A more detailed analysis of women’s participation in FWUC leadership is discussed in Annex 3

C3’s WEE Strategy was not highly developed, with the component’s work plan likely evolving at the time of WEE Strategy development. In relation to gender and WEE, C3’s work follows a similar pattern to C1’s. As with C3, there have been ‘happy coincidences’, such as working with Agriculture Cooperatives that are majority women, however, there are no deliberate efforts to empower women or transform gender relations.

In addition to the component-wise work, there has been a body of work developed outside the WEE Strategy. Under the leadership of the National WEE Advisor, CAVAC’s Strategic Coordination Unit (SCU) has been working with MAFF and MoWRAM on a series of initiatives. These include:

* Holding a National Workshop on WEE in Agriculture Market Development Programs, where CAVAC’s mapping of WEE and gender equality in agriculture programs was presented.
* Facilitating a study tour to Timor Leste to visit DFAT and USAID-funded agriculture and market systems programs. Participants included MAFF, DFAT and CAVAC staff.
* Facilitating a training workshop on empowering women champions that was held in collaboration with MAFF, PDAFF, Oxfam and other NGOs.
* Facilitating two training workshops on Gender Mainstreaming, Participatory Project Design, Monitoring and Evaluation for MAFF and MoWRAM staff.
* Facilitating a workshop on Pro-Poor Development and WEE/GE Responsive Approaches
* Working with MAFF to establish a Gender in Agriculture Task Force in 2018.
* Supporting MAFF to review and implement their Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework in Agriculture (2016 – 2020)
* Working with MoWRAM to review and implement their Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan by mobilising resources and coordinate joint implementation.

#### This work stream is well regarded by MAFF and MoWRAM. Importantly, CAVAC II is viewed by these ministries as a resource and as a source of expertise in gender and WEE. For example, with MoWRAM under-performing in its targets to have 30% of women in FWUC committees, they approached CAVAC to hold joint workshop to discuss challenges in women’s participation in FWUCs. This situation highlights a common observation made of CAVAC II - that much of its work is siloed under components. This can be seen in gender and WEE work where SCU has been working on substantial issues with MAFF and MoWRAM, yet there is limited collaboration or integration of these approaches with different components – notably C2.

### Future directions for inclusion in CAVAC

Looking forward, the proposed ‘design refresh’ process presents an opportunity for CAVAC to reinvigorate its commitment to mainstreaming gender and empowering women – and also considering options for disability inclusion. It should be noted here that most CAVAC staff are committed and willing to mainstream gender and empower women through their work, however, critically, most staff also lack the necessary capacity (time, skills, experience and resources) to do so. Staffing limitations and delays in recruiting an international WEE Advisor are also factors in the current context. For some, gender mainstreaming has fallen by the wayside in the push to achieve targets. Leadership is required to ensure that all CAVAC staff understand that gender issues are indeed a key part of each person’s work and that lack of inclusivity and equity erodes development effectiveness. To summarise in MSD parlance, there has not always been an *alignment of willingness and capacity to advance gender equality and empower women.*

As part of the design refresh, CAVAC II must strengthen its gender and WEE approach to reflect DFATs expectations in gender equality and its twin-track approach. Annex 4 provides an overview of specific areas for strengthening, which are summarized in the recommendations section.

## Progress towards end-of-program outcomes

### Adequacy of the program logic

#### The program logic change process and current program cohesion

In response to ODE Evaluation recommendations that CAVAC more strategically pursue links between its irrigation, agribusiness and rice milling interventions, CAVAC engaged SAT members and the M&E team to revise the program logic. This was done as part of a process of developing a more holistic M&E system, which culminated in the Performance Monitoring and Impact Evaluation (PMIE) plan. The resulting program logic in the current PMIE plan is generally sound, with a logical articulation of changes to support providers / related institutions capacity and behaviour leading to adoption of improved practice by farmers, and ultimately, incomes. Importantly, it is a marked improvement on the original IDD program logic, reflecting the potential for greater cross-component coherence, the evidence of which can be seen in: increased ‘demonstration’ of C1 activities in C2 irrigated areas which should increase the return on CAVAC investment given the major investment is in irrigation infrastructure; more integrated approaches to seed production; and development of an ‘Agriculture Support Model’ that aims to foster community based extension capacity within C2 supported areas, allowing dissemination of C1 and C3 learning. However the potential for geographic program coherence to fully contribute to improved productivity and income is still some way from being realized.

Despite improvements in the program logic, interviews with the CAVAC team regarding its appropriateness and the extent to which it shapes their current programming provided mixed responses, with many perceiving it as a process owned and driven by the M&E Team rather than an approach they were obliged to align with. It is also noted that the PMIE is perceived (especially within C1) as undoing much of the MSD approach to performance measurement.

As one of the primary purposes of developing a program logic is to foster *joint understanding* of the architecture and intended outcomes of a collective set of targeted activities, the process of developing the current program logic appears to have been insufficiently inclusive to both *harness* and *enhance* the understanding and ownership of the full program team.

#### Ongoing lack of clarity around end-of-program outcomes and goals

There remains a lack of clarity around what the end-of-program outcomes are beyond very general terms. In particular, there is confusion around whether the program is accountable for goal level outcomes (increased incomes and improved ‘competitiveness’), and for whom or how much. It was also noted during the MTR that there were conflicting accounts in documentation and during staff interviews over whether the targets for changed farmer practice (135,000 households) are the same as those for increased productivity and increased incomes. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.7.2 below.

While the revised program logic was added to the PMIE Plan in diagrammatic form, an accompanying narrative elaborating the theoretical underpinnings of outcomes and interactions between component activities was never developed. Instead, the program still relies on IDD explanations of the MSD approach to development with its accompanying input and outcomes value chain logic approach. In the absence of a narrative elaboration, the PMIE Plan logic diagram was accompanied by a set of hypotheses[[8]](#footnote-8). These relate to various Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) in the PMIE rather than the program logic outcomes themselves, and are concerned with aggregating contributions from each component rather than more fully describing the causal interactions leading to outcomes, or importantly, the intended level and nature of their achievement by program end.

General principles for writing program outcomes suggest they should be worded both as an end state – i.e. ‘what’ change will look like in specific terms – and specify at least the key stakeholders involved. The current CAVAC II end-of-program outcomes are articulated as follows:

* ‘diversification’: though understood to include both products and markets, the type and nature of diversity expected by end-of-program is not articulated
* ‘increased agricultural productivity’: for who (men, women, households?) and how many?
* ‘increased availability and use of quality paddy’: by how much? sufficient to the demand of domestic millers? Sufficient to demonstrate links between quality and competitiveness?
* ‘improved agricultural and trade enabling environment’: the broader enabling environment or a more specific outcome around more local stakeholders?

Unclear articulation of what the program expects to achieve by program end is hampering measuring progress towards achievement. This constrains reporting to *describing* lower level activities and select aspects of their progress, as well as progress towards the program’s three numerical targets. In addition, the issue of inclusivity of women and men has not been adequately emphasised in the language of the outcomes, and the expression of outcomes in terms of ‘households’ rather than women and men stakeholders limits expectations around gender equitable outcomes. With three years of program implementation still to come, better articulation of end-of-program outcomes will help to focus remaining program resources.

#### The need for closer re-alignment with the revised program narrative

Any process of refreshing the CAVAC program logic requires careful articulation of the ways in which CAVAC can usefully contribute to the knowledge and evidence base around its key issues. Ideally, this should be both reflective of the *work already undertaken* as well as production of the *evidence needed to facilitate influencing work.* Revised program outcomes could include an additional pathway that centres around policy aspirations and associated outcomes, such as:

* High quality knowledge products (based on CAVAC experience and targeted research) are available in a format which meets the needs of sector stakeholders (Immediate outcome)
* Stakeholders engaged in targeted policy, strategy or regulatory reforms are effectively exposed to and /or utilizing knowledge generated by CAVAC (Intermediate outcome)
* Targeted government/donor investment decisions and standards are increasingly reflecting CAVAC standards and approaches (e.g. sustainable irrigation design standards)

Modest and realistic targets that define success should be set for these, focused on the actual achievement of demonstrable policy changes, investment decisions or design standards.

#### Scope of the program logic

Expectation for domestic policy influence are reasonable based on current program positioning (see section 4.6 below). However, the extent to which end-of-program outcomes should be extended to achieve broader *regional* outcome requires further discussion. Depending on the appropriate level of emphasis, work at a regional level could be accommodated under the outcomes listed above, with the narrative description elaborating where and how it is expected to interact. Water issues in particular have an important regional dimension needing consideration.

The program logic needs to also more adequately reflect the language of the Program Narrative around its vision for greater development equity – if this is indeed its vision. Specifically, outcomes that explicitly address WEE, household resilience and food security should become more prominent development themes.Importantly, any future revisions in the ‘design refresh’ process underway at the time of the review should more fully engage all program staff (and if possible, select other stakeholders) to develop a more shared understanding and enhance ownership of the overarching program logic and its expected outcomes rather than just the individual components within it.

### Evidence of progress towards agreed outcomes

As noted above, end-of-program outcomes have come to be defined by numerical program targets in the scope of services, and component teams see these as the measure of their achievement. Whilst that has not prevented progress towards lower outcome levels, with some component teams doing their own more detailed monitoring, their reporting has been overshadowed and largely not aggregated in an accessible manner. In addition, while the M&E framework has been updated to reflect the revised program logic, periodic reporting *still largely reports against IDD outcomes*. Nevertheless, there is evidence of progress, variously measured against targets and narratively described in reporting. For example:

* C1 – There is confidence within team that they are on track to meet ‘targets’ associated with number of farmers changing practice (Currently 108,210 farmers). However the range of activities and how they are reported makes it difficult to get a ‘snap-shot’ view of progress against lower level outcomes related to other systemic changes and sustainability, including the level of ‘copying in’.
* C2 – (Revised) irrigation targets in terms of household numbers are broadly on track, however the target is to be reduced from 18,000 to 16,000 households following the reduction in CAVAC budget reducing the number of schemes to be implemented. The irrigation target is solid and able to be more closely tied to impact (as a result of the Irrigation Impact Evaluation). ISF collection is taken as the measure of FWUCs effectiveness which is considered to be an effective. Improved aggregated reporting would result if it was possible for a lead indicator of the longer term sustainability of FWUCs to be developed as a snapshot of their level of institutional maturity.
* C3 – The target of 5 seed varieties will be met, and there are plausible instances of positive policy / regulatory change, such as the draft sub decree on the National Seed Council and Variety Release Committee. However, it is unclear what a successful outcome for this component is beyond seed varieties being introduced.

### Possible changes to end-of-program outcomes in light of shifts in strategic priorities

As mentioned, there is a need to revise the program logic to better reflect the Program Narrative and provide clarity around definition and measurement of outcomes, in order to:

* more clearly define outcomes that specify who/what is expected to change, how, and to what extent, that are supported by a description of ‘what success would look like’.
* inclusion of an end-of-program outcome which articulates policy influence aspirations (including enhanced engagement of MoWRAM by C2), and the extent to which these go beyond the domestic policy sphere, and
* outcomes at all levels of the program logic that provide a more deliberate focus on equitable development outcomes.

## Capacity to influence the actions of key stakeholders

### CAVAC advocacy for good practice and reform in production and trade arenas

A conclusion of the ODE Evaluation was that “CAVAC is well-positioned to provide further support in other important areas of agricultural policy”. Since then, CAVAC II has consolidated its position as a highly regarded centre of expertise in the areas of private sector led agricultural growth, I&W and export oriented agriculture. Importantly, it holds an enormous amount of data, which has a sound analytical basis through adaptive research and on-farm testing to guide forward planning. Notably, its irrigation work is widely regarded as having ‘proof of concept’.

Much of CAVAC’s advocacy work has come as a result of being responsive to opportunities as they arise in relation to influencing reform and good practice. The fact that the RGC has sought CAVAC support on several key issues (i.e. developing MAFF’s five year master plan; updating their Pesticide Register; and both MAFF and MoWRAM requesting assistance with their gender mainstreaming strategies) provides evidence of this trusted adviser relationship.

In addition, the team noted a consensus across interactions with donors for CAVAC to be a more active information sharer and participant in coordination mechanisms, and for it to be active in a variety of information sharing fora such as the ‘Strategy on Agriculture and Water Sub-Sector’ group mentioned above. There is also significant interest in having greater access to CAVAC-generated knowledge products to support broader strategic planning and influencing efforts.

CAVAC II has also strengthened and broadened its engagement of other RGC institutions to better position itself to advocate for reforms. Recently, particular focus has been placed on better engaging MEF which has lead responsibility for decision making in relation to government loans and financing of irrigation schemes. CAVAC worked closely with the Ministry of Commerce in its engagement on a recent EC decision to place a ‘Safeguard’ tariff on Cambodian rice that risks undermining Cambodia’s agricultural export orientation. The ‘Safeguard’ highlights the importance of active sector engagement, given AFD suggested they could have also engaged on the EC decision-making process had they been clearer on CAVAC’s efforts.

