



Strategic Plan 2024-2030

METRI -

**Multi-stakeholder Engagement for
Transformative, Resilient, and
Inclusive Society**



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Abbreviation

ACs	Agricultural Cooperatives
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibilities
CRC	Child Right Coalition Cambodia
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CPDD	Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CACA	Cambodia Agricultural Cooperative Alliance
CFi	Community Fisheries
CPA	Community Protected Area
CF	Community Forestry
CNMC	Cambodia National Mekong Committee
CSDGs	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
CNA	Capacity Need Assessment
DPs	Development Partners
DACP	Department of Agriculture Cooperative Promotion
EBA	Everything But Arm
ED	Executive Director
EDI	Enterprise Development Institute
ESG	Environment, Social and Governance
HACC	Health Action Coordinating Committee
HDI	Human Development Index
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
GDA	General Directorate of Agriculture
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GCF	Green Climate Fund
MC	Management Committee
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOF	NGO Forum on Cambodia
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NRM	Natural Resources Management
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
REDD+	Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

Message from Chair, and Executive Director

We are pleased to introduce the new and the strategic plan that covers 7 years from 2024 – 2030 for the NGO Forum on Cambodia. The strategic plan is the result of rigorous consultation over six months with different stakeholders including key representatives from government, development partners, members and partners of the NGO Forum, provincial authorities, CSOs, private sector, management, staff, consultants, and expert advisors to the NGOF. We thank them for making this important document possible.

This strategic plan builds on the extensive experience, expertise, and strengths of the NGOF. The plan responds to relevant recommendations of the final evaluation of the last strategic plan 2018-2023. This plan has been approved by the Management Committee and the Annual General Meeting on 15 December 2023.

Updated vision, values, mission, and working approaches underpin this strategy and respond to identified needs of NGOF's members, partners, and communities as well as the development trends impacting Cambodia and Cambodians. The strategic plan is aligned well with policy agendas at a global, regional and national level including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, ASEAN priorities, and especially Cambodian development policies such as the newly the adapted Pentagonal Strategies Phase I (2024-2028), the Environment and Natural Resource Management Code, Climate Change Strategic Plan, National Program Phase 2 for Sub-National Democratic Development (2021-2030) and other sectoral laws and policies/strategic plans.

We look forward to constructive and transformative engagement with government, development partners, private sector, and civil society to support this plan for fairer, greener, resilient, and sustainable development which benefits all Cambodians especially women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, the poor and most marginalized people in Cambodia and protects the natural environment.

We look forward to your cooperation and support.

Date: 20/February/2024



Mr Tourt Chamroen

Chairperson of Management Committee

Date: 20/February/2024



Mr. Soeung Saroeun

Executive Director

I. Executive Summary

This 2024-2030 strategic plan or Vision 2030 builds on this NGO's expertise, responds to the findings and recommendations of program evaluation, the needs of our members, partners, and communities, and contributes to achieving the Cambodian government priorities at a national, regional and global level to progress agendas such as the UN 2015 sustainable development agenda (2016-2030), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Cambodian 2030 Vision, Pentagonal Strategies phase I (2024-2028), National Program Phase II for Sub-national Democratic Development (NP 2) for 2021-2030, and other sectoral policies, and responses to development trends. This strategic plan has also been developed in response to the needs of the NGO's members, members of civil society organizations at large to help ensure NGO's can contribute to policy and practices that are in the national interest and benefit all Cambodians, particularly those who are marginalized and face a precarious future.

This strategic plan - named **Multi-stakeholders Engagement for Transformative Resilient and Inclusive Society (METRI)**- has been developed through a **comprehensive** and user focused six-month planning process. The METRI plan has been endorsed by NGO's members.

Our Vision is 'A peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable society and planet'.

Our mission is to be 'a professional membership-based organization influencing and supporting policies, laws development and practices that champion and foster people harmonization, inclusive prosperity, and a sustainable planet for the benefit of all diverse Cambodians.

Our organizational goal is citizens and CSOs are well informed, and capable in influencing legal and policy development and practices to fairer, greener, inclusive, and sustainable development in Cambodia.

Our core values are Trust, Empowerment, Accountability Management for Results, and Sustainability (TEAMS). These are supported by our institutional governance policies and practice, our program delivery, and operations, and through the commitment to integrity and best practice by NGO's staff and Board. Our values are applied across our places of work. We seek to ensure alignment with the NGO's values among our members and partners.

Our strategic goal aims to champion genuine multi-stakeholder engagement for transformative society with human rights values, inclusive and green growth, a resilient and sustainable planet which benefits all, especially youth, women, indigenous, and marginalized people in Cambodia.

Our strategic objectives:

1. Enhancing people and resources rights, inclusive growth, and sustainable planet through supporting and influencing the climate smart and diverse policies and laws development and practices.
2. Fostering ecosystems for transformative, resilient, and prosperous communities through capacity development, mobilizing support for implementation and

monitoring of the enacted pro-poor policies and laws, and community led initiatives.

3. Strengthening a vibrant, resilient, and resourceful organization of the NGO Forum and its members through capacity development, and joint impactful initiatives.

Our strategic priorities are:

- 1) **Inclusive and Green Growth for all:** our prime subsets of this priority are cross cutting development issues, transparent and accountable public financial management (PFM), fair and green finance, food sovereignty, agri-business, and free trade.
- 2) **Climate Change Resilience and Natural Resource Governance:** climate change mitigation and adaptation, climate finance, biodiversity protection and restoration, land governance, water governance, forest governance, fishery, and aquaculture management. Just energy transition and mining will also be explored during the strategic plan implementation process.
- 3) **Vibrant, Resilient, Innovative and Impactful Civil Society:** Our prime focuses under this priority include a) strengthening internal governance, and sustainability of the NGOF and its members, b) enhancing civic space and enabling environment for the NGOF members and partners to engage with government and other stakeholders on the development issues, and c) promoting membership of the NGOF.

Our strategic roles:

- 1) **Alliance Building and Support:** promoting membership, coalition building and networking, inclusive partnership, joined consortium for resource mobilization, and support initiatives of the members and communities.
- 2) **Advancing Capacity Development:** capacity development, exposure visits, community of practices, and modeling of the target communities.
- 3) **Advocacy and Influence:** awareness raising, campaigns, evidence-based research studies, development of position papers, debates and dialogues, monitoring and documentation on development policies and laws.

NGOF will apply the following strategic approaches when developing program areas and activities as they are crosscutting methods or ways that guide all staff members and the members of NGOF. They include: 1) artistic approach, 2) multi-stakeholder engagement, 3) governance, gender, environment, and social inclusion (GGESI), 4) right-based approach, 5) nature-based approach, and 6) data science based and artificial intelligence.

