

# **Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC)**

## **Manual of Operations CAVAC Gender and Disability Strategy**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAVAC	Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain Program
FWUC	Farmer Water User Community
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MOWRAM	Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NPA	Kingdom of Cambodia National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
TOR	Terms of Reference

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Cross-cutting issues are at the heart of aid effectiveness and sustainable development. Two such cross-cutting issues are gender equality and disability inclusiveness. The Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC) team is committed to integrating gender across the Program, and to modeling good practice in project management in regards to disability.

The purpose of this Gender and Disability Strategy is to outline how gender and disability will be approached in the Program. The Strategy is a practical tool which provides a clear directive to staff, and allows simple application, monitoring and reporting of progress.

The Strategy complements the commitments of both AusAID and the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to gender and disability integration. It also aligns with internal Cardno policies, including a Gender Equality Policy and a Disability Inclusive Development Strategy. These articulate a clear commitment to mainstreaming these cross-cutting issues across all our operations.

This document is only the beginning of a process of learning, understanding and adjusting. The Strategy will be reviewed, at a minimum, on an annual basis to reflect lessons learnt through program activities.

## 2 BACKGROUND TO GENDER

### 2.1 Policy Context

AusAID has elevated gender equality to an overarching principle of the Australian aid program. The central message of the Australian Government's White Paper (April 2006) on the overseas aid program is that advancing gender equality is essential to reducing poverty and increasing the effectiveness of aid. Gender equality is also seen as a critical development goal in its own right. Building on this, the goal of AusAID's gender equality policy, *Gender equality in Australia's aid program – why and how* (March 2007), is to reduce poverty by advancing gender equality and empowering women.

This policy outlines four interrelated dimensions that need to be addressed in development investments in order to advance gender equality: access, decision making, women's rights, and gender capacity building.

The Cambodian Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) has implemented a *Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan 2006-2010*. The plan outlines a vision of equitable participation of men and women in decision-making at all levels, to promote gender equality and ensure equitable benefits for all.

Recognising the dominant role of women in agricultural production, the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has also established a *Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy in Agriculture* (2006). This policy is designed to ensure that gender equality is addressed in every strategy, program and plan concerning the delivery of agricultural services and knowledge.

## **2.2 Gender and Agriculture**

The division of labor, inequality and differences in power between men and women, and boys and girls are quite complex in Cambodia. Large differences exist between urban and rural societies and the relations change fast. However, several important gender themes emerge clearly throughout the rural areas where CAVAC will be active.

- Women make up the majority of CAVAC intended primary and secondary beneficiaries. More than 65% of women are farmers. Women are responsible for 80% of food production, and contribute nearly 75% of all agricultural labour in rural areas<sup>1</sup>.
- In terms of agricultural wages women are paid less than men. Even after taking differences in age and education into account, women's wages are only 75% of men's wages.<sup>2</sup>
- Women carry the main responsibility for housework and the care of children.<sup>3</sup>
- Women are usually responsible for managing food security in the family and ensuring that there is sufficient food on a daily basis.<sup>4</sup>
- As well as providing the greater share of agricultural labour, women spend approximately the same amount of time in wage-employment as men. If a woman is employed, her additional income is usually an essential part of the household's capacity to meet basic needs, rather than discretionary income.<sup>5</sup>
- While the majority of agricultural women have historically been engaged in subsistence production, many are now turning towards agribusiness in order to supplement household incomes.<sup>6</sup>
- Women tend to dominate small trading activities, with recent estimates that over 80% of Fruit & Vegetable traders, for example, are women. However, beyond small

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<sup>1</sup> MAFF, *Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy in Agriculture*, Phnom Penh, February 2006

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> AusAID, CAVAC Design Document, April 2009

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

trading, women have generally limited opportunities due to lack of access to land, credit, skills, information and modern technology.<sup>7</sup>