### Appropriateness of CAVAC’s strategies for informing and influencing, and the program’s current level of influence with key stakeholders

A Knowledge Management and Outreach Strategy (KMOS) was developed in February 2018, expanding and refocusing the fairly rudimentary February 2017 Communications Strategy. It responded more comprehensively to the need for the program to become: more outward-looking in its identification, packaging and communication of successes; more influential; and more policy focused. It has since been supplemented by a draft Influencing Strategy, developed in response to recommendations from the November 2018 SAT mission to identify priority policy influencing areas: These were as follows:

* Promoting sustainable irrigation and CAVAC’s ‘proof of concept’ with RGC and other DPs
* Enhancing the RGC’s understanding of the important role of the private sector in agriculture, and the government’s role in responding to market demands.
* Highlighting Australia's important norm-setting role in gender equity (women's leadership, women's economic empowerment) and regional leadership.

Whilst the KMOS offers a framework for moving forward, it is basic and lacking in ambition as a strategy, with no clear goal or clarity around what it is trying to achieve. Its focus is on products rather than supporting CAVAC goals, outcomes, influence and impact. Enhanced interaction with other DP, given their potential role in the wider application of CAVAC learning, should be much strengthened in the strategy.

Also, KMOS implementation is stalled having not yet been approved by DFAT, and other general issues related to team structure, staffing and a lack of confidence around the team’s appreciation of sensitivities surrounding communication of CAVAC information. The team’s role is also currently compromised due to work on the proposed knowledge platform being on hold, and major documentation processes having not yet commenced.

Despite the centrality of knowledge management and communication to CAVAC’s success – in particular in relation to its influencing aspirations – the knowledge management team appear to be marginalized within CAVAC and considered as a service provider to the three components. This dynamic is seen in the team being focused on outputs such as instructional/technical videos to meet the needs of the component teams rather than development of ‘communications and influencing’ materials for strategic partnerships and external audiences. Appropriately designed and targeted knowledge generation and communications will be central to CAVAC achieving the Program Narrative agenda, and broad based adoption of its learning.

#### Past CAVAC efforts at reaching and influencing key stakeholders

Staff from CAVAC I note greater openness to information sharing in CAVAC II – both internally and externally. However there was a strong view that achieving greater openness to an external audience was still a matter of urgency. A recent study highlighted that under half of the intended targeted recipients of CAVAC’s digital newsletter actually opened it, highlighting the weakness of email as an information sharing platform. Furthermore, opportunities for providing MAFF with information to share through their own knowledge hub appear to have not been fully utilized and could be further explored. For example, CAVAC does not have a Facebook page despite this being an extraordinarily popular medium for knowledge dissemination in Cambodia, and used by MAFF.

CAVAC relationships with MoWRAM are improving, though coming off a low base given initial resistance to CAVAC’s I&W approach. MoWRAM is now more supportive and have moved to be seen, publicly, as a partner, expressing support and an intention to adopt and adapt CAVAC’s approach. C2 has long intended to document its methodologies, standards and produce guidelines for the irrigation sector. If done well and promoted strategically, it will be a long term legacy with influence and impact within and beyond Cambodia.

CAVAC’s success in influencing high level RGC thinking has been achieved by careful analysis of barriers to progress and achieving real results in overcoming them. Much of the transmission of knowledge to attitude/practice change has come through face-to-face relationship building, in particular through joint field visits, though the impact of these are not routinely followed up to gauge and report their outcomes.

Important shifts in thinking within RGC can also be seen from longer term, multi-faceted efforts such as work to raise awareness and develop a constituency of support for the role of the private sector in supporting agriculture sector advancement. Senior government officials met through the MTR attribute this shift to ‘general exposure’ to CAVAC activities and knowledge since its inception. Improving relations with MoWRAM however seem to relate, at least in part, to the interest of MEF in the CAVAC model – particularly in relation to the sustainability features of irrigation projects and FWUCs.

In terms of the private sector, CAVAC has worked closely with key agro-enterprises to support them with strengthened technical knowledge of products available on the market, while also supporting improved strategies for information sharing. This generally occurs through support to mid-size agro-enterprise, where CAVAC supports roll out of products known by CAVAC to be effective in supporting productivity and/or labour saving measures. This often includes development of a training curriculum that the company uses to train retailers working at district level. Companies consulted through the review noted that hands-on CAVAC training has been key in them adapting their approaches and investing more in staff training and farmer outreach.

### Possible improvements to extend CAVAC and/or DFAT reach and influence

The revised Program Narrative envisages a more active role for CAVAC in influencing the way the RGC and DPs respond to changes in the economy and agriculture sector. This ambition constitutes the most significant departure from past CAVAC programming, and will require the creation of new and innovative spaces, building on existing relationships and processes to stimulate and strengthen policy dialogue.

The CAVAC team has recognised a need to identify a more refined menu of areas of potential policy reform to focus upon. Members of the SAT were assisting in this process at the time of the MTR. While their proposed framework for progressing policy influencing is sensible, there is also a need to:

* develop a shared understanding amongst the CAVAC team of what policy influence entails and their potential role in it, including its role in ‘thinking and working politically[[9]](#footnote-9)’
* agree and formalize roles and expectations of CAVAC and DFAT in the policy influence and dialogue space in order to develop shared understanding of opportunities and limitations
* agree and ‘package’ existing processes and evidence to anchor advocacy and influencing
* identify new areas of required knowledge/evidence generation and a strategy for either producing it or sourcing it from existing data
* develop targeted dissemination strategies that include a mix of extended reach to a broader external audience while maintaining a strong element of direct, face to face communication through practical partnerships
* broaden significantly the toolbox used by the M&E team to track and provide evidence of policy influence, including markers of immediate attitude and practice as well as longer term, detailed evidence gathering methods to trace actual *contribution* to changes observed.

In light of the management responsibility falling to an already stretched Team Leader, the addition of a knowledge management and communication advisor may be required in order to respond to the elevated role of policy influence aspirations in the remaining years of the program.

## Effectiveness of M&E system in meeting stakeholder needs

### Meeting the needs of CAVAC management and external stakeholders

#### M&E Framework Development

CAVAC Phase II’s initial M&E Manual was developed in July 2016. Guided largely by the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) Standards for Measuring Results in Private Sector Development, it built on CAVAC 1 M&E. The CAVAC II M&E Manual incorporated C2 and C3 components into the DCED monitoring approach. Neither C2 or C3 advisors felt this system was appropriate to their needs, and they developed their own independent monitoring systems.

During 2018, CAVAC II responded to the ODE Evaluation by developing a more fit-for-purpose M&E system comprising the PMIE plan and revised M&E Manual. However these collectively still reflected a fragmented, component-based system, with C1 utilising DCED standard monitoring, while the rest of the program was covered by the PMIE Plan KEQs. Neither describe C2 or C3 monitoring, (for example, FWUC and contract farming monitoring arrangements). As a result, effective monitoring and communication of progress has remained problematic for the first half of CAVAC II implementation. Developing a coherent framework that describes in detail the monitoring systems of all components would improve cohesion and highlight opportunities for better utilization of existing data to more effectively contribute to whole of program monitoring and reporting.

#### Are information needs met

Currently, needs of M&E reporting audiences (DFAT, the RGC and other donors) are neither differentiated nor explained in detail beyond being stakeholders to whom results are reported.

Nevertheless the MTR found that component managers view *component* intervention logics and monitoring plans, and the use of systematic three and six monthly meetings as appropriate to their needs for internal learning, analysis and improvement. This was corroborated through component staff interviews where there was widespread satisfaction with how their systems were working, including the utilisation of monitoring data to aid activity management. Despite this, C1 is aware that they have a credibility issue as well as an inability to effectively communicate what they do*.*

Assessment of the degree to which both CAVAC leadership needs and DFAT needs are currently met was not effectively addressed by the MTR due to the comparative newness to the program of the Team Leader and key DFAT staff. Proxy indicators of DFAT satisfaction however can be found in the consistently high AQC scores for M&E (6 each year between 2012-16). However, this dropped to 4 in 2017[[10]](#footnote-10) – indicating a growing sense that a strongly-focused DCED approach was not as appropriate to the needs of CAVAC II as it was to CAVAC I.

Interestingly, the CAVAC Senior Management Team expressed frustration at what they described as a lack of clarity around the information needs of DFAT as themain stakeholder, and their perceived inability to fully satisfy their need. However this was not reflected during interviews with DFAT staff, who felt comfortable that the reporting they received provided sufficient information for AQC purposes. However, there still were particular reporting concerns related to questions around relevance – of MSD activities in particular, the programs’ importance to Cambodia’s development as a whole, and effective monitoring and management of emerging program risks.

#### Adequacy of the PMIE Plan

The PMIE Plan aims to provide a whole-of-program approach to M&E across a range of immediate through to goal level outcomes in the program logic.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Key Evaluation Question | DAC/DFAT criteria | Program / Logic Level |
| 1. To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to the improvement of smallholder household income? | Impact | Objective, goal |
| 2. To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to improving or maintaining competitiveness of Cambodian milled rice by improving agricultural and trade policies, institutions, strategies and processes*?* | Impact | Objective, goal |
| 3. To what extent have the interventions of CAVAC contributed in enhancing the agricultural productivity? If so, which interventions have contributed to enhanced productivity? | Effectiveness | Objective, End-of-program Outcome |
| 4. To what extent have CAVAC implemented sustainable program interventions? | Sustainability | Whole of program |
| 5. To what extent have CAVAC approaches led to market actors (private sector, civil societies, government, producer organisations, community) collaborating for growth of the agricultural sector? | Effectiveness / Private Sector | Immediate/  Intermediate outcomes |
| 6. To what extent have CAVAC interventions led to GE / WEE and social inclusion (disability)? | Gender Equity / Inclusion | Whole of program |
| 7. To what extent have CAVAC activities contributed to environmental sustainability and mitigation to climate change? | Climate Change / Resilience | Immediate/Intermediate outcomes |
| 8. To what extent have CAVAC influenced government policies through policy dialogue? | Effectiveness | End-of-program |

While these KEQs are a reasonable attempt at capturing whole-of-program reporting, the development of the PMIE Plan could perhaps have considered other criteria of importance to DFAT. For example, monitoring and reporting on the program’s continuing *relevance* to context, and operationally, the extent to which it is performing *efficiently* or providing *value for money.*

That said, the PMIE Plan provides a solid basis for tracking and reporting program performance, and helps to marry the time consuming and particular M&E requirements of the DCED standards with the program’s gradual move away from a purely MSD focused program. The bulk of the PMIE Plan addresses impact questions relating to agricultural productivity and income increases, which are explained with a high degree of methodological rigour. A more detailed review of the PMIE Plan KEQs and indicators and suggestions for improvements are attached at Annex 5.

#### Quality of M&E data collection and reporting

The Irrigation Impact Survey, completed by an external company, appears to have been completed to a high standard, and interviews with the CAVAC team indicates a high level of confidence in its findings. However, there was much mixed messaging from the M&E Team regarding what could and would be measured in the process of verifying causal links, assumptions and outcomes from C1 activities.

Six monthly reporting has gone through various process and format changes due to Team Leadership changes, and in response to directions from DFAT. The reports provide a rich source of narrative around achievements, and summarise in brief terms the overall progress by component. Reported by goal, it draws on quantitative and qualitative monitoring data, including case studies, and is still largely following the outcome headings from the original IDD. The current report format however fails to capture progress on lower level outcomes, such as behaviour change of the private sector and FWUC functionality (beyond ISF collection), and overall reporting would benefit from aggregation of data on key result areas around these to provide a more coherent (if less granular) ‘snapshot’ of progress against expected achievement.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The CAVAC Team are aware of the need to revise reporting formats to better align with the PMIE Plan program logic. The design refresh presents a timely opportunity for both DFAT and the program to agree on future report formats and content, and to address the ongoing lack of ability to better utilise the rich sources of existing data to demonstrate progress towards outcomes.

Tracking and reporting on WEE and Disability is described above in section 4.4

#### M&E Team Capacity and Resources

The M&E budget for the 2019 work plan period is 2.66% of the overall budget. The team are confident that they mostly have the resources needed to implement the PMIE plan, and see the SAT as a valuable source of technical assistance. Since the development of the PMIE plan, the M&E Team has sought and enjoyed better collaboration from component teams and feel that they are now contributing more actively to program level monitoring - moving beyond a component focus.

The M&E Team were aware however of the need to “push the data” that they have available from component monitoring systems, in particular developing case studies and success stories, and working more closely with the Knowledge Management and Communications team to turn them into accessible products. They are also aware of the need to achieve better depth in their qualitative work by following up on key issues emerging through component monitoring, in particular, more systematic M&E of policy influencing efforts. In this regard, the M&E Team acknowledges a lack of specific skills and could benefit from support from external expertise. Depending on the eventual methodology selected to demonstrate attribution of CAVAC activities to changes in policy, strategy or regulations, the M&E Team may need to contract out some of this more qualitative, process-tracing work to external specialists.