NGOF will put its efforts to strengthen its governance, and sustainability and improve its organizational governance. NGOF is governed and oversighted by the members and management committee (MC)/Board of Directors (elected by the members). NGOF will have support from members and partners, especially those who are members of respective CSOs working groups/networks. NGO will seek volunteer advisors who have a long and rich experiences both institutional development, program quality, and compliance. Compliance with local government laws and regulations as well as donor requirements are always our priorities. Human resources development is a key of NGOF – it is not about just internal team of the NGOF but also human resources of the members. Sound financial management- NGOF will improve its financial policies and systems to meet the national laws and international

financial reporting and auditing standard. NGOF will have a team of communication and fundraising which play a critical role in mobilizing resources for the organizations and for the members. To measure the success, NGOF will review and develop a strong monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and innovation (MEALI) system which can be presented both at outputs, outcomes, and impact levels. MEALI system will be one of the role models which can be shared with members and partners of the NGOF as the learning/reference materials. NGOF will receive regular financial audits, mid-term and end-line evaluations, and more importantly regular meetings with its members and partners/donors for ongoing reflections and improvements.

II. NGO Forum on Cambodia at a Glance

The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) is a membership organization for local and international NGOs which exist for information sharing, debate and advocacy on priority issues affecting Cambodia's development.

Since our establishment in the 1980's the NGOF has demonstrated its ability to respond to the issues of greatest importance to our members, partners and most importantly that will support responsible and sustainable development in Cambodia that benefits all Cambodians.

Our work has included:

- Land mine clearance and embargoes.
- Establishing a permanent tribunal for crimes against humanity
- Land and Livelihoods
- Development justice policies
- Environmental protection
- Natural Resource Governance
- Agriculture
- Climate change
- Social economic development
- Strengthening engagement with provincial NGOs, CBO's and grassroots organizations and actions
- Facilitating networks to address issues such as gender, trade and economic development, environmental awareness, pesticides reduction, Mekong basin community rights, resettlement, and forest livelihoods.

NGO Forum on Cambodia is a member of number of Technical Working Groups, represents and facilitates CSOs to provide inputs and engage with the government and development partners at policies level. Those working groups are: Public Financial Management Reform Working Group (MEF), Food Security and Nutrition TWG (under CARD in the Council of Minister), Climate Change TWG (MoE), Partnership and Harmonization (P&H)- CDC, Agriculture and Water TWG (MAFF), Fishery TWG (MAFF), member of Planning and Poverty Reduction under Ministry of Planning (MoP) focusing on National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) - JMI, CSDG, and other related national policies and a few others. While NGOF is the secretariat for many CSO Working Groups such as Budget Working Group (BWG), Network of Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture and Water (NECAW), Network of National Resources and Land Governance (NRLG), and many others. Through these platforms, voices and concerns of the civil society organizations and their communities were heard and taken into key policies/laws formulation and practices.

III. Strategic Planning Processes

After drastic changes in the socio-economic, environmental and political situation during the course of the current strategic plan (2018-2023), including Global Climate Changes, Global pandemic, Ukraine-Russian war, lack of sustainable governance, corruptions, shrinking democratic space for citizens, the closure of several media outlets, threats to the public and NGOs, and not granted permission of the opposition party to challenge the election 2023, it was found that while portions of the program were considered successful, parts of the program design are no longer relevant and should be modified for the new strategic plan (2024-2030). To do this, a few processes were undertaken.

As an initial and important process, the strategic plan evaluation was commissioned and carried out in August 2023 to evaluate progresses made and challenges faced during the implementation period. In addition to understanding the contextual changes which bring out opportunities and threats, for discussions feed into strategic planning process. Internal factors affecting NGOOF operations were also analyzed. This exercise was made possible through a systematic process of data collection with stakeholders including NGOOF members, staff, management committee members, NGO partners, development partners, Government, and private sector stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

The second step in the process was the organization on 1 September 2023 of the strategic workshop with NGOOF staff and their management committee members. This gave opportunities for all staff to reflect on the findings of the evaluation and to develop the strategic plan for themselves. Their active participation in the process enabled the consultant team to develop the first draft of the strategic plan for sharing with the NGOOF management and MC members for further input before the strategic plan being finalized. A meeting with members and partners of the NGOOF was conducted and consulted about the key priorities, and strategic activities need to be done within the next strategic plan period. A meeting with current donors/partners of the NGOOF was conducted to present the first draft of the strategic plan and generate inputs from them.

To develop the second draft, field visits combined with several meetings with stakeholders in Kampongthom, Preahvihea, Oddor Meanchey, and Siem Reap have been organized. These consultations enabled NGO Forum to gather inputs from provincial authorities, and provincial NGO network representatives, as well as community representatives. The authorities and CSOs in these provinces expressed their full support and commitment to implement this strategic plan particularly, governor from Oddar Meanchey approached the NGOOF for help in identifying Sangkh Rok Voan as the pilot area for implementing the NGOOF's strategic first.

As result, the third draft has been developed and presented with the NGOOF members, development partners and key ministerial departments for further input.

The plan was finally reviewed and approved in principle by the NGOOF Management Committee (MC) by 14 November 2023 at its MC meeting, and final version was present and endorsed by the members during the Annual Membership Meeting which

was conducted on 15 December 2023. With the newly elected MC has been on board, the plan has been fined turning to make it more consistent with the current NGOF's bylaws, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timewise. Finally, it was finalized and signed off by the MC during the extra-MC meeting on 20 February 2024.

IV. Summary of Contexts Analysis

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the Royal Government of Cambodia has localized, encapsulates a global commitment to end poverty and promote social and economic development while ensuring healthy ecosystems and addressing climate change, goal 13 of the SDGs calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The Paris Agreement¹ was adopted by all 196 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at COP21 in Paris on 12 December 2015. In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and given the grave risks, to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius.

1. People challenges:

In the Pentagonal Strategies phase I (2023-2028) noted that the Royal Government of Cambodia has made progress on social and human capital over the past decades. While there is a need to be done more on poverty reduction, social protection, social trust and cohesion, human rights and dignity, public health, food safety and food security.

In the UNDP's most recent survey in 2021 on Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measuring three main dimensions of poverty: 1) health - nutrition and child mortality; 2) Education - years of school and school attendance; and 3) standard of living - cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing and assets, it is indicated that 16.6 percent of the population in Cambodia (2,761 thousand people in 2021) is multidimensionally poor while an additional 20.5 percent is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (3,404 thousand people in 2021)².

