Advocacy and Policy Institute

Five-Year Strategic Plan 2014-2018
‘Strengthening Democratic Governance (SDG)’

Phnom Penh, July 2013
About API

Organisation, vision, mission, goal and values
The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) is a Cambodian non-profit and non-Government organisation. Established in July 2003 as part of PACT Cambodia, registered with the Ministry of Interior in July 2007, it became fully independent in 2008. API is a leading advocacy capacity building institution, working on promoting access to information, decentralisation and policy dialogue. The Institute has forged its reputation through the delivery of advocacy training courses and the production of advocacy publications in both Khmer and English to promote understanding of advocacy, access to information and the Government’s Decentralisation and De-concentration policy. API is becoming increasingly involved in direct advocacy and policy activities, sponsoring research and functioning as a think tank.

The vision
API’s vision is for a Cambodian nation that through poverty reduction and the protection of human rights creates a national culture of harmony with sustainable democratic, political, and economic stability.

The mission
The organisation’s mission is to serve the long term democratic and social development needs of Cambodia through the empowerment of people to interact with their Government to protect their rights and provide for their needs.

API is committed to working together with all national and international institutions who share its values to advocate for positive and peaceful social change. API seeks to encourage coordination among Governments, citizens and the private sector.

The goal
The organisation’s goal is to increase Cambodia’s democratic space by creating more effective advocates and responsive Government institutions.

The values
1. All Cambodians have the right to participate, mobilise and express themselves in matters that affect their daily lives.
2. All matters should be resolved peacefully and justly according to the principles of our shared humanity.
3. Building capacity, particularly at the community level, is the most sustainable way of building a brighter future for all Cambodians.
4. Engaging with all social sectors ensures that when solutions are reached, they are of greatest benefit to the community.
5. Being transparent, accountable, independent, and non-partisan helps build an organisation that has the respect and confidence of both the Cambodian people and its international supporters.

Ten year achievements of API
In the last ten years (July 2003- July 2013), API has established itself as one of Cambodia’s leading advocacy capacity building institutions as well as heading the campaign for a law on public access to public information and information disclosure. It has worked on building communication amongst Parliament, the Government and civil society. It has received widespread positive feedback from Cambodian and international organisations for its reliability, relevance and professionalism. The Institute has forged its reputation through the delivery of advocacy training courses and the production of a range of publications in both Khmer and English to promote understanding of advocacy, access to information and the Government’s Decentralisation and De-concentration policy. API is also becoming increasingly involved in direct advocacy and policy activities.
In a decade, API has successfully implemented a grassroots democracy project that encouraged community actions to protect livelihoods, promoted access to information, enhanced the democratic space to hold the Government more accountable and strengthened civil society’s ability to participate in local Government. API advocated for policies on access to information and social accountability. The recognition and importance of API’s effective activities have attracted funding support totalling over US$2,086,000 in that time. API, with the invaluable support of others and donors, contributes to increase Cambodia’s democratic space by creating more effective advocates and responsive Government institutions. The organisation works with partners and networks\(^1\) at sub-national and national levels to support API’s mission of serving the long term democratic and social development needs of Cambodia through the empowerment of people to interact with their Government to protect their rights and provide for their needs. API is committed to working together with all national and international institutions that share its values to advocate for positive and peaceful social change. API also seeks to encourage coordination among Governments, citizens and the private sector.

API was recognised and became a key partner of the sub-national Government and the Parliament in addressing the needs and concerns of Cambodian citizens, particularly marginalised and venerable groups. In many ways, API has played a critical role in achieving goals of democratisation, participation, good governance, poverty reduction, social accountability and development. *For further details, please refer to API’s Ten-Year Achievements.*

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\(^1\)To-date, API is leading three and working with eight issue-based civil society networks and building capacity in advocacy, access to information and facilitating policy dialogue.
Summary of five-year strategy, 2014-2018

Goal
The goal of API's five-year strategy is to contribute to poverty reduction and better protection and promotion of rights and voices, particularly for young people, women, and vulnerable persons and groups, by promoting a culture of public information disclosure, strengthening democratic participation and transparency and accountability within the Decentralisation and De-concentration framework in Cambodia, particularly in the targeted Commune and District Councils, and advocating for equitable and sustainable public policy.