### Credibility of the current impact projections based on CAVAC’s program logic

Current impact projections are largely related to agri-business intervention outcomes and were originally based on the reported *outreach* outcomes of CAVAC I, which claimed outreach to 214,550 farming households at program completion in 2015. Phase 1 also had an additional *projected* total of 106,450 agribusiness outreach by 2017. These projected outreach numbers were expected to be verified in late 2017, however this has not taken place. The estimation of what could be achieved in CAVAC II assumed a continuation of similar MSD methodologies. Projected targets, their definitions, and the subsequent changes to them are as follows:

*Table 1 Program target definitions across CAVAC documents*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Investment Design Document | Scope of services | M&E Manual and PMIE Plan | 2019 Work Plan | Revised Program Narrative |
| 135,000 hh  - improved income (assumed to be same as increased productivity) | 135,000 hh  - knowledge and application of improved farming practices | 135,000 hh  - improved productivity and incomes | 135,000  - improved incomes | 135,000  - improved farming practices |

In terms of C1, CAVAC is only contractually obliged to demonstrate it changed practice rather than improved *income*. The constant ambiguity around the tying of the impact goal of increasing incomes to the target of improving farming knowledge and practice is in part related to the need to respond to the ODE Evaluation recommendation that income increases be a measurable outcome. The program has responded to this without necessarily assessing which set of ‘program beneficiaries’ it is applicable to, and the target is vague in this regard. It has therefore become a source of anxiety within the CAVAC Team, who seem uncertain of the burden of proof around attributing improved practices AND improved productivity AND improved incomes.

A further complication in assessing progress of program impact on farming practice, productivity or income is the level of *direct attribution* of these results to the program. This is variously described in the PMIE Plan as income changes for ‘direct beneficiaries’, while applied knowledge relates to households ‘participating in DFAT funded activities’. Both are at odds with how the MSD approach defines ‘outreach’ targets[[12]](#footnote-12).

Consistent with the ODE evaluation, the MTR Team were not in a position to verify the assumptions underpinning each intervention in order to verify the feasibility of projected outcomes in absolute terms. Generally, there appears to be strong systems in place to capture the number of farmers attending information-sharing/learning events in the short term. Beyond this, farmers who attended private partner extension activities in the future may be difficult to identify. However, the quality of the analysis underpinning interventions and the conservative estimates of numbers of farmers who *change practice* underpinning these projections appear sound as a result of:

* the modest multiplier used for adoption of some interventions for the first year at least (20%) which has some basis in experience gained during CAVAC I
* the use of pesticide sales data as a proxy for adoption appears reasonable – where there is an expectation that increases represent changed practice, (e.g. number of litres sold /hectares covered/average landholding) - which account for 70% of the projected target
* monitoring systems being in place to ensure private sector providers are performing as expected, and to adjust their support to maximize achievement of projected results.

#### Measurement of projected impact

Regardless of the *projected* impact for practice change, a lingering issue is the way the program collects data to demonstrate accurately the *achievement* of the target. In order to resolve the issue of attribution outlined above, the M&E team have made the following decisions:

* the program is currently counting ‘improved practices’ from farmers across *all* components in its reporting against the target (i.e. this includes all households in an irrigation command area, where irrigation itself is the ‘improved practice’)
* the program is including those farmers who are not yet considered ‘outreach’ by C1 in its data regardless of MSD and DCED methodological principles, and
* the M&E Team is considering the feasibility of sampling and including data from true ‘outreach’ farmers *as well* *as* those reached by CAVAC funded extension activities, by exploring the accuracy with which they can estimate private sector partner reach in years 4 – 6

Importantly, the M&E team plans to more closely *evaluate* the assumptions in the logics of all 36 interventions, and is currently finalising methodology for this in collaboration with the C1 team. Current methods of measurement indicate 108,210 farmers have changed practice, which provides a reasonable degree of certainty about reaching the projected 135,000 farmers (not households) in the revised program narrative target.

#### Ongoing lack of goal target definition as a distraction from more meaningful outcome measures?

While the projections for changed farmer practice seem plausible, what needs to be resolved is whether these targets were ever intended to include the impact of *increased productivity and incomes*, and if so, for how many farmers who changed practice and by how much?

The ODE Evaluation recommended measuring and reporting on net attributable income change for smallholder farming households so that the resulting information “can be used to allocate resources and select interventions that will maximise the program’s impact”. Given that there will be no new interventions developed post 2019, it is difficult to see how this information (which is unlikely to be available until late 2019) will be used for this purpose. DFAT management only partially agreed with this recommendation, and the project team engaged an M&E adviser external to C1 to explore the feasibility and utility of effective income measurement. For C2, income increases have been measured through a randomised control trial which will be repeated for the remaining schemes at end of program. However measuring income increases meaningfully presents particular methodological problems for C1. CAVAC needs to advise DFAT on the feasibility of meaningfully measuring income increases, and agree on the interpretation of the targets for changed practice, increased productivity and income(refer Annex 5 for more discussion on indicators and methods of measurement).

As highlighted in the April 2018 SAT report (p18), of more interest than measuring the targets could be some more detailed case study work which sheds light on three main questions:

* the significance and role of on-farm income, as the primary mechanism through which CAVAC affects economic welfare – essentially “how” CAVAC makes a difference ultimately;
* the impact of better irrigation infrastructure in supporting off farm income
* “for whom”- i.e. what kind of households adopt/benefit from CAVAC (and how does this align within the broader picture of the rural economy and rural poverty in particular).

This would also provide a more nuanced picture of the variables affecting impacts on women and men, and potentially, people with disabilities. The ODE Evaluation concluded that “notwithstanding the large amount of data available, the ability of CAVAC to report at the most important level – systemic change – is limited…. It therefore needs a plausible way of linking its activities to changes in the broader market”. It seems that the inclusion of targets and renewed emphasis on measuring increased incomes and productivity may have also detracted from a more deliberate focus on understanding private sector behaviour change dynamics and potential for sustainability – including any “copying in”[[13]](#footnote-13) of other providers. CAVAC M&E resources may therefore be better utilised by examining these systemic changes with more rigour, such as institutionalisation of practice changes, modifications to the intervention, shifts in trading relationships, emergence of trading networks, and innovations in business models etc.

### Effectiveness of CAVAC II risk management

CAVAC efforts in relation to risk management have been significantly energized over the implementation period following the response by Cardno to the election related political interference in the Wat Thmey FWUC. Following the review and subsequent strengthening of its Program Risk Management system, there is now greater proactivity in terms of identifying and capturing risk, through platforms such as the SMT meeting and monthly ‘roundtable’ Program Strategic Management Meetings, involving CAVAC, the contractor representative and DFAT. The review also led to a revamping of the Program Risk Management Matrix to ensure more complete reporting on program and political risks. CAVAC now has a cross-section of controls in place:

* more frequent and focused interaction with DFAT in relation to the risk horizon
* connecting in to risk identification mechanisms of other leading DPs
* more deliberate relationship development with key government partners, in order to ensure more open communication and greater awareness of CAVAC perspectives and needs in relation to risk management
* more regular engagement and communication with key government partners, including NSC members in relation to program governance and management, and
* more active initial investment of time and resources in researching and understanding potential private sector partners.

Specific focus has also been placed on strengthening FWUC capacity to undertake financial management, reporting and oversight processes, backstopped by more frequent and rigorous monitoring. This includes monitoring to identify and report any potential political interference.

CAVAC also undertakes specific studies where it assesses potential risk, such as preparation in mid 2018 of an “Issue Paper on Temporary Herbicide Ban”, which tabled different issues, perspectives and available evidence on this high profile issue.

## CAVAC II focus on sustainability of the investment

### Expected legacy of CAVAC II for Cambodian agricultural production and marketing

CAVAC is regarded within the RGC and through its private sector partners as having played an important facilitating role by raising awareness of the significant role of the private sector in reshaping agriculture as the economy goes through significant structural change. While this change is not solely attributable to CAVAC, the program has been influential in achieving greater mutual understanding of the benefits of a strengthened public *and* private agriculture sector.

An anecdote shared during the MTR highlighted this. When CAVAC I commenced, a very senior MAFF official made clear that there was only one source of agricultural extension in Cambodia, and that was the government’s service. Now, eight years on, MAFF’s strategic plan includes the objective of a strong and capable private sector providing important extension services to rural Cambodia.

CAVAC has placed particular emphasis on awareness raising and the regulatory environment in relation to pesticides, including finalization of a *prakas* on pesticide labelling that dictates minimum standards to address prior weaknesses. In addition, other policy engagement efforts have potential to contribute to a strengthened enabling environment for the Cambodian agricultural production and marketing sector.

Similarly, CAVAC has worked to foster a changed dynamic in agricultural retailer-farmer relations, aiming to strengthen awareness that there is mutual advantage in building sustained longer term relationships between farmers and agro-enterprise based in mutual advantage. By building awareness and capacity of agro-enterprises to provide better services to farmers, while demonstrating a causal pathway between quality of service provision and increased market share, strengthened relationships have been achieved that help set the stage for longer term relationships. As retailers develop a genuine client base, they recognize the need to expand the range and quality of their services if they are to hold on to those clients.

For example, laser levelling is proven to have potential to significantly reduce fertilizer application, and seeding machines significantly reduce the amount of seed needing to be used compared to traditional broadcasting methods. Focus is also being placed on identification of labour saving technologies, noting the complex impact of labour shortages on traditional methods.

The CAVAC ‘Irrigation Impact Evaluation’ (IIE) reported very large increases in agricultural production (333% increase in rice production) from the projects studied. Assuming that the CAVAC model for modernising schemes can be more widely replicated and sustained post CAVAC support, this will leave a significant, positive legacy on agricultural production in Cambodia. Add to this the interest of DPs in the CAVAC irrigation model for their emerging major investments, then CAVAC will have had an outstanding achievement.

### How sustainable is the operation and maintenance of irrigation schemes built under Component Two and what can CAVAC II do to strengthen sustainability?

The sustainability of irrigation schemes in developing countries and Cambodia in particular, is problematic due to difficulties in collecting fees for O&M and the lack of a functioning FWUC equivalent. Recognising this, the underlying goal of C2 has been to establish and demonstrate irrigation schemes that have the best chance of being sustainable in the long term.

Factors contributing to a ‘sustainable’ system in the ‘C2 System’ include:

* A well-documented scheme section approach and pre-project rapid appraisal process, including community interest and support, that assess factors relevant to scheme sustainability and productivity.
* System design and construction quality control through a list of pre and well qualified contractors.
* Development of FWUCs including collection of crop area based ISFs for O&M of the pumping and main canal system, as well as their capacity for O&M and equitable sharing of water in lower level canal systems.
* Ongoing support to FWUCs for two years post completion to support the FWUC and its sustainability.
* Involvement of credible private sector companies in maintaining canal and pumping systems.

O&M features of CAVAC schemes are stronger than generally experienced with water user associations elsewhere because of the ‘C2 System’ and the quality of support provided by the CAVAC team. The MTR team considers that FWUCs could be reasonably expected to continue in the immediate years post CAVAC, but share concerns of the IIE regarding their longer term sustainability:

* FWUC members are elected every 5 years and hence there is a significant risk that as members change, capacity and institutional memory and commitment will be lost
* It is unclear to the MTR, whether the ISFs fully recover costs for ‘regular’ O&M; the degree that the RGC O&M budget will provide for ‘non regular’ maintenance; whether this division of financing is clear; and whether asset renewal fund should be established for each scheme.
* CAVAC’s model for FWUC governance has not yet been embedded in MoWRAM and PDWRAM although the model is said to be consistent with the RGC’s FWUC sub-Decree (2015).
* Human nature, being as it is, levels of enthusiasm of FWUCs members could lessen with time and as outside observation and support reduces.

#### Strengthening C2 Sustainability

CAVAC II intentionally adopted a narrow definition of ‘sustainability’ for the C2 program (ISF collected and O&M provided by FWUCs) and this enabled C2 to focus on the primary issue of irrigation sustainability rather than also addressing other less core and, at the moment, significant issues. However in future, a more comprehensive would consider wider issues including:

* Farmer Profitability: Farmer irrigated agriculture profitability is critical for schemes to remain effective post CAVAC. The review of Phase 1 schemes found a large increase in production Options for further raising this (e.g., by increasing support from C1) in the remaining years of CAVAC and then post CAVAC should be evaluated and the best approach(es) implemented.
* Environmental Protection and Regeneration: An environmental checklist is used at the feasibility stage of the project. However, this is largely targeted at the construction phase with limited consideration of the environmental implications of irrigation and drainage and their mitigation or opportunities for environmental enhancement. Drainage is a necessary part of schemes for productive irrigation. However, drainage also comes with a range of environmental implications.
* Ancillary Uses of Water: It is common for irrigation canals in command areas to have other uses such as for household and drinking water; stock water use; laundry and recreation (children swimming). There was ambiguity as to the extent that this occurs in the C2 command areas and it was unclear if this was fully considered during system design so that these uses are catered for such as through watering points for such uses.
* Health and Safety: Agri-chemicals are an important element in the formula for conventional, high value agriculture – and promoted by CAVAC through C1. This has a water quality and health and safety risk from spillage entering surface or groundwater during usage but also from poor storage, mixing, washing and container disposal.
* Ex-poste assessment of CAVAC I and II projects: All past projects should be reviewed as also recommended by the IIE. This would involve developing a standard indicators-based template for assessing FWUC performance and sustainability. Use of this template as a national tool for monitoring of FWUCs health and performance should also be considered, and would offer a valuable point of collaboration with MoWRAM. This assessment would also consider if there are options to strengthen earlier projects that were not fully successful.