- Among all female farmers, half are illiterate or have less than an elementary level of education.<sup>8</sup>
- Female headed households, including widows, working in agriculture tend to have smaller landholdings and be more vulnerable to losing their land. Women also tend to be more isolated than men due to constraints on mobility and time, and exclusion from male dominated community networks.<sup>9</sup>
- Women do not have equal access to extension training, community activities, and other opportunities that enhance knowledge and skills or improve their management and leadership roles due to many hours of household work.<sup>10</sup>
- In particular, women have not been able to utilize offered opportunities for agricultural extension services due to childcare, time constraints, mobility, education and socio-cultural characteristics.<sup>11</sup>
- Extension techniques have not addressed the differing problems and needs between women and men.<sup>12</sup>
- Agricultural research and information is not well geared to address the immediate needs and activities of female farmers.<sup>13</sup>
- Women are not equally represented in positions of power, and few influence decisions concerning key issues. Women are rarely active in Farmer Water User Communities (FWUC), for example, at the commune or village level, or in provincial departments of MOWRAM and MAFF.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.3 Gender and Value Chains

CAVAC acknowledges the important role of women in both the production and marketing process, and in the business trading environment. Understanding gender inequalities is critical to understanding and addressing issues within value chains, and identifying the most critical areas for upgrading quality and growth. Unless gender analysis is an integral part of value chain analysis, strategies for upgrading the value chain may further disadvantage women.

<sup>7</sup> AusAID, CAVAC Design Document, April 2009

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> MAFF, Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy in Agriculture, Phnom Penh, February 2006

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Anecdotal evidence from interim CAVAC studies

## 3 BACKGROUND TO DISABILITY

### 3.1 Policy Context

Disability inclusive development has recently become an AusAID priority, with recognition that people with a disability are often among the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded members of developing countries. AusAID's disability-inclusive development strategy, *Development for All* (November 2008), sets out practical approaches to guide the Australian aid program in meeting the needs and priorities of people with a disability. The Strategy's primary outcome is to support people with a disability to improve the quality of their lives by promoting and improving access to the same opportunities for participation, contribution, decision-making, and social and economic well-being as others.

In 2009 the RGC adopted a *National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities* (NPA) and passed the *Law for the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. These aim to promote the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities, in line with the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. The NPA, in particular, is a key document for promoting greater collaboration between government ministries to address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in Cambodia.

### 3.2 Disability and Agriculture

The 2004 Cambodian Socio Economic Survey estimated that at least 4% of the population has a disability. According to this survey, disability rates are higher in rural areas (4.9% versus 4.0% urban). In addition, the NPA identifies that landmines and other explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, continue to be an ongoing threat in many rural communities in Cambodia.

Of key importance for those in rural areas is the ability of disabled people to access basic farming skills and/ or advanced techniques to improve animal raising, rice and other crop production. Discrimination can often play a role. As the NPA points out, even if a person with a disability possesses the appropriate skills, they are often not given a fair chance in terms of employment and business opportunities due to a lack of understanding from the community regarding the capacities of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities also have on average a lower level of formal education in Cambodia. This results in difficulties in finding employment, including in the agricultural sector, and hinders their ability to access up-to-date resources and information.

## 4 GENDER AND CAVAC

To be judged as an effective development assistance intervention it will be necessary for CAVAC to demonstrate that:

- i) women have benefited from CAVAC to an extent that reflects in an equitable manner the predominance of women stakeholders in the sector; and
- ii) the benefits from CAVAC do not exacerbate broader gender inequities associated with cultural roles and relationships that continue to exist in Cambodia.

The CAVAC team has also embraced a third target:

- iii) To ensure equal participation of women in decision making.

This target has arisen from observation and early analysis of the operating environment, including recognition of the fact that whilst women make most decisions at a farm level, they are noticeably absent at any formal or informal level of representation.

### 4.1 Strategies for Integrating Gender into CAVAC

CAVAC will adopt a strategic approach to gender that acknowledges the important role of women in both the production and marketing process, and their role in the business trading environment. The approach also reflects the fact that CAVAC will rarely engage with its final target group, the farmers, directly. Instead, CAVAC will mainly interact with key stakeholders such as government institutions, associations, traders, and input suppliers, to develop mutually beneficial partnerships and market connections.