Between 1990 and 2021³, Cambodia's HDI value changed from 0.378 to 0.593, and Cambodia's life expectancy at birth changed by 14.1 years, mean years of schooling changed by 2.4 years and expected years of schooling changed by 4.4 years. Cambodia's GNI per capita changed by about 304.8 percent.

Trust and collaboration amongst individual citizens, between CSO networks/membership-based organizations and citizens and the public are still room for further improvement. While the way CSOs operate is a more project based oriented and shallow approach, and this urgently needed to be more converged, coordinated, and consolidated.

¹ [GOAL 13: Climate Action | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

² [KHM.pdf \(undp.org\)](#)

³ [Specific country data | Human Development Reports \(undp.org\)](#)

2. Prosperity Challenges:

Cambodian economy has stayed at 7% growth annually nearly over the past two decades, and reduced poverty rate from around 50% in 2001 to less than 20% in 2022. However, Cambodia remained number of bottlenecks need to be addressed. They are included commodity cost, low income, lack of job opportunity, migration, lack of market information, low quality of local products, high imports from neighboring country's products, high expenditure of health treatment, and less support on business investment/local products.

Shortage of employment opportunities and substantial differentials with overseas wages are the main factors fostering migration in Cambodia⁴. Cambodia's porous borders, poverty and geographic location render the country a major point of origin, destination, and transit for irregular migrants.

An increasing number of Cambodian irregular migrants are apprehended in neighboring countries⁵. Despite being an agrarian economy, Cambodia imported vegetables approximately 70 percent of the total domestic consumption because the commercialized vegetable farming in Cambodia is inadequate. (USAID 2015)⁶.

According to FAO statement in 2020, Cambodia required a million ton of vegetables annually, and it has been recorded that 0.9 million ton of which was imported from neighboring countries. There is a lack of structured market and Cambodian farmers also face technical production issues such as insufficient irrigation systems, insufficient and expensive of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, and pesticide —. They grow vegetables and sell them — sometimes to get profit and sometimes they get losses⁷. While there are about 300 companies that received economic land concession for agriculture investment.

3. Natural Resources and Planet Challenges:

Cambodia has been considered as one of the most natural resources rich country ASEAN, covered by forest, many natural rivers: Mekong and Tonle Sap and their tributaries, fertilized soils, mining, aquaculture, biodiversity, and many others. However, many of these resources are under threat/endangerment.

Number of issues such as climate change, plastic issue, greenhouse gas (GHGs), land degradation, depletion of biodiversity, degradation of inland aquatic resources, coastal and marine resources management, and waste management have been found to be the big concerns. (UNEP, 2009)⁸. Cambodia is projected to experience

⁴ [Cambodia - Migrants & Refugees Section \(migrants-refugees.va\)](#)

⁵ [Cambodia | International Organization for Migration \(iom.int\)](#)

⁶ [Cambodia | International Organization for Migration \(iom.int\)](#)

⁷ [Cambodia Demands a Million Ton of Vegetables \(freshnewsasia.com\)](#)

⁸ [Cambodia Environnemental Outlook | UNEP - UN Environnement Programme](#)

warming of 3.1°C by the 2090s, against the baseline conditions over 1986–2005 under the highest emissions pathway⁹. CO2 emissions from energy consumption are projected to increase by 6.8% per year, from 3.0 Mt-C in 2018 to 25.0 Mt-C in 2050 under BAU¹⁰.

4. Challenges of Civil Society Organizations in Cambodia

In accordance with the Ministry of Interior, as of 2022 there were around 6,500 local and foreign Associations and NGOs registered with Mol and signed MoU with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFA/IC). While more than ten thousand communities/grassroots-based organizations across the country.

They have been playing critical roles ranging from humanitarian assistance, capacity development, advocacy on human rights and democracy, policies and legal reforms, economic development, natural resource conservation and protection, health and education, and many other sectors for the benefits of the poor, marginalized groups, and Cambodians as a whole.

However, they have been heavily depending on external resources, especially funding, while the funding has been dried out gradually. Many donors have shifted their funding to other countries and to other sectors – private sector or transform funding to impact investment.

The institutional capacity of civil society organizations needs to be further strengthened to effectively play their roles both influencing policies/laws formulation and implementation and supporting communities to address their challenges.

Civic space and enabling environment for NGOF, its networks, and civil society are major concerns, and these need to be addressed to ensure that NGOF and CSOs can operate safely, freely, inclusively, and successfully.

V. Vision, Mission, Goal and Values

Vision:

We all live in a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable society and planet.

Mission:

A professional membership-based organization influencing and supporting policies, laws development and practices that champion and foster people harmonization, inclusive prosperity, and a sustainable planet for the benefit of all diverse Cambodians.

Organizational Goal:

Diverse citizens and CSOs are well informed and capable in influencing legal and policy development and practices to enjoy fairer, greener, inclusive, and sustainable development in Cambodia.

⁹ [Climate Risk Country Profile: Cambodia \(adb.org\)](https://www.adb.org/publications/climate-risk-country-profile-cambodia)

¹⁰ [Energy Outlook and Energy Saving Potential in East Asia 2020 \(eria.org\)](https://www.eria.org/publications/energy-outlook-and-energy-saving-potential-in-east-asia-2020)

Core Values:

The NGO Forum believes in TEAMS as our core values. TEAMS are imbedded in our institutional governance, program, and operations, and individuals of staff members of the NGO Forum. Our values will be applied across the places we work and constituencies we serve.

Trust: NGO Forum believes that nothing stands still, but it should be transformed in a deeper rooted with a sustainable and impactful manner. NGO Forum commits to build positive thinking and behavior of all key stakeholders involved as well as promote culture of trust within the society. NGO Forum commits to creating a shared voice, based on principles of mutual respect, trust, and joint commitment to learning and reflection.

Empowerment: NGO Forum commits to sharing its institutional, human, and intellectual capital with its network members. NGO Forum wishes to see resources of the country distribute fairly to all Cambodians so that each citizen can reach her fullest potential. All our work promotes and respects diversity and inclusion. NGO Forum believes that all Cambodians, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation, should be able to fully participate in the development of the country. NGO Forum exists to serve its members, network members and community representatives, to address their needs, and to collectivize their voices to join in national development dialogues and respect their diversity.

Accountability: NGO Forum commits to reciprocal information flows with its partners, and to the highest standards of multi-dimensional accountability to the people of Cambodia, government, members as well as our funding partners. NGO Forum strives to use our resources for the maximum benefit of our clients and to hold ourselves to being assessed by those we intended to serve. NGO Forum also holds our members and partners accountable to people, inclusive growth, and planet.