#### Extending the CAVAC C2 Approach and its Impact

As MoWRAM noted, CAVAC II has been “clever” in its scheme selection and that adopting the approach elsewhere and adapting it to other locations will be more challenging.

Water security has at least 5 drivers: water availability v demand from all sectors (urban, irrigation, hydropower, fisheries, environment etc); topography and hydrogeology (suitable storage sites); water supply infrastructure (e.g. reservoirs, regulated rivers, diversion/abstraction infrastructure, distribution networks); water quality constraining water use (especially groundwater); and capacity for management of water supply from reservoir to field. As other larger projects in other river basins are undertaken, these will need to be addressed.

Partnering with other DPs, as is beginning to happen, is strongly supported but a more systematic and managed approach could be taken with DFAT having a more direct role. Current good progress and raising DP awareness of CAVAC II appears to have been led by the forward-looking activities of the SAT I&W specialist and C2 TL. More systematic analysis and approach, supported by DFAT, might yield additional benefits, such as introducing additional Australian irrigation and water expertise and innovation. DPs noted that the nature of their financing often means their projects don’t have the time or resources to fully develop FWUCs and that this is an area where Australia could assist based on CAVAC successes.

Several DPs have noted that they are not clear about the feasibility of the ‘C2 System’ for large irrigation schemes and schemes where conditions are more challenging in terms of FWUC capacity, bio-physical conditions, and limited access to the skilled staff available within CAVAC. Despite this, CAVAC should develop clear strategy on how the ‘C2 model’ could be up scaled. The CAVAC approach to private sector involvement has many of the attributes of a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) approach, including FWUC support activities. If accepted by MoWRAM, this could provide potential benefits for directing approaches of DPs, moving forward. However, the most impact will come if it is possible to embed the ‘C2 System’ directly within MoWRAM and, as relevant, MEF, rather than solely following the conventional DP model.

In the longer term, consistent with the FPWP and Program Narrative and the importance of innovation and policy influence, there would be justification in introducing pipe irrigation projects. Unfortunately, the irrigation scheme cancelled due to budget cuts was to be a piped irrigation supply system. Such systems are becoming more common in other developing countries when supported by DPs have potential benefits over conventional open canal schemes especially for small irrigation schemes such as in Cambodia. Planned for benefits include:

* A better water policy environment with likely flow through to MOWRAM as water management and reform becomes more feasible
* Increased Level of Irrigation Service is provided to water users as water is on demand and at a uniform pressure and discharge
* Ease of operation and not requiring ‘male strength’ which was raised as a disincentive for women (or the disabled) involvement in FWUCs.
* Low maintenance requirements
* High feasible and ease of volumetric water charging. This provides an incentive to farmers to improve water use efficiency
* Ensures farmer fee payment, unless there is an exemption, and enables a pay before delivery approach consistent with water entitlements and allocations.
* Ease of automation whether partial or fully.
* Reduced potential for tampering, water theft, and vandalism

## Efficiency

### Program resourcing and efficiency

The light touch nature of the review made it difficult for the MTR team to investigate efficiency aspects with any rigour. Despite this, the team was able to make the following observations regarding the program’s efficiency and value for money (VfM).

Central to CAVAC is a desire to strengthen the evidence base driving decision making within Cambodia’s agriculture sector. It is well positioned for this given it holds an important range of relevant knowledge regarding the rapidly evolving context of agriculture. While it has invested in development of this knowledge and data, this important program asset is not always used optimally in terms of communicating results and knowledge to key audiences. Moving forward, strengthened knowledge management and communications will be central to successful influencing efforts, and offers the opportunity of an important efficiency gain.

A widely observed phenomenon of CAVAC to date has been an absence of integrated programming across components, undermining the opportunity for the program whole to be greater than the sum of its parts. This weakness is being addressed through a mix of initiatives that have the potential to harness synergies across and between components.

Currently 72% of program resources are allocated through C2 to irrigation and water related activities, with the aim of directly benefiting 18,000 households in the target areas. Overall, the program aims to reach the far greater target of 135,000 households, primarily based in outreach of C1 activities. While C2 per household costs are high, the contribution made by CAVAC has the potential to profoundly impact the economic potential of the whole area for a long period to come. The component is also innovative and presents the opportunity of being a circuit breaker in terms of providing a model that addresses longstanding sustainability issues related to irrigation scheme O&M and FWUC’s development. The component is therefore well positioned to help influence thinking and investment decisions of all parties interested in irrigation infrastructure moving forward.

To date, CAVAC II performance has been undermined by a lack of leadership around inclusion. In particular, a program as large as CAVAC requires significant gender expertise from program start. The impact of this context has been underperformance in terms of GEWE type activities, including an inability to measure performance through a gender lens. CAVAC’s restricted ability to view its achievements through a gendered lens likely has efficiency implications given it fails to achieve full understanding of program impacts on women and men.

### Effective leveraging of private sector investment and/or donor funding

Despite limited capacity within its M&E system to track private investment with any rigour, there are many clear examples of CAVAC partnering with and mobilizing private sector investment in forms that are supportive of program objectives. This is most readily seen in C1 where co-financing of activities with different agro-enterprises has been achieved across a range of interventions – mostly related to the roll out of private sector led extension services. Encouragingly, agro-enterprises met through the review such as Angkor Green Ltd, An Giang Agriculture Co. and Amru Rice are expanding on these activities, based in confidence of their appropriateness to their business model.

Efforts to influence and leverage support of other donors has primarily occurred through C2, and is still in its earliest stages. There appears to be potential within these efforts to partner with other donors, through provision of CAVAC I&W expertise to FWUC set up and other aspects of O&M that many donors are poorly equipped to support.

# Key findings and recommendations

The following section provides a summary of the findings of the CAVAC II MTR, and recommendations emerging from those findings.

## Relevance to Australian strategic priorities

Despite being designed prior to the FPWP, CAVAC II has strong potential to align more closely and more fully with it. CAVAC II is demonstrating innovative approaches to rural development that respond well to the rapid economic transformation currently underway in Cambodia. However, a challenge faced by CAVAC is a perception that it works ‘outside government’. While this is an unfair characterization, it is also a perception that has shifted significantly over time. This shift is helping position CAVAC to evolve from a delivery focused program to one more capable of influencing future delivery – in line with FPWP ambitions. To further progress this evolution, there is a need for greater capacity within CAVAC II to more strategically communicate its knowledge and achievements to targeted audiences – particularly in relation to I&W infrastructure, where both the RGC and DPs express interest in CAVAC’s model. Gender and WEE are areas where CAVAC performance is noticeably out of alignment with Australian priorities, and where opportunities exist to better align with DFAT’s values and approach.

## Relevance to the rural development, irrigation and water priorities of the RGC

Emphasis placed within the RGC’s recently updated Rectangular Strategy on development of the rural economy, rural infrastructure upgrading, the important role to be played by the private sector in advancing economic growth, and the need to strengthen Cambodia’s export orientation highlights strong levels of alignment between CAVAC II and RGC priorities. Based on the Rectangular Strategy, options exist in the ‘CAVAC landscape’ for future Australian investments. These include further consolidating complementarity and cooperation between the public and private sectors, and initiating programming that leverages off Australia’s current standing as a knowledge leader – specifically in relation to small and medium irrigation infrastructure and mobilization of private sector extension capacity in rural areas.

## To what extent has CAVAC been inclusive?

CAVAC’s performance in gender equality and WEE varies by component, with its strongest efforts undertaken by SCU and Component 1. Gender has not been adequately considered in Component 2 and 3. Furthermore, data collection shortcomings currently make it difficult to determine if women and people with disabilities have equitably benefited from CAVAC activities. As a whole, CAVAC II efforts in relation to gender and WEE are inadequate and out of alignment with the ambitions articulated in the FPWP.

Despite shortcomings, CAVAC II staff have a level of understanding and hold a significant amount of gendered data to help guide future directions. It is also noted that both MAFF and MoWRAM look to CAVAC for support around gender inclusion, including a specific desire within MoWRAM to address challenges in women’s participation in FWUCs. Having both knowledge within CAVAC and interest from the two key ministries to collaborate on gender issues presents significant opportunities for CAVAC II moving forward. To best take up these opportunities, there must be genuine leadership on gender within the CAVAC II team, clearly articulated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for ensuring gender mainstreaming, and also access to high quality technical assistance.

Disability inclusion is not addressed in any form in the IDD, and the review team saw no evidence that anything more than token efforts have been made to support disability inclusion in activities.

### Summary recommendations related to inclusion

* refresh the WEE Strategy during the ‘design refresh’ to align with DFAT’s expectations
* assign clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for GEWE work
* include a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Advisor in the SAT
* explore opportunities for collaboration within CAVAC to break down the silos around gender mainstreaming and programming.
* take immediate action to improve women’s representation and/or participation in FWUCs (as outlined in Annex 3)
* update C1 and C3 intervention plans and impact logic formats to have a clear statement of who (mainly women or mainly men) will be included and benefit from each intervention
* develop a plan to undertake further pragmatic actions on four of the seven primary drivers of women’s economic empowerment*[[14]](#footnote-14)*: strengthening visibility, voice and representation; tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models; building assets; and changing business culture and practice.

A more detailed set of recommendations relating to GEWE is included at Annex 4.

While irrigation related construction work aligns with universal accessibility standards, CAVAC efforts in relation to disability inclusion in program activities more generally lack rigour and deliberate focus.

## Progress towards end of program outcomes

Whilst the program logic is essentially sound, the current iteration in the PMIE has not been fully documented in narrative form in a way that adequately articulates the more integrated causal chain and expected end-of-program outcomes beyond general terms. Although improving, the limited ownership of the change process detracts from more effective integration across components, and more importantly, hampers effective reporting on progress against outcomes. Nonetheless, there is evidence that program *targets* may be reached. The clear intention to revise the program logic to better reflect the approved program narrative provides a timely opportunity to clarify the goal, the end-of-program outcomes, any associated targets, and the program’s accountability for achieving them. Importantly, it offers an opportunity to foster a joint understanding of what the program is collectively working towards achieving by engaging all program staff in its articulation and increasing their ownership.

### Recommendations related to CAVAC II’s program logic

The program logic needs to be revised to better reflect the Program Narrative and its enhanced focus on supporting policy reform.

In undertaking the revision, CAVAC should take into account the following considerations:

* the end-of-program outcomes that the program is accountable for are clearly articulated, and include an indication of the scope and quality of the achievable changes expected
* realistic targets at goal and end-of-program outcome levels are developed and described, in particular the relationship between the existing program target ‘beneficiaries’, and changed practice, increased productivity and increased incomes targets across program components
* a more detailed narrative description of the program logic clearly articulates the expected coherence, complementarities and interactions between components
* the language of the logic reflects the achievement of equitable outcomes for women, men and people with disabilities in line with DFAT policy
* the process of revising the program logic is inclusive of all program staff, and where practicable, key stakeholders, in order to foster joint understanding and ownership

## CAVAC Influencing capacity

CAVAC II has consolidated its position as a highly regarded centre of expertise in the areas of private sector led agricultural growth, sustainable irrigation schemes and export oriented agriculture. This is evidenced in the increasing frequency of RGC requests for assistance in policy and strategy-related work, and a general desire from the donor community that CAVAC become more active in information sharing. Taken together, CAVAC is well positioned to have an impact on strategic reform areas of interest. The current program strategies for achieving this are not serving it well due to lack of reform area focus, leadership, and capacity within the team. To expedite the program’s potential to influence, there is a need to develop a focused and realistic influencing strategy, with a more pro-active approach to identifying key reform areas around which to gather evidence and target key stakeholders. Members of the SAT have set out a sensible framework to progress this. There is also a need to elevate the role and enhance the leadership of the Knowledge Management and Communications teams to ensure they have the capacity to undertake this important work.

### Recommendations related to CAVAC II influencing capacity

A series of comprehensive influencing strategies for the program need to be developed which clearly articulate the key reform area of interest to CAVAC, the stakeholders targeted for change, the manner/medium through which CAVAC expects to influence them, and the expected outcomes which encourage meaningfulness, practicality and usefulness.