Four strategies have been identified as critical for effective integration of a gender perspective into the Program. These strategies are:

- Maintaining Program Focus
- Sharing Responsibility
- Striving for Meaningful Representation
- Doing No Harm

**Maintaining Program Focus.** The Program aims to have a positive, albeit limited, impact on overall gender issues in the agriculture and rural development sector. CAVAC will focus on building the gender capacity within the Program team, and managers will have an obligation to ensure gender has been considered in the design and implementation of all activities, and that women are appropriately represented in the development of all activities.



**Sharing Responsibility.** The development and implementation of the Gender (and Disability) strategy is the responsibility of the entire Team and not just of one or two individuals. Furthermore, the CAVAC Team considers itself responsible for communicating the strategy to counterparts and stakeholders, and influencing them where possible. Efforts will be made to ensure that all Program staff have the understanding and capacity necessary to incorporate gender into program planning, implementation and monitoring.

**Striving for Meaningful Representation.** CAVAC will focus on maximising the effective, meaningful participation of women in all activities and processes. With women having a limited voice in government and other public sector bodies, such as commune councils, CAVAC will actively seek opportunities for women's voices to be heard. For example, genuine efforts will be made to improve the ratio of women and men in Program activities to more accurately reflect their representation. In situations where women are underrepresented in existing organizations, women's voices will be deliberately sought through different mechanisms. Opportunities to increase the number of women in leadership roles, such as the number of lead farmers working with the Program, will also be sought.

**Doing No Harm.** Much of what CAVAC wants to achieve is related to innovation and changes to the way things have normally been done. Changes normally influence the roles and responsibilities of men and women in a different way. Therefore, CAVAC has to carefully consider how such changes influence gender relations. For example, the introduction of innovations like mechanical harvesters or direct seeders can reduce the workload of women, but can also reduce their influence. CAVAC has a development obligation to do no harm, and it takes this obligation seriously. The Program therefore commits to carefully consider the effect activities will have on gender relations. In addition, program monitoring will look at both the positive and negative outcomes of program activities, and continually learn from these.

## **4.2 Applying the Strategies**

These strategies will be promoted through four broad measures:

- the integration of equity issues with respect to program capacity building activities (for example ensuring training times and content are tailored to encourage the maximum involvement of women);
- the strong representation of women's needs and interest in all program stakeholder groups (for example community interface and industry representative groups);
- supportive program management processes that model good practice (for example developing a working environment that promotes equality, rejects discrimination and fosters an appropriate work-life balance); and

- ongoing M&E that will be carried out on a gender-disaggregated basis.

Examples of the types of specific gender activities to be undertaken under the Program include:

- Value chain analysis and agribusiness proposals will include gender beneficiary analysis.
- Two pieces of early research will be undertaken considering:
  1. Potential discrepancies, and their causes, in salary levels between women and men in agricultural labour. Once this is determined options to improve any identified discrepancy will be investigated.
  2. The role of widows in farming, and potential interventions to increase incomes for this significant group. This research will include a focus on widow's groups and the potential for increasing income.
- Women's active participation in representative bodies will be promoted. For example, women's participation in FWUC processes will be supported, and the role of women in irrigation management will be strengthened. Where women are not represented in FWUCs, different avenues for representation will be sought through alternative methods to ensure that their voices are heard. Gender issues will also be a mandatory component of operation and maintenance plans.
- Mechanisms will be adopted that ensure women are fully involved in the identification and implementation of village-level activities, including knowledge initiatives and any extension activities. CAVAC will also look for opportunities to test a Whole Family Training model which has been used effectively in South Asia. Extension materials will be specifically designed to target women as well as men. In addition, consideration will be given to promote extension providers that involve females as well as males.

## **5 DISABILITY AND CAVAC**

### **5.1 General Strategies for Integrating Disability into CAVAC**

The CAVAC Team recognises that integrating disability into programs is new for AusAID, the RGC, and other program partners. In addition, the nature and mandate of CAVAC means that it can only have a limited influence in this area. The primary target group for the Program comprises smallholders who have access to adequate land and other resources to meet their subsistence needs and produce a marketable surplus. This group is not the poorest of the poor, and consequently people with a disability are not a key program focus.