Management for results: NGO Forum applies “people oriented with result-based principle”. It is our belief that every individual staff and stakeholder has their necessity and values for positive. NGO Forum commits to transform its works and its members’ to be more result oriented with greater outcomes and bigger impacts toward a fairer, greener, and sustainable development in Cambodia. NGO Forum values money in both organizational level and its intervention. NGO Forum commits to turn from one-dollar investment equally 10 dollars in social goods, economic growth, and sustainable planet within its seven years strategic interventions.

Sustainability: NGO Forum recognizes that people, peace, prosperity, and planet are the key pillar for sustainability. NGO Forum strives for people harmonization, sustainable peace with just social, economic, and cultural institutions that promote sustainable, equitable development and serve the people of the country to enjoy their rights and potential.

VI. Strategic Goal and Objectives

6.1. Strategic Goal:

The goal of the strategic plan aims to champion genuine multi-stakeholder engagement for transformative society with human rights values, inclusive and green

growth, a resilient and sustainable planet which benefits all, especially youth, women, indigenous, diverse and marginalized people in Cambodia.

6.2. Strategic Objectives:

1. Enhancing social wellbeing, inclusive growth, and sustainable planet through supporting and influencing climate smart and diverse policies and laws development and practices.
2. Fostering ecosystems for transformative, resilient, and prosperous communities through capacity development, mobilizing support for implementation and monitoring of the enacted pro-poor policies and laws, and community led initiatives.
3. Strengthening a vibrant, resilient, and resourceful organization of the NGO Forum and its members through capacity development, and joint impactful initiatives.

VII. Strategic Priorities and Key Focuses

Based on the development trends /paradigm shift mentioned in the section above, there is a unanimous urgent call for all stakeholders to take strategic actions toward resilient, prosperous, and sustainable development. The NGOF will play critical roles in **alliance building and support** within our member and beyond, **capacity development** of civil society, and **advocacy** on following priority issues affecting Cambodia's development, but not limited too.

Priority 1: Inclusive and Green Growth

The NGOF will put more emphasis to support members and partners on the following priorities and focuses:

- 1.1. Cross Cutting Development Issues:** influencing and supporting voices of CSOs and community, as well as providing inputs and engaging with government and other stakeholders on key global, national, and sub-national development frameworks, but not limited to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDG), Pentagonal Strategies, National Strategic Development (NSDP), NP2 Development Program for NCDDs, Natural Resources and Environmental Code.
- 1.2. Transparent and Accountable Public Financial Management (PFM):** This will focus on National budget analysis, Open Budget Survey (OBS) and citizens budgeting and monitoring on the national budget law and to supervise the budget execution, and cash works for social protection.
- 1.3. Fair and Green Finance:** promoting ESG in banking sector and financial institutions, mining sector, as well as the green and fair finance, and tax justice.
- 1.4. Food Sovereignty:** strengthening agri-food systems such as the idea of establishment of the Agricultural Park, supporting the establishment of new modern agriculture community (AC) and strengthening capacity of existing ACs in Cambodia, hosting regular farmer forum as a space for dialogue and learning.

- 1.5. Agri-business:** promoting ESG principles and fair trade in rubber, banana, coffee, and other agri-business activities.
- 1.6. Free Trade:** influencing fair-trade policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring the implementation of the policies.

Priority 2: Climate Change and Natural Resource Governance

In responding to promote climate actions and governance for sustainable natural resources, the NGO Forum on Cambodia will continue to build on its outstanding expertise and double and deepening its contributions to follow key priorities and focuses:

- 2.1. Environment and Climate Change:** Ministry of Environment (MoE), development partners and other stakeholders have put a lot of effort in promoting wastes and climate pollution management. If emissions from waste disposal continue to increase, NGOF works to 1) influence both policies and practices related plastic wastes, agricultural waste, and air-pollution, 2) promote composited dumpsites, 3) influence mindset, behavior, and practices of general population on the implications of wastes and pollution, 4) support communities initiatives and actions to promote clean, green and sustainable communities, and 5) promote protection and restoration of biodiversity.
- 2.2. Land Governance:** The NGOF will work and support members and partners to 1) advocate for land and resources rights, a pro-poor land law and policy on land tenure, land value, land use, land cover, and land development, 2) have a proper EIA for any development project, 3) to have fair compensation and livelihood of the displacement from the development, 4) advocate on proper implementation of economic land concessions (ELCs), 5) participate in dialogue and addressing land dispute, and 6) work in partnership to use the lands withdrew from the ELC.
- 2.3. Water Governance:** NGOF will work and support members and partners to 1) promote evidence based researches and participatory action researches on impact of climate changes to Mekong River, and Tonle Sap, and livelihoods of people living along these rivers, 2) advocate for a fair transboundary water management of Mekong River and its tributaries such as Tonle Sap Lake through policies and law influences with MRC and National Commission on Tonle Sap and other stakeholders, 3) work and support the communities to have good knowledge on the impact of the changes of rivers flows and level of waters, and 4) support the communities to cope with more innovative, alternative, and sustainable solutions.
- 2.4. Forest Governance and REDD+/Climate Finance:** On Forest Governance and REDD+, NGOF will work to influence on 1) develop certain laws and guidelines for implementation of the Environment Code, 2) revise CPA guideline and CPA guideline implementation of the Ministry of Environment, 3) develop REDD+ benefit sharing mechanism, 4) develop CT documentation and RUM guidelines, 5) establishment and facilitation of Environment, Social, Governance, and Gender Inclusion (ESGGI), 6) mainstreaming gender and social inclusion to CPA guideline, REDD+ benefit sharing, and CT

documentation and RUM guidelines, and 7) provide public awareness and actions of forest conservations and reforestation across the country. On green/climate finance, NGOF will work toward 1) initiate community reforestation, 2) promote ESG guideline development for certain sector such as mining, banking and finance institution, and other industries, 3) promote low carbon agriculture practices, 4) mobilize resources for communities to promote ESG guideline within their communities, and 5) strengthen partnership with investors, and other stakeholders to support and invest on green/climate finance including offset GHG emissions with carbon credits and share benefits to communities.

2.5. Fishery and Aquaculture Management: NGOF will work and support members and partners to 1) strengthen capacity of the fishery communities, 2) promote dialogue between the fishery communities and authorities in addressing key challenges faced by the communities.

2.6. Mine and Energy Governance: NGOF will work and support members and partners to 1) promote ESG principles in mine sector, and 2) advocate for just energy transition in Cambodia.