In undertaking development of the strategies, CAVAC should take into account the following considerations:

* respective roles and expectations of CAVAC and DFAT in the spheres of information sharing, policy influence and dialogue are formalized to ensure there is a realistic understanding of the opportunities and limitations of each
* CAVAC staffing structure is reviewed to assess the need for additional advisory resources to respond to the elevated expectations around policy influence and ensure that CAVAC staff understanding and capacity is developed commensurate with expectations
* the strategies build on and enhance CAVAC’s ongoing practical transfer of skills and knowledge-to-attitude/practice change through forming implementation partnerships, relationship building, dialogue and face-to-face dissemination of lessons learnt
* DFAT, through its dialogue with the RGC, DPs and the Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water should promote adoption of these ‘Procedures’
* C2 accelerate its efforts to influence government policies and approaches (e.g. MoWRAM, MEF, MAFF) including development of indicators for measuring ‘policy influence’ that are based on a clear and explicit logic to encourage meaningfulness, practicality and usefulness.
* DFAT and CAVAC consider an approach for ensuring and building on the legacy of irrigation schemes during the final post-CAVAC II. The elements of this include (i) the issues involved and approach in having irrigation modernisation implemented by the RGC and DPs in sub-basins where water is insecure and including management of the impacts on all sectors; (ii) options and opportunities for improved Management, Operation and Maintenance of small systems to improve service provision and financing, including alternative innovative irrigation systems and alternative service providers. Some of these systems offer scope to strongly influence and strengthen RGC water policy and its implementation, (iii) full documentation of procedures, assessments and design standards, and drawings for its irrigation projects, and water security assessments and control in insecure sub-basins for adoption by MOWRAM. (iv) consideration adding an international water resources and irrigation policy and water planning specialist or international consultant to the CAVAC team for the purpose of water resources policy, water security activities, and DP influence.

## Utility of the M&E system

Stakeholder information needs are not yet adequately agreed and described in the M&E Framework – particularly DFAT’s expectations. That said, monitoring of individual component activities appears of high quality and meets the day-to-day management needs of activity implementation. The extent to which DFAT’s needs are met however is questionable, and the recent turnover of both program and DFAT staff, combined with the ‘design refresh’ process, provides an opportunity to agree reporting formats, content and expected quality to ensure needs are both better understood and met and conform to DFAT progress reporting standards. While the PMIE Plan represents a solid basis on which to monitor and evaluate progress, the lack of a coherent M&E Framework, (marrying the PMIE Plan and the M&E Manual) is restricting utilisation of the existing rich data for measuring and reporting whole-of-program progress. The impending update of the program logic offers an opportunity to better articulate the outcomes expected, and show how data from each source will contribute to their reporting. While the M&E Team is well resourced to collect the data it needs to answer KEQs, there may be a need to source external expertise to conduct some of the qualitative data collection related to measuring CAVAC’s contribution to and impact on policy influence.

CAVAC II outcome projections in relation to C1 are rooted in CAVAC I experience. They appear to have a sound basis due to their conservative multiplier and the fact that 70% are related to pesticide interventions (measured by additional litres sold). At issue however is what will be counted against this projection of 135,000 farmers (changed practice AND productivity increase AND income increase); whether contributions to its achievement come from all component’s activities; and the level of appropriate attribution both required and feasible. To resolve this the M&E Team has made the decision to:

* ‘count’ improved practice of farmers from all components to reflect the more coherent, revised program logic;
* collect data on both farmers who attend program-funded extension activities AND survey a sample of those typically considered ‘outreach’ in MSD programs to determine the feasibility of attributing outcomes to program interventions;
* evaluate the assumptions in the logics of all C1 interventions to make a defensible argument for the achievement of the projected targets in terms of improved practice.

The utility of measuring productivity and income increases at scale however remains contested, and while a high quality Irrigation Impact Evaluation has been conducted, CAVAC has yet to develop a suitably rigorous methodology for measuring income increases in MSD interventions. However, they are in the process of trialling the feasibility of doing so, and the results of this trial should be used to inform DFAT of the potential of the methodology to produce data of sufficient quality to be defensible, and an estimation of the projected cost of data collection. Following this, DFAT and CAVAC need to agree on the relationship of the projected targets to income increases, and the extent to which contestable evidence of achievement at scale should be sought, or whether M&E resources would be better utilised in reliably assessing any lower-level systemic changes attributable to CAVAC, through its interactions with the private sector in particular.

Efforts to strengthen risk management systems are multi-faceted and well considered within the complex risk context of Cambodia, including logical approaches for monitoring political risk.

### Recommendations related to CAVAC II monitoring and evaluation

Once the program logic is revised and agreed, the documents which make up the M&E Framework (the PMIE and the M&E Manual) will need to be reviewed to ensure they align with and will collect the data required to report on progress towards the end-of-program outcomes.

In undertaking the review of the M&E Framework and Manual, CAVAC should take into account the following considerations:

* information needs of CAVAC’s key stakeholders – particularly DFAT’s – are re-confirmed and clearly reflected in the reporting formats of all progress reporting in line with DFAT standards
* an overall M&E Framework is developed which describes the monitoring processes of all components, and clearly articulates which monitoring data will be utilized for reporting against key evaluation questions and whole-of-program monitoring
* the KEQs and their indicators are reviewed to ensure they are still relevant to the revised program logic. Consideration should also be given to including the evaluation criteria of Relevance and Efficiency, as well as the other recommended changes to the KEQs and indicators detailed in annex 5
* six monthly and annual reporting formats be substantially revised to report against the new program logic, end-of-program outcomes and key evaluation questions in a more coherent manner, utilizing where possible ‘snapshots’ of progress against outcomes to accompany the rich descriptive data
* the feasibility of measuring income increases associated with non-irrigation related activities in a sufficiently defensible manner at scale should be rigorously tested by CAVAC For DFAT’s consideration
* more prominence should be given to assessing systemic changes attributable to CAVAC through its interactions with the private sector (in line with past recommendations of the ODE Completion Evaluation and the April 2018 SAT report), and
* broadening significantly the toolbox and resources used by the M&E team to track and provide evidence of policy influence, including sourcing additional STA expertise to undertake analysis of CAVAC’s contribution to policy change.

## Sustainability of investment

### Expected legacy of CAVAC II for Cambodian agricultural production and marketing

CAVAC has played an important facilitating role in raising awareness of the important role of the private sector in reshaping agriculture, including capacity development of each. This has contributed to shared understanding of the benefits and synergies that can be achieved by there being both a strong public and private agriculture sector. Similarly, CAVAC has helped foster a changed dynamic in agricultural retailer-farmer relations, strengthening service delivery, and thereby raising awareness of there being mutual advantage in sustained longer term relationships between farmers and agro-enterprise being built. Another aspect of these strengthened dynamics has been support to a strengthened and more relevant regulatory environment, through holistic approaches aimed at improving and reducing the risks associated with pesticide use. By strengthening an awareness of roles and comparative advantage of different value chain actors, more reliable and complete systems are now in place that help progress growth and sustainability in targeted value chains.

#### Recommendations related to strengthening CAVAC’s legacy in production and marketing

While strong progress has been achieved in strengthening relations between the public and private sectors, and the services they provide to farmers, this is still a work in progress. Further consolidation can occur through:

* targeted, high quality data gathering and dissemination which can:
* demonstrate to agro-enterprise a causal pathway between quality of service provision and increased market share
* strengthen farmer capacity to undertake cost-benefit analysis, and understand the virtues of different interventions
* enhance confidence of farmers in the private sector as a source of high quality extension services
* strategic support to the RGC to help them most effectively support and monitor private sector performance, with the aim of them being an enabler of the private sector’s role
* more focused support at provincial level where awareness and understanding of the private sector’s role is still limited and mostly viewed through the lens of a need to regulate and monitor.

### Sustainability of irrigation O&M schemes

The sustainability of irrigation schemes in developing countries such as Cambodia is notoriously problematic. Despite this, CAVAC II irrigation schemes enjoy many of the characteristics of sustainable irrigation schemes by being very well constructed; having textured knowledge of factors affecting productivity and sustainability; and by having invested in O&M through capacity development of FWUCs. At the same time, longer term sustainability is assessed as uncertain due to general risks such as those related to the loss of institutional memory from FWUCs and the likelihood of reducing levels of enthusiasm of FWUCs members over time as outside observation and support reduces. More significantly and specific to the CAVAC context are concerns related to whether the ISFs fully recover costs for ‘regular’ O&M, the degree that the RGC O&M budget will provide for ‘non regular’ maintenance, whether this division of financing is clear and whether there should be an asset renewal fund. These risks are exacerbated because CAVAC’s model for FWUC governance has not yet been embedded in MoWRAM. Moving forward, scheme sustainability can be enhanced by efforts aimed at helping ensure farmer profitability (possibly through extension of CAVAC C1 and C3 activities in to irrigated areas); and measures to ensure sound environmental monitoring and management over time. Continued support to strengthening FWUCs will also aid sustainability.

#### Recommendations related to sustainability of irrigation O&M schemes

* C2 review all phase 1 and phase 2 schemes to learn from successes and the less successful; develop a standard indicators template for assessing FWUCs performance and sustainability with relevance to a future national ‘FWUCs well-being’ reporting system
* C2 review and strengthen the RAP methodology especially the longer-term environmental impacts and sustainability of the project (e.g. drainage impacts on wetlands/natural areas and downstream water quality, water tables and soil salinity, health risks to other canal water users such as village drinking water, recreational uses, stock watering, impacts from interference with natural flooding lines etc.) and recognising the relevance of these guidelines to other irrigation regions.

## Efficiency of the investment

CAVAC II efforts to promote the role of the private sector as an agricultural service provider are strategic and offer the potential of an important longer term efficiency dividend. An aspect of this approach is to strengthen the evidence base that explains cost effectiveness, profitability and synergies between different market actors. However, application and communication of this important information to wider audiences is in need of further strengthening.

Currently 72% of program resources are allocated through CAVAC’s irrigation and water component, directly benefiting 18,000 households in the target areas (being reduced to 10,313 due to budget reductions). While C2 per household costs are high, CAVAC’s I&W model has the potential to not only directly impact its target area for a long period to come, it also has the potential to influence a wide range of water interested actors should it achieve true ‘proof of concept’ as a model capable of resolving longstanding sustainability issues related to scheme O&M.

It is the perspective of the MTR team that CAVAC’s restricted ability to view its achievements through a gendered lens likely has efficiency implications given it fails to achieve full understanding of program impacts on women and men.

Efforts to influence and leverage support of other donors has primarily occurred through C2, and is still in its earliest stages. There appears to be potential within these efforts to partner with other donors, through provision of CAVAC I&W expertise to FWUC set up and other aspects of O&M that many donors are poorly equipped to support.

### Recommendations related to efficiency of the investment

* CAVAC and Component 2 strategize an approach for ensuring and building on the legacy of C2 post-CAVAC II including how this would be resourced best. In the MTR’s opinion, there is justification in a DFAT sponsored follow-up project which would include a wider WRM and basin management approach inclusive of water use by all sectors and with a significant component extending the experience and procedures of CAVAC II Component 2 to other water regions in Cambodia and promoting innovation and policy penetration into RGC.

# Annex One CAVAC II MTR Schedule

| Date | Activities | Team Leader | RD and M&E Specialist | Gender Advisor | Irrigation and Water Specialist |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mon** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8-9.30 | Entry meeting with DFAT – David Bloch and Sinal Pou | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9.30-11 | Entry meeting with CAVAC Team Leader Gary Ellem | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11-12 | CAVAC SMT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 12-2 | CAVAC components | C1 | M&E | Gender | C3 |
| 2-3.30 | DFAT – Luke Arnold and David Block | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4-5.30 | CAVAC components | Gary Ellem | M&E | C1 | C2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Tue** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8-10 | CAVAC components | C3 | M&E | M&E | C2 |
| 10-12 | External meetings | Chilli processor | M&E | Chilli processor | WB Ag Diversification project |
| 1-3 | External meetings | An Giang Ltd |  | An Giang Ltd | C2 |
| 3-5 | External meetings | MAFF GDA Director | BNG – Cassava fertilizer | C2 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Weds** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.30 | Travel to Prey Veng and Takeo | PV | PV | Takeo | Takeo |
| 9-10 |  | Presentation about C1 and Rice Unit | Presentation about C1 and Rice Unit | (0930-1130)  Ta Soung FWUC and farmers | (0930-1130)  Ta Soung FWUC and farmers |
| 10-11 |  | Meeting with PDAF | Meeting with PDAF | Ta Soung FWUC and farmers | Ta Soung FWUC and farmers |
| 11-12 |  | Meeting with Angkor Green | Meeting with Angkor Green | Ta Soung site visit and pump house | Ta Soung site visit and pump house |
| 1-2 |  |  |  | Meeting with PDOWRAM staff | Meeting with PDOWRAM staff |
| 2-3 |  | Laser land leveling (Kung Nuon Group, | Laser land leveling (Kung Nuon Group, | Visit Char I&II schemes | Visit Char I&II schemes |
| 3-4 |  | Meet FWUC | Meet FWUC | Meet FWUC | Meet FWUC |
| 4-6 | Travel to PNH |  |  |  |  |
| **Thur** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8-9 | Internal and external meetings | CARDI | M&E | Gender |  |
|  |  | H.E. Sar Sophyrak (Secretary of State - MAFF) | M&E |  |  |
| 8.30 |  | Mr. Meas Piseth (Deputy Director General) |  | MAFF |  |
| 10-11 |  | CARDI | M&E | MOWRAM | 1030 MOWRAM: H.E. Sang Vansay; |
| 11-12 |  | AMRU Rice |  |  |  |
| 2-3 | National Steering Committee | NSC add on meetings | NSC add on meetings | NSC add on meetings | NSC add on meetings |
| 3-4 | Meeting with CAVAC Strategic Advisor – Pech Sokhem | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4-6 | Group meeting with Senior National staff | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Fri** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8-9 | Internal and external meetings | AgriSmart | KM and Comms | Socheata Sim and Wayne Gum – Oxfam Cambodia | Nigel Hayball |
| 9-10 |  | Mr. Phum Ra, Director of Dept of Ag Legislation | KM and Comms | Socheata Sim and Wayne Gum – Oxfam Cambodia |  |
| 10-11 |  | MAFF GDA: Dr. Monthivuth | KM and Comms | Socheata Sim and Wayne Gum – Oxfam Cambodia |  |
| 11-12 |  | MAFF GDA: Dr. Monthivuth | KM and Comms |  |  |
| 1-2 |  |  | KM and Comms |  | Long Piseth - ADB |
| 2-3 |  | Ministry of Commerce | KM and Comms |  | Ministry of Economy and Finance |
| 3-4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4-5 | Meet with CAVAC Team Leader | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5-6 |  | Sangha re Provincial relations |  |  |  |