Efforts to mainstream disability will therefore focus primarily on the overarching principle underpinning AusAID's work in this area – to respect and value the contribution and perspectives of people with a disability. This will include providing training for the Program team to raise awareness; and modeling good practices in project management, including non-discriminatory employment practices.

### **5.2 Applying the Strategies**

Specific actions to mainstream disability in the Program will include:

- developing and implementing a training module for staff to build awareness on the rights and capacities of persons with disabilities;
- promoting non-discrimination through all employment and other program activities as much as possible; and
- removing barriers to the involvement of persons with disabilities where possible, and factoring these into activity budgets (for example making the Program office disability-friendly, using an appropriate font size on all published materials, and ensuring the Program website is user-friendly).

Additionally, a piece of research will be undertaken to consider the constraints faced by people with a disability in agriculture, and the potential for further appropriate interventions to be developed in line with the overall Program.

## **6 GENDER AND DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

### **6.1 Action Plan**

#### *Year 2010*

- Hold a Gender and Disability workshop with senior managers, and training for all staff.
- Develop appropriate Terms of Reference (TOR) and appoint a Gender and Disability focal point(s).
- Include Gender Equality and Disability in reporting structures.
- Undertake research: into widows in farming, salary discrepancies in agriculture labour, and constraints faced by people with a disability in agriculture.
- Ensure recruitment processes, job descriptions, TORs, and career development reviews consider gender and disability issues.
- Ensure the Procurement Manual includes the promotion of key requirements in all contracts to support equity in employment in terms of gender and disability.

#### *Year 2011*

- Gender and Disability focal point(s) provide ongoing support for the application of the strategy.
- Undertake a workshop considering new ways to incorporate gender and disability into program interventions and areas in need of greater support.
- Identify major gender and disability issues relevant to CAVAC, and incorporate these into the second year work plan.

### **6.2 Organisational Issues**

The creation of a gender equality and disability inclusive culture will be highly dependent on the messages coming from the senior management. The first step is to ensure that managers understand the importance of these issues, and how they will be addressed.

In the second half of 2010, Gender and Disability awareness training will be conducted for all staff. The training will address gender equality principles, disability inclusive development, CAVAC's Gender and Disability Strategy, as well as practical training of how to realise gender and disability inclusiveness.

CAVAC will select a Gender and Disability focal point(s) whose main task will be to ensure implementation of the strategy. The focal point(s) will be on hand to provide technical

advice, but will not take away responsibility for implementation of this strategy, which rests on all staff.

A TOR will be drafted for this position early in the Program, based on the position of the focal point. If needed, the focal point can receive additional training on gender and disability.

### **6.3 Monitoring and Learning**

The collection of gender disaggregated data will be built into the Program monitoring system. This includes gender disaggregation of outcomes, looking at both positive and negative outcomes for women and men. In addition, gender sensitive collection methodologies will be incorporated into the monitoring system, to ensure both women's and men's voices are being heard.

Staff and partners will receive training to ensure all relevant data is disaggregated appropriately. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager and the national M&E specialist will be the key focal points for the larger team and counterparts to access on-going advice and support in this area.

Internal reflections on gender and disability will be important in progressing integration, and regular reflection will provide the opportunity to build on lessons learned identified through program monitoring. Information collected through the monitoring system will be used in ongoing planning activities to: identify good practice and any gaps or issues; review priorities, strategies and actions; and then update Annual Plans and this strategy accordingly.

### **6.4 Reporting**

Reporting on gender equality and disability will be in line with general reporting of CAVAC.

In the first two years the emphasis will be on how CAVAC handles the integration of gender equality and disability inclusiveness in its daily work, how it has been integrated in the organization, and how it has influenced activities.

The annual AusAID Quality at Implementation (QAI) Reporting will also be an important reporting opportunity for facilitated self-assessment of gender equality results and actions. The QAI report also includes a discussion on other cross-cutting issues, including disability, and this section should provide specific details of relevant outputs, outcomes or activities undertaken.