Priority 3: Vibrant, Proactive, Resilient, and Sustainable Civil Society.

To build a vibrant and resilient civil society to genuinely engage and impact fully address key priorities: people harmonization, prosperity, and sustainable planet, the NGOF prioritize to put its efforts for both its internal governance and sustainability strengthening, and membership and civil society effectiveness and sustainability. Key areas for the strategic interventions are:

3.1. Civic Space and Enabling Environment: The NGOF will support members and partners to address three out of six key dimensions of civic space/enabling environment for civil society organizations defined by Civicus. The first dimension is the capacity of the CSOs to operate and advocate on issues related to their mandates, second is to financial sustainability (access to resources), and third is on relationship with governments and other partners. For the first dimension, NGOF works to 1) build capacity of CSO members of Technical Working Groups, 2) build capacity of members and partners of the NGOF at sub-national level to be able to understand and translate the adopted policies/laws into practices within the communities they work with, 3) build capacity of the members and partners on ESGs so that they can become a strong, accountable and transparent organizations, and 4) support and discuss on intergenerational leadership within CSOs. On the financial sustainability, the NGOF work to 1) advocate development partners to allocate more direct resources or establish civil society facility fund to the local CSOs and community base organization, 2) promote partnership between government, private sector, and civil society on certain join projects, 3) to advocate to government of Cambodia to allocate national budget for CSOs to implement their roles to support development and implementation of national and sub-national policies and strategic plans in a more effective and transparent manner, 4) build capacity

of members and partners on resource mobilization, especial local fund raising at commune level, and 5) support to CFs, CPAs and CFis through strengthening their capacity in resources governance aspects as well as addressing national policy ensuring equitable sharing benefits and that government need to be more transparent to its citizens. On relationship with governments and other partners, NGOF work to 1) advocate for development and implementation of Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategies (DCPS) 2024-2028, 2) strengthen line ministries via TWG and connection with focal points of each line ministries, 3) work in partnership with the NCDDS/NASLA to develop and implement a) partnership guidelines between local authorities and CSOs, and b) multi-stakeholders guidelines for all key actors for sustainable and democratic development at sub-national level, 4) work with development partners to have a regular sectoral issues based dialogue, and 5) work with private sector to bridge between CSOs, communities and private sector for impact projects and markets.

3.2. Membership Development: The NGOF is a membership-based organization and has been playing important roles to represent its members and the voices of the poor and vulnerable people in the policies formulation and implementations. NGOF will expand its membership across the country from 70 organizations in 2023 to 150 organizations in 2030. NGOF will engage and link members with different stakeholders such as the TWGs, line ministries, development partners, private sector and others who can be partner projects/actions. NGOF has built strong collaboration with some government institutions and private sectors such as on the water governance, Ministry of Economic and Finance (MEF), Ministry of Planning (MoP), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF), and National Assembly (NA) to work on the national budget transparency, national policies such as NSDP, CSDG, and social protection policy and private sectors on the cooperate responsibilities, so that NGOF can also bring other members to participate in these platforms. NGOF and civil society learned that although grants have declined, impact and green funds have been increasing which can be another avenue for resource mobilizations to support their works and target communities. NGOF will have a department of fund raising, so it will play a critical role to work with members and stakeholders to join proposal, co-financing, and partnership in development.

3.3. Governance and Sustainability of the NGO Forum: NGOF will put its efforts to strengthen its governance, and sustainability and improve its organizational governance. NGOF is governed and oversighted by the members and management committee (MC)/Board of Directors (elected by the members). NGOF will have support from members and partners, especially those who are members of respective CSOs working groups/networks. NGO will seek support from volunteer advisors who have a long and rich experiences both institutional development, program quality, and compliance. Compliance with local government laws and regulations as well as donor requirements are always our priorities. Human resources development is a key of NGOF – it is not about just internal team of the NGOF but also human resources of the members. Sound financial management- NGOF will improve its financial policies and systems to meet the national laws and international financial reporting and auditing standard. NGOF will have a team of communication and fundraising which play a critical role in mobilizing resources for the organizations and for the members.

To measure the success, NGOF will review and develop a strong monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and innovation (MEALI) system which can be presented both at outputs, outcomes, and impact levels. MEALI system will be one of the role models which can be shared with members and partners of the NGOF as the learning/reference materials. NGOF will receive regular financial audits, mid-term and end-line evaluations, and more importantly regular meetings with its members and partners/donors for ongoing reflections and improvements.

VIII. Working Approaches, Roles, and Interventions

NGOF has redefined its own roles, in terms of fitting in with the development trends and paradigm shift be relevant, effective, accountable, and sustainable.

7.1. Strategic Approaches:

NGOF will apply the following strategic approaches when developing program areas and activities as they are crosscutting methods or ways that guide all staff members and the members of NGOF.

7.1.1. Artistical Approach

The role of the arts is very critical in healing fragile society, addressing issues in a more peaceful and long-lasting manner, and modernizing and sustainable development of the country. Different forms of arts including performance arts, and visual arts will be used by NGOF and its members in program design, and implementation so that policies makers.

7.1.2. Multi-stakeholders Engagement

NGOF strongly believes that each of the stakeholders has its necessity, values, and resources, the more they are together the more they will be efficient and able produce bigger outcomes and great impacts of their works. NGOF will build synergies within its members and between the members and partners for collective voices and joint efforts in addressing issues faced by communities themselves.

NGOF will engage and work with Technical Working Groups (TWGs), Ministerial Departments, NCDDS, and Council of Ministers, National Assembly, development partners and UN agencies at national and regional levels on key inputs/findings/inputs from CSOs on their related policies/legal frameworks, link to regional and international bodies to exchange our best practices and joint efforts for influencing both national and global policies for the poor, and marginalized groups.

NGOF will work closely with Banks and Financial Institutions, Chambers of Commerce, SMEs, and other forms of private sector to improve their ESGs and build synergies for the benefits of people/customers.

NGOF will work in partnership with line Ministries such as the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF), especially Ministry of Interior to set of guidelines on local partnership, and to provide support to its members to strive for a multi-stakeholder engagement platform at sub-national level, especially at district/municipality/khan and commune/sangkat level for collectively address their issues by themselves.

7.1.3. Governance, Gender, Environment and Social Inclusion

NGOF will update its governance, gender, environment, and social inclusion (GGESI) policies and will incorporate it into all NGOF program priorities and operations. NGOF

will support its members to develop and/or update their GGESI. The GGESI principles will be applied in all activities.