# Annex Two Key review questions and Sub Questions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Review Criteria | Key Review Question and Sub-Questions |
| Relevance | **1. To what extent is CAVAC II relevant to the strategic priorities of the Australian Government?**   1. How aligned is CAVAC to the Foreign Policy White Paper, DFAT’s strategic priorities in the region and the current Cambodian Aid Investment Plan? 2. What opportunities exist for closer alignment with Australia’s strategic priorities? |
| Relevance | **2. To what extent is CAVAC II relevant to the rural development, irrigation and water priorities of the RGC?**   1. Is CAVAC engaged on the most relevant rural development, irrigation and water issues for smallholder women and men in the current C context and has CAVAC demonstrated an adaptive approach? 2. What opportunities exist for Australia’s future investment in the rural development sector? |
| Inclusion | **3. To what extent has CAVAC been inclusive?**   * 1. To what extent has CAVAC II equitably benefited women and people living with disabilities?   2. What strategies and actions have been employed to promote gender equality, empower women and enhance women’s participation and voice in the private sector and governance bodies (such as Farm Water User Committees) and what more could CAVAC do? |
| Effectiveness | **4. To what extent is CAVAC II on-track to achieve end-of-program outcomes?**   1. Is the current program logic sufficiently robust to lead to achievement of end-of-program outcomes? 2. Is there evidence of sufficient progress towards agreed outcomes and what can CAVAC do to ensure outcomes are achieved? 3. Is there evidence that outcomes are equitable for women, men and people with disabilities? 4. Are any changes required to end-of-program outcomes in light of shifts in strategic priorities and context? |
| Effectiveness | **5. How well positioned is CAVAC to influence the actions of key stakeholders in the agricultural production and trade arenas?**   * 1. Is CAVAC well positioned to advocate for reform / good practice in the agricultural production and trade arenas?   2. How appropriate are CAVAC’s strategies for informing and influencing key stakeholders, and what is the program’s current level of influence with the Cambodian government, other development partners and the private sector?   3. What else could CAVAC and/or DFAT do to extend reach and influence? |
| Effectiveness | **6. To what extent is CAVAC IIs M&E system effective in meeting stakeholder needs and how can it be strengthened?**   * 1. To what extent does CAVAC’s M&E system meet the needs of program management and external stakeholders, particularly DFAT, including tracking and reporting on women’s economic empowerment and disability?   2. Are the current impact projections sufficiently credible based on CAVAC’s program logic?   3. To what extent does CAVAC II proactively manage and mitigate program risks, especially political risks? |
| Sustainability | **7. Is CAVAC II adequately focused on maximising the sustainability of the investment?**   1. What is the likely/expected legacy of CAVAC II for the Cambodian agricultural production and marketing sector? 2. How likely are the improvements in the functioning of target value chains to be sustained? 3. How sustainable is the operation and maintenance of irrigation schemes built under Component Two and what can CAVAC II do to strengthen sustainability? |
| Efficiency | **8. To what extent are CAVAC resources prioritised to areas delivering the greatest development returns?**   1. Is the current mix of program activities and resourcing well placed to achieve outcomes efficiently? 2. Has CAVAC effectively leveraged private sector investment and/or donor funding? |

# Annex Three Women’s representation and participation in FWUCs

**Background**

When an irrigation scheme is rehabilitated or constructed, CAVAC staff group the water users (farmers) within the scheme into a Farmer Water User Community (FWUC). When a woman or man farmer is a member of the FWUC, she or he agrees to conform with the FWUC’s regulations and pay irrigation service fees (ISF). Overseeing the operation and maintenance of the FWUC are several staff comprising four committee members (chair, first vice chair, second vice chair and accountant), pump operators and block leaders. These FWUC staff are paid a modest salary out of the ISF payments. Article 19 of the Water Law in 2005 outlines the roles of the FWUC and its committee members. In reality, the responsibilities of FWUC staff are wide-ranging, including decision making, planning, budgeting, dispute resolution, communication and awareness raising, maintenance of pumps and other infrastructure, opening and closing of gates, collection of ISF, accounting, and so on. Committee members and block leaders are elected by FWUC members.

**CAVAC II and FWUCs**

Across the country, it is known that very few schemes have functioning FWUCs. A 2017 article noted that only four FWUCs are functioning well, out of Cambodia’s 2,525 irrigation schemes.[[15]](#footnote-15) During interviews for the MTR, senior MOWRAM staff noted CAVAC II FWUCs are ‘especially good’ or exceptional in their functioning, with many remaining operational (during program life) and have a high rate of ISF collection. CAVAC II is currently documenting its process in forming and training FWUCs as a ‘best practice’ model. The resulting model is expected to be replicated across Cambodia by MOWRAM, the Asian Development Bank and others.

Success has -in large part- been attributed to CAVAC II’s approach to shaping and training the FWUCs. CAVAC staff support each FWUC to prepare selection criteria for their FWUC committee members, pump operators and block leaders. Candidates are nominated within the FWUC, CAVAC staff vet each candidate for suitability against the criteria. Following election, CAVAC staff train and coach FWUC staff for a minimum of two years.

Despite CAVAC II’s successes with FWUCs, there remain challenges: No women represented among CAVAC II’s FWUCs’s staff. MOWRAM’s national target for FWUC committee members is to achieve 30 per cent women’s representation. Nationally, 14 per cent of FWUC committee members are women, and a further 14 per cent of block leaders are women.[[16]](#footnote-16) Women’s engagement is critical, given that ‘effectiveness’ is only one criterion of success, with other criteria including fairness and social justice.[[17]](#footnote-17) Furthermore, DFAT’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy strives to enhance women’s voice in decision-making, leadership and peace building.

**Why no women?**

In interviews with women water users and staff of CAVAC, PDWRAM and MOWRAM, several reasons have been cited as to why women are under-represented. Women are too busy to take on this work, which can be equivalent to a full-time job during the growing season. They do not have the physical strength to open the water gates, and do not feel safe working at night in their communities, e.g., to fix broken gates or patrol for water theft. Community members do not see women as FWUC leaders. Husbands of married women do not let them travel to attend training in the nearest town. Even when women are interested in being FWUC committee member and stand for election, they may not get elected.[[18]](#footnote-18) When women were elected in CAVAC I, about half resigned from their roles.[[19]](#footnote-19)

These ‘reasons’ could, conversely, be viewed as ‘barriers’ that impede the likelihood of women being elected to a FWUC and being able to perform their roles. The FWUC staff roles are currently structured to match a man’s capacities and availability.

Experience in comparable sectors suggests that changes can be made to promote women’s representation. For example, Oxfam Cambodia, through DFAT funding, has developed valuable learning on women’s representation and voice in men-dominated spheres, such as fisheries. Fisheries committees had previously comprised of men, given that women are unable to perform night patrol duties. With Oxfam support, committees had outlined the functions that a committee needs to perform in addition to night patrolling. Many were functions that women in the community are known to perform well, such as dispute resolution and awareness raising. Communities acknowledged that it would be a shame to not draw on women’s capacities because women are unable to perform only one function of night patrolling. Women are now strongly represented on the fisheries committees and communities benefit from their capacities.

**What could CAVAC do?**

CAVAC II could draw on learning from Oxfam and similarly identify the functions that women are able to perform well. These likely include decision making, dispute resolution, planning, budgeting, communication and awareness raising, accounting, etc. Roles could be structured to ensure that women can perform them and flourish in their roles. Training could be structured so that it is at a time and venue that is more accessible for women.[[20]](#footnote-20) Another area for action is to work with husbands and communities to change perceptions of women’s engagement and leadership in FWUCs.[[21]](#footnote-21) These improvements need to be tested and documented in CAVAC’s operations and maintenance guide for its irrigation schemes.

For most irrigation schemes under CAVAC II, the FWUC staff positions have already been elected and filled. There is limited scope to influence the existing composition of the FWUC staff positions. CAVAC staff can prepare FWUCs to consider gender balance of FWUC staff for future elections. In addition, CAVAC could explore the possible avenues for women to voice their opinions and play leadership roles in their irrigation schemes. One option is to engage women as well as men in the planned work to train FWUC Agricultural Support Members (ASM).

Given that both women’s and men’s lives are described as being substantially changed by CAVAC II irrigation schemes, CAVAC needs to better monitor and capture these changes as experienced similarly and differently for women and men. The intended outcome stated in CAVAC documentation is changed practices and increased income. Yet interviewed women indicate that there are other unintended positive effects, such as time and labour savings from the irrigation water as well as the access roads. As these changes are captured, CAVAC II can identify ways to maximise positive and empowering changes for future irrigation schemes (and minimise or mitigate negative ones) for scheme designs and O&M processes.

# Annex Four Actions to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment

Elaborating on Section 4.4, this annex presents actions to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in the final three years of CAVAC II implementation. These are separated into immediate actions to be undertaken by 2019, and the actions looking ahead to 2020 and 2021.

**Immediate actions:**

* The immediate priority is to ensure that the **refreshed IDD** reflects DFAT’s expectations in gender equality and its twin-track approach. The refreshed IDD also requires an update in language to provide clearer articulation that CAVAC is working for both ‘women and men farmers’, and not just gender-neutral farmers.
* CAVAC II should **refresh the WEE Strategy** to align with the Program Narrative, refreshed IDD and DFAT’s Good Practice Note on Gender Equality Strategy Development. Critically, the updated WEE Strategy should reflect CAVAC II’s increasing role in policy influencing and thus its need to model good practice in GEWE. It should also incorporate clear accountabilities and resourcing for gender mainstreaming and empowering women.
* **Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities** for ensuring gender mainstreaming need to be appropriately articulated and monitored, including clearly articulated roles for DFAT, Cardno, the Team Leader, SAT members, component leads, unit coordinators, M&E team, communications, human resources and WEE Advisors.
* Given the importance of gender and WEE and repeated challenges in adequately mainstreaming, include a **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Advisor** in the SAT.
* Explore opportunities for **collaboration within CAVAC** to break down silos around gender. One immediate opportunity is for SCU and Component 2 to collaborate with MoWRAM to pilot approaches to enhancing women’s participation in FWUCs.
* **C2** has achieved a model for scheme design, construction, operation and maintenance that is perceived as being successful. Efforts are now needed to ensure that the model that is used for policy influence purposes is also inclusive of women and other marginalized groups and is equitable. Immediate steps to be undertaken are to:
* Prepare an **issues paper** on factors impacting women’s representation and participation in FWUCs and potential actions to remove barriers to women’s participation. This should document the pre-existing barriers to women’s participation and representation in FWUCs, and examine the extent to which CAVAC 2 may have inadvertently placed additional barriers to women’s participation. The issues paper should adopt an imaginative and problem solving approach to proposing actions to remove barriers to women’s meaningful participation and representation. FWUC committee roles, for example, may need to be restructured to ensure that women are not excluded because they cannot perform certain functions. In preparing this issues paper, CAVAC II should learn from other organisations, such as Oxfam’s work in developing women’s leadership in community fisheries management and UN World Food Programme’s work on women and men’s roles in community asset management. This work should be led by the SAT or international WEE Advisor, reporting directly to the Team Leader and working in close collaboration with Component 2. The intent is that this work will inform future FWUC formation and actions and CAVAC’s policy influencing.
* Given that FWUC committees and block leaders are already elected, explore options in established FWUCs to support **women’s voice and leadership**.
* Ensure robust gender mainstreaming in the **operations and maintenance manual** that is currently being developed. Support needs to be provided by a specialist with expertise in gender in community asset or infrastructure management.
* **C1 and C3** need to more strongly mainstream gender. Immediate steps to be undertaken are:
* Update the **intervention plan** **and impact logic formats** to have a clear statement of who (mainly women or mainly men) will be included and who will benefit from each intervention. If advancing gender equality or empowering women is part of the vision and intent of the intervention, it should be stated what gender outcomes are expected and how this will be measured.
* Develop resources and staff skills to pragmatically **work with private sector partners** to advance gender equality and empower women. C1 staff already use concepts such as market intelligence and market segmentation. This can be elaborated and expanded so that private sector companies see pragmatic incentives in targeting women consumers or engaging women employees or farmers.
* In future diversification work, use analysis to **purposefully select** value chains, sub-sectors, private sector partners and interventions that benefit women, people with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups. That is, shifting from what the C1 team refers to as ‘happy coincidences’ to purposefully making **‘happy convergences’** occur.
* Ensure that **analysis** is guided by strong gender expertise. There are clear benefits in working with local consultants who are familiar with the local business environment. However, they may need more support in their analysis and recommendations.