7.1.4. Rights Based Approach

The NGOF implementing approach is using rights-based approaches where rights holders and duties barriers are equally treated and engaged. A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress. It seeks to have an enabling environment for genuinely discussion and dialogues at both technical and strategic levels with responsible authorities and policy makers.

7.1.5. Nature Based Approach

The Nature Based or Biodiversity Based Approach will be used within the NGOF organization, program, and operations. NGOF will also encourage and support its members to embrace this approach for their program design and implementation. This approach will help to maintain and improve governance and transparency in natural resources management, especially land use, fisheries, forestry, water, and energy.

7.1.6. Data Science Based and Artificial Intelligent Approach

As we are living in a digital era, NGOF will be based on scientific data/information for its works and use digital platforms and instruments including Apps to innovate and promote visibility, communication, capacity development, advocate, influence and to support daily operations of the NGOF and its members in a more effective, efficient, and sustainable manner. It will support the NGOF and its members to reach out to wider audiences and the public, as well as to engage and generate inputs from public on certain issues for relevant stakeholders. It will assist NGOF and its members to innovate and effectively respond to emerging challenges.

7.2. Strategic Roles:

NGOF has adopted its key following roles:

7.2.1. Advancing Capacity Development

NGOF will provide tailored capacity development supports to its members and partners on the priority issues, especially on laws and policies adopted by the Government. The capacity development will be conducted through training of trainers, and coaching and mentoring so that the trained organizations can then provide cascade training to their community representatives. NGOF will establish a community of practices (offline and virtual) to ensure that the members will have adequate capacity to effectively and impact fully engage in advocacy.

Some capacity needs of members such as institutional legal compliance, and organizational development will be referred to CCC and/or other expertise organizations, whereas the training course on mobilizing support, multi-stakeholder partnership and other related technical aspects, will be provided by NGOF itself in partnership with key others relevant partners such as National School for Local Administrative (NASLA) to develop the local actor partnership guideline and provide capacity development to the local administrative authorities, especially those are in the target locations.

NGOF will support NGOF's members, partners, and the communities (incl. ACs, CPA, CFi, CF, and IPLCs) to operationalize relevant laws and policies mentioned above into practices, and to support their local-led initiatives to transform their communities toward harmonious, prosperous, resilient, and sustainable one. One of the feasible ideas is to transform CFis/ACs/CFs/CPAs/IPLCs into the community of Agritourism, education, environment, and culture so that the target communities can build trust, solidarity, income, conserve their environment and culture in a more harmonized, prosperous, and sustainable manner.

NGOF will support the members and partners to build synergies and collective efforts/actions in responding key issues (including emerging) and priorities of their organizations and communities.

NGOF will coordinate/be as the secretariat of several CSO networks such as NRLG, RCC, NECAW, and METRI Youth Ambassadors to have better coordination and more common goals, effective use of resources and greater success.

7.2.2. Alliance Building and Support

NGOF will work with members and partners to transform their organization to become resilient, innovative, and transformative institutions. The NGOF will be the strategic connector between its members to policies makers (line ministries and parliaments), to development partners, to private sector, civil society organizations/platforms, and other emerging stakeholders.

The NGOF will serve as the regional and global gateway for the CSOs to engage and influence regional and global policies and development agenda that impact the lives of people, economy, and planet. At national level, NGOF will continue to stay a strong connection with ministerial departments via Technical Working Groups (TWGs), NCDDS, and national assembly, and development partners.

The NGOF will continue to work closely in partnership with its members at the provincial level, and others NGO coalitions and sectors such as CCC, NGO CRC, NEP, HACC, CPDD and others to have strong and unified voices and link the issues to the national and regional levels.

The NGOF will link to private sector who has applied Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) principles to its members to seize more opportunities for obtaining resources support and partnership in addressing common issues.

The NGOF will work closely with development partners both in the country and overseas to gouge more opportunities for its members and their communities to obtain both technical and financial resources support, and partnership in addressing common issues.

7.2.3. Advocacy and Influence

The NGOF will engage and influence global, regional, and national laws and policies effecting the poor, indigenous, marginalized, and vulnerable groups, and people.

The NGOF will be one of the regional and global gateways for CSOs in Cambodia which will engage and influence key policies such as Paris Agreement on Climate

Change and Conference of Parties (COP), Sustainable Development Goals, and Transboundary Free Trade Agreements.

Whereas at the national and sub-national level, the NGOF will facilitate evidence-based fact-finding reports and research finding reports through collaboration with research institutions and academia, coordinate consultations with CSO community, the members of the NGOF, and private sectors for the position papers on the policies/laws, dialogue and advocate based on the position papers, work with media, and community representatives to communicate/ disseminate key policies and voices of the citizens on the key policies, and monitor the integration of the inputs of CSOs into the laws/policies.

The NGOF will work with its member organizations and other stakeholders to provide awareness on policies, laws, and regulations. The NGOF will work with media and community representatives to communicate/disseminate on key policies and amplify the key concerns of the poor and vulnerable people.

The NGOF will conduct and/or work with research institutions to conduct scientific research to come up with good evidence to support its advocacy to the policies makers (line ministries and parliaments) and other relevant actors.

NGOF will use both offline, and online portal for public consultations/inputs on certain policies/legal frameworks to get more youth and public attention. NGOF will promote engaged and evidence-based advocacy and lobbying with the policy makers.

IX. Stakeholders and beneficiaries

NGOF will influence changes both at sub-national level/grassroots, national, regional, and global levels. NGOF will support and work with members, and CSO partners, as well as work in partnership with government, private sector, development partners, grassroots, regional and international platforms.

The prime beneficiaries are all members of the NGOF, NGO partners, CBOs/CPAs/CFs/ACs/MSME/ SME. While ultimate beneficiaries are the poor, people with disabilities, women and girls, indigenous people, diverse, marginalized, and other vulnerable people/groups.

X. Annex A: Context Analysis

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the Royal Government of Cambodia has localized, encapsulates a global commitment to end poverty and promote social and economic development while ensuring healthy ecosystems and addressing climate change, goal 13 of the SDGs calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The Paris Agreement¹¹ was adopted by all 196 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at COP21 in Paris on 12 December 2015. In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and given the grave risks, to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius. However, “The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived”, said The U.N. General Secretary. The United Nations is calling on people everywhere to work together to solve climate challenges and realize the commitments of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Everyone has a role in climate action.

Southeast Asia¹² is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change, and faces rising sea levels, heat waves, floods, and droughts, and increasingly intense¹³ and unpredictable weather events. ASEAN¹⁴ has made significant progress in improving incomes and economic opportunities, including for women, and reducing poverty since 2000. However, ASEAN still faces several challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as income inequality and climate change remain relatively high in several countries including Cambodia.

1. People challenges:

In the Pentagonal Strategies phase I (2023-2028) noted that the Royal Government of Cambodia has made progress on social and human capital over the past decades. While there is a need to be done more on poverty reduction, social protection, social trust and cohesion, human rights and dignity, public health, food safety and food security.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 45 percent of Cambodians live in moderate or severe food insecurity¹⁵. Cambodia has made significant progress in improving food security and nutrition, and reducing poverty and child and maternal mortality rates, but malnutrition in all its forms remains a national concern¹⁶. Food security and nutrition face challenges caused by shocks, a rapidly changing food environment and inefficiencies in the food system¹⁷. Consumer demand for safe food with low environmental impact is increasing everywhere offering new opportunities to organic producers.

¹¹ [GOAL 13: Climate Action | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

¹² [Climate Change | United Nations](#)

¹³ [Confronting the Climate Crisis in Southeast Asia | Regional Development Mission for Asia | Fact Sheet | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](#)

¹⁴ [ASEAN Progress Towards Sustainable Development Goals and The Role of the IMF](#)

¹⁵ [Agriculture and Food Security | Cambodia | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](#)

¹⁶ [New National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition: How to defeat malnutrition in Cambodia | FAO in Cambodia | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

¹⁷ [Cambodia | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)

WHO says, "our planet, our health", there are zoonoses found in Cambodia include rabies, Japanese encephalitis and malaria, and influenza strains such as avian flu. Such diseases may become more frequent as our climate changes, and therefore pose even more of a risk to our health.

In the UNDP's most recent survey in 2021 on Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measuring three main dimensions of poverty: 1) health - nutrition and child mortality; 2) Education - years of school and school attendance; and 3) standard of living - cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing and assets, it is indicated that 16.6 percent of the population in Cambodia (2,761 thousand people in 2021) is multidimensionally poor while an additional 20.5 percent is classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (3,404 thousand people in 2021)¹⁸.

Between 1990 and 2021¹⁹, Cambodia's HDI value changed from 0.378 to 0.593, and Cambodia's life expectancy at birth changed by 14.1 years, mean years of schooling changed by 2.4 years and expected years of schooling changed by 4.4 years. Cambodia's GNI per capita changed by about 304.8 percent.

UNDP noted that social cohesion in Cambodia has four dimensions of 11 sub-dimensions: 1. trust – religion, institution, community, and leadership; 2) belonging – identity and tolerance, 3) inclusion – economic, political, and social; and 4. security – human perception of social threat²⁰. The human rights situation in Cambodia is facing growing criticisms both within the country and from an increasingly alarmed international community. Politicians and journalists critical of the government face violence and intimidation and are barred from equal access to the broadcast media²¹. Cambodian rule of laws was ranked at 141st of 142 countries by the World Justice Project report 2023²². The poor rule of laws harm to fairer society, greener economy, and sustainable planet in Cambodia.

2. Prosperity Challenges:

Cambodian economy has stayed at 7% growth annually nearly over the past two decades, and reduced poverty rate from around 50% in 2001 to less than 20% in 2022. However, Cambodia remained number of bottlenecks need to be addressed. They are included commodity cost, low income, lack of job opportunity, migration, lack of market information, low quality of local products, high imports from neighboring country's products, high expenditure of health treatment, and less support on business investment/local products.

Cambodia Annual Household Income per Capita data is updated yearly, available from Dec 2009 to Dec 2021, with an averaged value of 983.774 USD²³. This means that the daily household income is about \$2.69 which is very low as compared to the neighboring countries. The value of merchandise imported in Cambodia reached a

¹⁸ [KHM.pdf\(undp.org\)](#)

¹⁹ [Specific country data | Human Development Reports \(undp.org\)](#)

²⁰ [What is social cohesion in Cambodia? | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

²¹ [Human rights in Cambodia - Wikipedia](#)

²² [WJP Rule of Law Index | Cambodia Insights \(worldjusticeproject.org\)](#)

²³ [Cambodia Household Income per Capita, 2009 – 2023 | CEIC Data](#)

total \$ 28 billion in 2021 while the value of merchandise exported from Cambodia is \$ 17.5 billion in 2021²⁴.

Shortage of employment opportunities and substantial differentials with overseas wages are the main factors fostering migration in Cambodia²⁵. Cambodia's porous borders, poverty and geographic location render the country a major point of origin, destination, and transit for irregular migrants.

An increasing number of Cambodian irregular migrants are apprehended in neighboring countries²⁶. Despite being an agrarian economy, Cambodia imported vegetables approximately 70 percent of the total domestic consumption because the commercialized vegetable farming in Cambodia is inadequate. (USAID 2015)²⁷.

According to FAO statement in 2020, Cambodia required a million ton of vegetables annually, and it has been recorded that 0.9 million ton of which was imported from neighboring countries. There is a lack of structured market and Cambodian farmers also face technical production issues such as insufficient irrigation systems, insufficient and expensive of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, and pesticide —. They grow vegetables and sell them — sometimes to get profit and sometimes they get losses²⁸. While there are about 300 companies that received economic land concession for agriculture investment.

More than 50% of the population is younger than 25 years old, and the population lacks education and productive skills, particularly in the impoverished countryside, which also lacks basic infrastructure²⁹. Cambodia has more labor forces than the jobs created every year, and despite the surplus of labor forces, the country still lacks quality human resources³⁰.

The Cambodian Investment law 2021 has provided more incentives to foreign direct investment while also promote responsible business or environment, social and governance. Cambodia has steady increased investment projects both large, medium, and small in the field agri-food, infrastructure, electronic, automotive, and many other sectors, just in December 2023, CDC³¹ has granted investment certificate to 15 investment projects with 247 million dollars. However, there are a lot of challenges and issues related to ESG that remained vital concern among the public and investors.