**Looking ahead**

Once the foundations are in place to mainstream gender, CAVAC II can take further pragmatic actions on four of the seven primary drivers of women’s economic empowerment[[22]](#footnote-22), such as:

* Strengthening visibility, collective voice and representation.
* Support women’s participation in or among FWUCs, Agricultural Cooperatives and other CAVAC supported mechanisms. This includes deliberately targeting existing or emerging women champions and supporting them to fulfil their roles in these groups.
* Collaborating with government, private sector actors, business forums, development actors etc. to advocate for and promote GEWE.
* Tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models.
* Work with MAFF, MoWRAM, women business leaders and women business foundations to shift business and social norms regarding women’s roles and work in the agri-food sector, including through providing positive women and men role models.
* Building assets – Digital, financial and property.
* Purposefully select women-led enterprises, value chains or Agricultural Cooperatives where women predominate to build their assets or support their access to assets.
* Changing business culture and practice.
* Engage with companies willing to shift their business culture and practice to become more inclusive and empowering of women by providing incentives or cost-sharing

# Annex Five Review of CAVAC II KEQs and Indicators

***General comments on the Key Evaluation Questions***

The KEQs included in the Performance Monitoring and Impact Evaluation (PMIE) plan measure outcomes at all level of the revised Program logic. These will likely need further revision as the program logic is updated to reflect the approved Program Narrative. In the interim, the KEQs are reasonably well pitched to collate data from existing monitoring processes and generate new data collection processes around issues of interested to CAVAC, DFAT and the RGC.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Evaluation Question | DAC/DFAT criteria |
| 1. 1. To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to the improvement of smallholder household income? | Impact |
| 1. 2. To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to improving or maintaining the competitiveness of Cambodian milled rice by improving agricultural and trade policies, institutions, strategies and processes*?* | Impact |
| 1. 3. To what extent have the interventions of CAVAC contributed in enhancing the agricultural productivity? If so, which interventions have contributed to enhanced productivity? | Effectiveness |
| 1. 4. To what extent have CAVAC implemented sustainable program interventions? | Sustainability |
| 1. 5. To what extent have CAVAC approaches led to promote market actors (private sector, civil societies, government, producer organisations, community) collaboration for economic growth of the agricultural sector? | Effectiveness / Private Sector |
| 1. 6. To what extent have CAVAC interventions led to GE / WEE and social inclusion (disability)? | Gender Equity / Inclusion |
| 1. 7. To what extent have CAVAC activities contributed to environmental sustainability and mitigation to climate change? | Climate Change / Resilience |
| 1. 8. To what extent have CAVAC influenced government policies through policy dialogue? | Effectiveness |

While largely adequate as they are, the KEQs could be strengthened in the following ways:

KEQs 3, 5 and 8:

Consider combining the three KEQs relating to *Effectiveness* (i.e. the testing of selected causal links and assumptions from the activity level of the program logic to the end of program outcome level) and developing a more nuanced Results Measurement Framework to support its measurement. These would incorporate the three existing effectiveness questions and involve:

* Including a generic effectiveness KEQ: ‘How effective has CAVAC been in contributing to key outcomes in the overarching program logic?’
* developing an indicator-based results framework which tracks progress towards achievement of key immediate, intermediate and end-of-program goals
* developing indicators and measures of success for selected outcomes at immediate, intermediate and end-of-program stage

This would ensure that some of the intermediate outcomes of interest – around FWUG formation and effectiveness, private sector changes within the market system, and other markers of improved competitiveness are more specifically tracked and reported.

KEQ 6

While there is a specific question related to gender equity, Women’s economic empowerment and disability inclusion, consideration should be given to the extent to which this further marginalizes rather than promotes inclusivity. An alternative approach would be to incorporate considerations of equity into all relevant KEQs. For example:

* How effective has CAVAC been in contributing to key outcomes, including economic empowerment and access of opportunity, in the overarching program logic for men, women and people with a disability? (i.e. incorporating equity and empowerment concepts into the generic effectiveness question suggested above)
* To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to improved incomes for smallholder men and women and people with a disability?
* To what extent have the interventions of CAVAC contributed in enhancing the agricultural productivity for smallholder men and women and people with a disability? If so, which interventions have contributed to enhanced productivity? etc

***Possible Additional KEQs:***

Additional KEQs which track the efficiency of activity implementation, (i.e. whether the program could have been doing things more cheaply or in a more timely manner) should be considered. This is of interest to DFAT as *efficiency* is a key criteria of Aid Quality Check (AQC) reporting. In addition, the recent requirement for CAVAC to update the program narrative to reflect perceived contextual changes was largely driven by DFAT. More routinized program monitoring of contextual changes could have better prepared the program for the perceived mismatch between CAVAC’s level of maturity, the changing country context, and CAVAC’s designed approach before mid-term. The addition of the following KEQs might address these issues in future:

* To what extent can the program be considered operationally efficient and cost-effective? (Efficiency criteria)
* How relevant are CAVAC’s outcomes and approaches in terms of alignment with Australian policy, the Cambodian rural economy, and the goals of RGC in promoting rural development? (Relevance criteria)

The following comments relate to the existing KEQs and indicators in the PMIE, assuming the changes set out above are not made.

**Table 3 Existing KEQs and Indicators and MTR comments**

| PMIE KEQs and Indicators | Comments |
| --- | --- |
| **1. To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to the improvement of smallholder household income?** | Consideration should be given to the measures of success of this question. In particular, what percentage change in income is considered sufficient? For how many men and women – the whole 135,000 or a sub-set of these? |
| (1) Percentage change in household income; | Whilst the approach to measuring changes to agricultural income as a proportion of total household income appears sensible and methodologically robust, the intended sample size for the mix of methods (household surveys, longitudinal studies, case studies, and impact stories) is not yet clear.  This data is clearly being generated from a number of beneficiaries across the program through a number of different methods (in order to provide an appropriate level of attribution). These should be made transparent by including a table of data sources (including their direct or less direct relationship to program interventions) and methods for collection and data disaggregation by sex.  See also below, indicative comments on gender considerations for KEQs 1, 2 and 3 |
| (2) Number of smallholder farmers with increased incomes; and | Whilst the approach to measuring changes to agricultural income as a proportion of total household income appears sensible and methodologically robust, the intended sample size for the mix of methods (household surveys, longitudinal studies, case studies, and impact stories) is not yet clear.  This data is clearly being generated from a number of beneficiaries across the program through a number of different methods (in order to provide an appropriate level of attribution). These should be made transparent by including a table of data sources (including their direct or less direct relationship to program interventions) and methods for collection and data disaggregation by sex.  See also below, indicative comments on gender considerations for KEQs 1, 2 and 3 |
| (3) Value of additional agricultural production. |  |
| **2. To what extent have CAVAC interventions contributed to improving or maintaining the competitiveness of Cambodian milled rice by improving agricultural and trade policies, institutions, strategies and processes*?* (Impact)** | ‘Competitiveness’ is defined as:  - increasing or maintaining current level (volume, share) and growth  - diversification of export  - quality of export  The KEQ appears to be related to these changes occurring as a result of changes to policies, institutions, strategies and processes. The indicators below however relate only to the quality of export aspects (achieved directly by the program, not necessarily via institutional change), and counting the numbers of policy / practice change adopted. Diversification and volume/share aspects do not appear to be captured. |
| (1) Number of policies and practices supported and adopted to facilitate trade; | Whilst the indicator is a numerical one, the descriptor in the PMIE Plan indicates it will report on the *effects* of the policies and management practices. This is a considerable undertaking and appears to include the value and volume of savings in milled rice as a result of policy interventions. In practice, these savings may come from causes unrelated to policy change (for example, introduction and use of an improved variety is not a policy change as such) but are still a good indicators of competitiveness. In addition, the indicator as described does not capture changes in diversity of crops.  It is understood that CAVAC’s approach to policy influence is still being developed which is likely to result in selection of specifically targeted policy / reform areas of interest. Once finalised, this indicator should be revised to capture the intent of the agreed policy influence strategy while still capturing modest, ad hoc contributions of the program to trade-related policy. |
| (2) Number of new / improved varieties adopted by farmers and millers; and | This reports only on rice varieties (which is a program target) and does not capture changes in diversity of crops |
| (3) Value of improved seed produced. | Whilst this is a reasonable indicators of increased seed *availability*, of more interest may be the procedural aspects of the system of its production, i.e. the relatively innovative introduction of the contract farming system and its development.  Consider adding an indicator which reflects the achievement of an equitable and sustainable *procedure/system* for improved seed production |
|  | Consider adding an indicator relating to improved *diversification* (of products and/or markets) |
|  | Consider adding an indicator relating to changes in the *volume*  of product being milled / processed in Cambodia as a result program interventions |
| **3. To what extent have the interventions of CAVAC contributed in enhancing the agricultural productivity? If so, which interventions have contributed to enhanced productivity? (Effectiveness)** | As with KEQ above, the targets for this need to be clarified, particularly the extent to which the 135,000 for practice change does include those households in the irrigation command area that can potentially access water from the improved schemes, and any contract farmers for example, or whether the higher target of 135,000 plus 18,000 with improved access to irrigation (153,000) is the expectation. |
| (1) Percentage change in yields; | For irrigation projects *t/million cubic metre of irrigation water* is more usual as a productivity measure however here, as the water source is the Mekong system, land seems to be the limiting resource rather than water. For benchmarking purposes however, consider including an indicator for:   * No. of Ha under irrigation * t/million cubic metre of irrigation water used |
| (2) Number of farmers who apply innovative (improved technologies and management) agricultural practices; | This data is clearly being generated from a number of beneficiaries across the program through a number of different methods (in order to provide an appropriate level of attribution). These should be made transparent by including a table of data sources (including their direct or less direct relationship to program interventions) and methods for collection and data disaggregation by sex. The narrative description in the PMIE Plan (p24) claims agricultural practice change will only be counted after it has been extended to farmers *without program support*. This is at odds with the current method of data collection, which is now counting farmers who participated in the initial years of an initiative,. They are currently only *considering* including verifying practice change from farmers considered ‘outreach’ pending feasibility and contestability of attribution of data collection methods. This needs to be clarified and revised in the PMIE Plan and throughout program reporting. In addition, the PMIE Plan narrative for this indicator claims that *systemic* change relating to service providers will also be captured under this indictor. This may be better incorporated into KEQ 5 below. |
| (3) Number of new / improved technologies made available and adopted by farmers / millers. |  |
| Indicative gender considerations for KEQs 1, 2 and 3 | Although the M&E team is taking steps to properly verify the gender of the beneficiary to whom income is accrued within each household, this will not likely be completed at scale until the final years of the program. Where it makes sense, household-level data should be disaggregated by the sex of the household head in order to identify and address any discrepancies in the capacity of male and female headed households to increase income. Where it does not make sense or is not yet known, a ‘sex-unknown’ category should be created – especially for reporting on ARDs.   * Do assumptions about gender roles (drawn from typology studies) in production cycles apply, particularly when it is about the adoption of new technologies and practice? * Do assumptions about intra-household communication of information apply? E.g. if man farmer attends farmer meetings, he will then communicate to woman farmer about what herbicide to buy? * Do women and men face different barriers to adopting new technologies or practices? Are there differences in improved income for households headed by women and by men? What are the reasons for these differences? Do women and men household heads face different barriers? |
| **4. To what extent have CAVAC implemented sustainable program interventions? (Sustainability)** | Indicators of sustainability draw on several indicators already under other KEQs (Indicator 2 (KEQ4), Indicator 3 (KEQ3) Indicator 5 (KEQ 6). These are commented on under their respective KEQs. |
| (1) Rate of ISF payment; | Whilst a good indicator of likely sustainability, it is also fairly blunt, and needs to be combined with some contextualised information about whether there are a sufficient *proportion* of eligible users utilising the scheme to make it economically viable (see below comments on indicator 4)  Indicative inclusivity consideration:  Why are some farmers unable to pay their ISF? Are there groups that are unable to pay due to disadvantage, such as women household heads, people with disabilities or elderly farmers? |
| (2) Number of firms continuing with program interventions without program support; |  |
| (3) Number of households adopting new or improved varieties; | Indicative gender considerations:   * To what extent have firms and government departments continued to consider gender without program support? E.g., through ensuring that both women and men have access to farmer meetings or field days. |
| (4) Number of proved concept schemes constructed by the project and operational; and | The degree to which a scheme can be said to be ‘operational’ is potentially a very good indicator of its sustainability, however this concept is not yet defined in the PMIE Plan beyond ‘impacts on the FWUCs especially management, governance, payments, challenges and opportunities’. Consideration should be given to better define benchmarks for what ‘operational’ looks like, utilising the data already collected on FWUCs to include:  - no. of schemes with an adequate proportion of households in the command area joining/maintaining membership/replacing those that drop out of the FWUC; OR adequate proportion of command area (ha) utilising irrigation (as an indicator of the scheme’s ongoing viability)  - no. of FWUCs developing and completing adequate maintenance plans  Indicative inclusivity consideration:   * To what extent do FWUC committees and block leaders continue to engage with women and other disadvantaged groups (such as people with disabilities or smaller landholders) without program support? |
| (5) Number of government guidelines and policy documents developed through the support of the program. |  |
| **5. To what extent have CAVAC approaches led to promote market actors (private sector, civil societies, government, producer organisations, community) *collaboration* for economic growth of the agricultural sector? (Effectiveness)** | It is not clear from the Program Logic the extent to which improved *collaboration* is an expected outcome of CAVAC. That said, the indicators selected appear to only illuminate the collaboration between the private sector and CAVAC, not between actors as described in the hypothesis, and the description in the PMIE relates only to indicator 1. As CAVAC is interested in influencing *systemic* reform, this evaluation question and its indicators may need to be revised to capture aspects of static and dynamic changes in private sector partners, such as institutionalisation of practice changes; modifications to the intervention made; shifts in trading relationships and networks (i.e. collaboration); and innovations in business models. |
| (1) Value of private sector investment funds leveraged. | An ADR requirement |
| (2) Number of partnerships formed with the private sector | Consider including private sector partnerships from C2, i.e.   * the number of FWUCs being supported by the private sector and associated FWUC satisfaction   Consider expanding to consider shifts in trading relationships and networks (i.e. collaboration)  Indicative gender and inclusivity considerations:   * Number of partnerships formed with women-led enterprises compared to men-led enterprises   Number of jobs created for women and for men, and people with disabilities. |
| (3) Number of firms continuing with program interventions without program support (in KEQ4) | A good indicator by itself, but consider expanding to consider:- No. of innovations introduced by private sector partners (defined as ‘new’ in the sub-sector – tech, product, business model etc)Consider inclusion of an indicator to explore the extent of ‘copying in’ that can be attributed to CAVAC interventions |
| **6. To what extent have CAVAC interventions led to GE / WEE and social inclusion (disability)? (Inclusion)** | The hypotheses attached to this KEQ: ‘Strengthening integration of women and GE within selected interventions will promote greater WEE resulting in improved household income among families’ is somewhat limiting, and does not reflect disability advocacy the program is expected to engage in. Integration of women and GE may or may not lead to improve household incomes for households. The intent here should not only be to improve household incomes, but advance equity and intra-household sharing of benefits (e.g., income) and risks. Suggest re-wording to: ‘The integration of GE, WEE and social inclusion (disability) includes strengthening agency, improving access to opportunities, and greater economic advancement. This in turn may lead to increased household income. It can also lead to GE, WEE and inclusion outcomes, such as more equitable sharing of benefits and risks. Improved GE and social inclusion programming can also lead to other outcomes, such as greater representation, reduced workload, or reduced reliance on harmful practices. While these are not systematically quantified through monitoring processes, they will be documented in reporting and case studies’. |
| 1 Percentage change of additional income accrued by female famers. | Although the M&E team is taking steps to properly verify the gender of the beneficiary to whom income is accrued within each household, this will not likely be completed at scale until the final years of the program. Where it makes sense, household-level data should be disaggregated by the sex of the household head in order to identify and address any discrepancies in the capacity of male and female headed households to increase income. Where it does not make sense or is not yet known, a ‘sex-unknown’ category should be created – especially for reporting on ADRs. |
| 2 Percentage of women with access to training and skills development. | Propose sex-disaggregation of attendance at training and skills development activities instead. i.e. ‘Percentage of women who attend training and skills development’.The narrative on p. 28 of the PMIE implies that this is what it intends. |
| 3 Number and type of new and appropriate techniques and technologies adopted by women for improved crop production. | Propose sex-disaggregation of indicator of ‘Number of poor women and men who adopt innovative agricultural and fisheries practices.’  Although the M&E team is taking steps to properly verify the gender of the beneficiary to whom income is accrued within each household, this will not likely be completed at scale until the final years of the program. Where it makes sense, household-level data should be disaggregated by the sex of the household head in order to identify and address any discrepancies in the capacity of male and female headed households to adopt technologies. Where it does not make sense or is not yet known, a ‘sex-unknown’ category should be created – especially for reporting on ADRs. |
| 4 Change in number / percentage of women who can make independent decisions regarding the choice of new agricultural activities, purchase, sale, transfer or use of agricultural assets.  Suggested replacement: Numbers or types of interventions that purposefully seek to advance gender equality, empower women or address barriers to disability access | As this indicator stands, ‘independent decisions’ would need to be defined, as well as the ultimate objective/target. For example, clarification would be needed as to whether CAVAC seeks to change the nature of household decision making. Would it be to shift from ‘mainly men’ to ‘shared’, ‘mainly women’,or to enhance women’s role in decision making? This is currently unclear. It is also unclear as to which interventions this would be measured for. Is it for Component 1 when information is provided on improved practices? Why would we then look to measure change in decision making in relation to agricultural assets if this is unrelated to CAVAC’s intervention?  If there is a deliberate intent to enhance women’s role in decision making, propose indicator 4 be revised to: ‘Numbers or types of interventions that purposefully seek to advance gender equality, empower women or address barriers to disability access’. The following indicators would they relate to those interventions design for these outcomes (NB existing indicator 4 is now reflected in revised indicator 6 |
| 5 Number of hours spent by women on income generating activities and unpaid work.  Suggested revision: Number of hours saved by women and men (disaggregated) by introduction of the agricultural innovation | This indicator implies that a baseline and an endline is required. Given that that a baseline is not possible for many interventions that are mid-implementation, consider a change of wording to “Number of hours saved by women and men (disaggregated) by introduction of the agricultural innovation” |
| Revised indicator 6. Proportion of households where women report an enhanced role in decision making over agricultural practices. | Replacing indicator 4 |
| Revised indicator 7. Number of partnerships with men-led versus women-led businesses and / or jobs created for women and men | While women led businesses are being target by CAVAC, there is not yet an indicator relating to the success of this. Suggest a relatively light touch approach which counts as a starting point which could be bolstered eventually through more exploratory qualitative work. |
| Revised indicator 8 Measures put in place to address needs of people with disability. (previously indicator 6) |  |
|  | Although flagged in the original M&E Manual, the heading for the ADR indicator: ‘Number and percentage of management committees in which women are equally represented’ has been dropped from the six monthly reporting format. This should be reinstated, regardless of whether the number is zero, and steps taken to improve it. |
| **7. To what extent have CAVAC activities contributed to environmental sustainability and mitigation to climate change? (Climate Change mitigation)** | CAVAC does not appear to have specific outcome expectations on climate mitigation, however a do-no-harm approach to environmental risk is an underlying principle of the program logic which is worth measuring. Pending revision of the program logic to better reflect the program narrative (which appears to elevate the centrality of climate change mitigation/resilience, this KEQ may need to be revisited to ensure it remains appropriate. |
| The number and types of activities that contribute to environmental conservation | Depending on the revised program logic, the addition of an indicator for active climate mitigation rather than passive do-no-harm / conservation outcomes could be considered |
| **8. To what extent have CAVAC influenced government policies through policy dialogue? (Effectiveness)** | Pending revision of the program logic to better reflect the program narrative, and the imminent intention to develop in more detail CAVAC’s approach to policy influence and related M&E, once finalised, this KEQ should be revisited to ensure it captures the intent of the agreed policy influence strategy (including any regional aspirations) while still capturing modest, ad hoc contributions of the program to overall agricultural, water resource and trade-related policy. The use of the term ‘policy dialogue’ may not reflect the lower level diversity of CAVAC’s interactions with strategies, standards and regulations, and a broadening to include these considerations might be required (although ‘guidelines’ are included in the first indicator). This was also recommended in the September 2018 SAT Mission report. It also does not explicitly highlight CAVAC’s intention to seek influence in the areas of WEE and disability equity |
| (1) Number of government guidelines and policy documents developed through the support of the program; | Whilst the indicator is a numerical one, the descriptor in the PMIE Plan indicates it will report on the *effects* of the policies and management practices. This is a considerable undertaking, and the methods suggested i.e. linking indicator 2 below to demonstrate the effect of ‘policy influence’ appear difficult to verify. |
| (2) Number of farmers adopting new or improved technologies and management practices including rice varieties, improved seed, improved mechanisation, and efficient use of inputs; and | This indicator is repeated from KEQ 2 and 3. Its relationship to ‘influenced government policies’ may be prohibitively distant in the causal chain to reliably measure (i.e. proving adoption by farmers was the result of a changed policy).  Suggest this indicator be removed from this KEQ. |
| (3) Changes in knowledge, attitude and practices by government officials. | While this is potentially a good indicator of intermediary changes affecting the likelihood of policy change/reform, it is unclear in the PMIE Plan how this data will be collected. |
|  | Suggest add an additional gender-focused indicator:  Number of government staff trained or participating in events to advance gender equality, women’s empowerment or disability |

1. Such as DFAT’s Operational Guidance Note in Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment in Agriculture (Sept 2015), Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy (Feb 2016), Australia Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment through Aid, Trade and Economic Diplomacy (Jan 2017), and subsequent good practice notes [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DFAT, 2019. *Good Practice Note – Gender Strategy Development*. DFAT, Canberra. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Malapit, Hazel et al, 2014. *Measuring Progress Toward Empowerment. Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index: Baseline Report*. International Food Policy Research Institute. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. CAVAC, 2018. *Study of Challenges of Women in Business in Cambodia*. CAVAC, Phnom Penh [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The focus of the typology studies were narrow, looking at the role of women and men in decision making and labour division through the production cycle. A quantitative survey of women only was conducted. This could have been supplemented with more qualitative information through FGDs to determine why gender roles have formed. For example, why are there differences in gender roles among wet and dry season rice farmers? A broader study could have explored other dimensions that are known to be critical in the Cambodian farming context, such as gendered time use and workload, control and decision making over income. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Data provided by MoWRAM in March 2019. It is worth also noting that many FWUCs are inactive or underperforming while CAVAC II’s FWUCs are functioning. Likelihood of FWUC success was an important criteria for scheme selection. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. FWUCs are perceived as successful if ISF fees are collected and the pumps, gates and canals are functioning and maintained. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Program Monitoring and Impact Evaluation Manual (p4) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Lessons from DFAT’s Governance for Growth investment in the Pacific suggest that ‘thinking and work politically’ meansopportunisticallyseekingengagement in **reform-oriented** **dialogue** throughout dealings with *all* stakeholders and institutions as well as targeted ones. Responding to **locally identified priorities** and **leveraging** high quality international and locally engaged staff who have an entrée to reform-oriented decision makers is essential to this process. The program’s long term commitment to providing **well-grounded** examples of potential success also provides a means of **continual engagement** with stakeholders targeted by influencing strategies, and legitimises the program’s potential for influence. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Evaluation of DFAT Investment Level Monitoring Systems – Case Studies, ODE, February 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The need for this potential aggregation and reporting of existing data was also highlighted in the April 2018 SAT Mission Report and remains relevant nearly 12 months on. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The M&E Team sees those participating in CAVAC funded outreach activities as direct beneficiaries, while the MSD approach only counts them after they have been ‘reached’ by the private sector partners *without* program support in at least the third year of a program [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Despite Phase I claims that ‘copying in’ had occurred, the ODE evaluation was not able to verify this based on the M&E system data and reporting [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The seven drivers of women’s economic empowerment are drawn from the UN High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment report, [Leaving No One Behind – Taking Action for Transformational Change on Women’s Economic Empowerment](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/hlp%20wee/attachments/reports-toolkits/hlp-wee-report-2017-03-taking-action-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5226). These seven drivers are also referred to in DFAT’s publication, *Australia Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment through Aid, Trade and Economic Diplomacy*. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Mak, Sithirith (2017). *Water Governance in Cambodia: From Centralised Water Governance to Farmer Water User Community, Resources.* Vol 6:44 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Data provided by MOWRAM staff, March 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See for example, Dore, John (2014). *An agenda for deliberative water governance arenas in the Mekong.* Water Policy (2014) 16 (S2): 194-214. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. As was the case with one woman that was interviewed by the MTR team. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. CAVAC I Completion Evaluation, ODE. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A man PDWRAM staff member said that training had been held in the nearest town for three consecutive days, requiring women to stay for two nights. Some women FWUC committee members could not attend and resigned after. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Noting that, according to PDWRAM and MOWRAM staff, most women FWUC members who resign typically do so at their husband’s urging. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The seven drivers of women’s economic empowerment are drawn from the UN High Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment report, [Leaving No One Behind – Taking Action for Transformational Change on Women’s Economic Empowerment](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/hlp%20wee/attachments/reports-toolkits/hlp-wee-report-2017-03-taking-action-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5226). These drivers are referred to in DFAT’s publication, *Australia Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment through Aid, Trade and Economic Diplomacy*. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)