3. Planet Challenges:

²⁴ [Cambodia | Imports and Exports | World | ALL COMMODITIES | Value \(US\\$\) and Value Growth, YoY \(%\) | 2010 - 2021 \(trendeconomy.com\)](https://trendeconomy.com/cambodia-imports-and-exports-world-all-commodities-value-usd-value-growth-yoy-2010-2021)

²⁵ [Cambodia - Migrants & Refugees Section \(migrants-refugees.va\)](https://migrants-refugees.va.gov/cambodia)

²⁶ [Cambodia | International Organization for Migration \(iom.int\)](https://iom.int/cambodia)

²⁷ [Cambodia | International Organization for Migration \(iom.int\)](https://iom.int/cambodia)

²⁸ [Cambodia Demands a Million Ton of Vegetables \(freshnewsasia.com\)](https://freshnewsasia.com/cambodia-demands-a-million-ton-of-vegetables)

²⁹ [Is Cambodia a poor country? | - CountryReports](https://countryreports.org/cambodia)

³⁰ [\(English\) Cambodia Should Produce More Quality Human Resources, Rather Than Quantity | Open Development Cambodia \(ODC\)](https://open-development.org/cambodia)

³¹ [Recent News – The Council for the Development of Cambodia \(CDC\)](https://councilfordevelopmentofcambodia.org/)

Climate change, plastic issues, greenhouse gas (GHGs), land degradation, depletion of biodiversity, degradation of inland aquatic resources, coastal and marine resources management, and waste management have been found to be the big concerns. (UNEP, 2009)³². Cambodia is projected to experience warming of 3.1°C by the 2090s, against the baseline conditions over 1986–2005 under the highest emissions pathway³³. CO2 emissions from energy consumption are projected to increase by 6.8% per year, from 3.0 Mt-C in 2018 to 25.0 Mt-C in 2050 under BAU³⁴

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) highly committed to combating climate change and accelerating the transition to a climate-resilient, low-carbon sustainable mode of development. The RGC has supported global efforts against climate change by being a Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since 1996. Cambodia adopted and ratified the Paris Agreement by which the country submitted an ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which showcased of progress in climate policy, and put forward mitigation targets and adaptation actions consistent with the national circumstances³⁵.

Cambodia's vulnerability is characterized by frequent floods and irregular rainfall, coupled with an agrarian based economy, limited human and financial resources, insufficient physical infrastructure, and limited access to technologies³⁶. During the 20-year period from 1987 to 2007, a succession of droughts and floods resulted in significant loss of life and considerable economic loss³⁷. With efforts from the Royal Government, private sectors and civil society, the poverty headcount rate of 53.2% in 2004³⁸.has now been reduced to 16.6% in 2022³⁹. However, between 2011 and 2018, nearly one million households were reported to have suffered from extreme weather of flood and storms. The share of the total 2019 budget has slightly improved to 7%, at 2,181 billion riels. The report suggested that unless greater efforts are taken to address climate change, Cambodia's plans to become an “upper middle income” country and to lift people out of poverty would remain at great risk⁴⁰.

REDD+ provides a complementary avenue for forest protection by providing performance-based financial incentives for projects and jurisdictions to reduce forest loss against a defined baseline (Walker , 2010). The ongoing challenges in these areas can be nontransparent and inequitable shares of the benefits from selling CO₂ from the national level down to the local communities who managed the forestry resources. REDD+ has the potential to preserve natural forests by using carbon finance to transform the economic relationship between people, the governments, and forests on the ground by making the forest more valuable in its standing state. In order to achieve this transformation, REDD+ projects develop activities and incentive structures through benefit sharing and the development of alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities (e.g. intensified sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism) whilst enacting robust protection measures.

³² [Cambodia Environmental Outlook | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)

³³ [Climate Risk Country Profile: Cambodia \(adb.org\)](#)

³⁴ [Energy Outlook and Energy Saving Potential in East Asia 2020 \(eria.org\)](#)

³⁵ Cambodia updated Nationally Determined Contribution, 2020, p1

³⁶ [NDC_Executive Summary_2020.pdf \(moe.gov.kh\)](#)

³⁷ [Cambodia - Vulnerability | Climate Change Knowledge Portal \(worldbank.org\)](#)

³⁸ [Poverty has fallen, yet many Cambodians are still at risk of slipping back into poverty, new report finds \(worldbank.org\)](#)

³⁹ [Cambodia's poverty rate falls to 16.6 pct: UNDP - Khmer Times \(khmertimeskh.com\)](#)

⁴⁰ Cambodia's Citizens Climate Budget Report 2018-2019, p 2-6.

It is recognized that there are many institutions addressing these challenges and trends related to people, prosperity, and the planet. The Royal Government of Cambodia has just formed the new government, 7th mandate and has been in governance reform process, while development partners such as UN agencies, and bi-lateral donors have developed their country partnership strategic plan (CPS) and development frameworks for development in Cambodia. The private sector has mushroomed, especially MSME and SME across the sectors and country. In broader term, they have done and put a lot of efforts and resources, but in many reports informed that there is a lack of cohesion, a lack of synergy, and limited opportunities for citizens engagement in development process, especially in laws/policies/strategies formulation, implementation, and monitoring at both national and sub-national levels.

In this regard, the NGO Forum on Cambodia sees to play critical roles to connect and bring all actors together to build synergies, shared resources, and collective efforts to address these challenges in a more effective and impactful manner.

4. Challenges of Civil Society Organizations in Cambodia

In accordance with the Ministry of Interior, as of 2022 there were around 6,500 local and foreign Associations and NGOs registered with MoI and signed MoU with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFA/IC). While more than ten thousand communities/grassroots-based organizations across the country.

They have been playing critical roles ranging from humanitarian assistance, capacity development, advocacy on human rights and democracy, policies and legal reforms, economic development, natural resource conservation and protection, health and education, and many other sectors for the benefits of the poor, marginalized groups, and Cambodians as a whole.

However, they have been heavily depending on external resources, especially funding, while the funding has been dried out gradually. Many donors have shifted their funding to other countries and to other sectors – private sector or transform funding to impact investment.

The institutional capacity of civil society organizations needs to be further strengthened to effectively play their roles both influencing policies/laws formulation and implementation and supporting communities to address their challenges.

Civic space and enabling environment for NGOF staff, its networks, and civil society are still major concerns, and these need to be addressed to ensure that NGOF and CSOs can operate safely, freely, inclusively, and successfully.

Trust and collaboration amongst CSO networks/membership-based organizations are still room for further improvement. While the way CSOs operate is a more project based oriented and shallow approach, and this urgently needed to be more converged, coordinated, and consolidated.

The result of last strategic plan (2018-2023) evaluation confirmed that NGOF has been operating since mid of 1980s with a lot of achievements contributing to development of Cambodia. The roles of the NGOF are more critical to ensure that the vision of Cambodian government to become the high middle-income country and high-income country by 2030 and 2050 are realized and benefits for all with a fairer, greener and

sustainability. NGOF needs to invest more to support its members and civil society organizations to be more vibrant, proactive, resilient, and sustainable manner. The NGOF also needs to upgrade its organizational bylaws, membership guidelines and communication and partnership strategies, M&E system, organizational structure, capacity of the staff, financing and working approaches.

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