Objectives
To achieve the goal, five strategic objectives will yield outcomes ensuring positive impact benefiting vulnerable and marginalised groups in which the sub-national and national Government institutions are more accountable and responsive. The outcomes are:

1. Increased information availability and disclosure on critical issues at sub-national.
2. Access to information and information disclosure legislation and policies debated and adopted.
3. Productive dialogue and effective participation in democratic decision making to enhance the voices of and protect the rights of Cambodian people (young people, women, men and people with disabilities) in the target areas.
4. Increased capacity development of local government and councils to improve functions, transparency, accountability, human rights, information disclosure, and collaboration with communities, local civil society and national Government.
5. Enhanced and effective participation and contribution of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and networks in democratic governance, human rights, environmental governance, decentralisation, transparency and accountability, information disclosure and development processes at the sub-national and national levels.

To achieve these objectives API through its organisational strengthen and support will ensure financial stability, strong management, results, accountability and transparency as overseen by an effective and active Director and Board of Directors.

Key indicators to monitor the extent the programme/project objective has been achieved.

1. Increased from 48.12% to 60% of the population, at least 55% women actively accessing (both demanding and receiving) public information from local authorities for their own and community use in 2016.
2. A draft law on access to information debated and passed by the Parliament by 2016 with inputs from civil society.
3. 90% of cases of social and environmental issues and needs (particularly issues and needs of women) brought by CSOs and communities to district and Commune councils and Government line offices that are responded to by 2016.
4. Increased from 46.21% to 55% of citizens confirmed local Government and councils provide faster and reliable administrative public services and respond to their needs, particularly for women and girls; and
5. More NGO input, comments/ suggestions are included in nine national Government plans and policies with the contributions of 12 CSO networks and groups dialogue with the Parliament and Government's institutions.
Target Groups

API works to promote voices and rights and address the needs and concerns of vulnerable and marginalised groups through the strategic partnerships with community based organisations, local and national government institutions, civil society organisations and the private sector. API builds capacity and supports institutions and organisations so they are able to tackle the issues, concerns, and needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the target areas.

At local and provincial levels, the target groups are local residents (men and women), community based organisations (young people, women, fishermen, farmers, people with disabilities and elderly people) and local government officials in selected districts and municipalities. At the national level, API’s work relates to the adoption of an access to information law and is directed at civil society organisations and issue based networks, government institutions and the Cambodian Parliament.

API’s target groups are made up of:

- **134 Community based organisations (CBOs):** As essential proponents of a community’s genuine needs, demands and concerns, CBOs are required to play an increasingly active role in encouraging local councils and appointed officials to be more accountable to their communities and to work towards improved public services and solving conflicts effectively in a just and fair manner.
  
  a. **167,301 young people (79,879 women)** are important to democratic participation and economic growth. Young people, however, lack the very basic civic awareness necessary for them to make justifiable demands from elected leaders and for participating in political decision making processes.
  
  b. **17,696 women household headed** need information about community services including healthcare, education for children, employment, and local council decisions on promoting the rights and status of women and children.
  
  c. **179,359 farmers (82,013 women)** engage in agriculture and are dependent on forest products. They require information about agricultural techniques, marketing and investment and natural resource management when it directly affects their livelihoods.
  
  d. **7,734 fishermen (2,264 women)** dependent on the water of Tonle Sap need information about development projects affecting fishery resources and the livelihoods of fishermen.
  
  e. **11,204 elderly people (4,817 women)** want information about social safety nets, the Government’s social welfare system and community investment plans to support them.
  
  f. **3,270 people with disabilities (1,041 women)** require information about welfare and health care benefits and how sub-national government policies can support them.

- **351 Commune Councillors (55 women):** Commune Councillors (CCs) in general are short of knowledge about democracy and political processes, which results in councillors being unable to respond to their constituents or to work with CBOs, CSOs and others organizations. Minimal support from district authorities and relevant line government agencies makes it difficult for CCs to answer community needs and successfully implement commune plans and projects.
• **229 District Councillors (26 women):** District Councils review and approve Commune Council plans and investments, influence line government offices and can support Commune Council responses to the concerns of community people. They lack of knowledge and skills.

• **809 Local authority officials (170 women):** They provide public services to the community but often want for understanding of community needs and concerns particularly those of vulnerable and marginalised groups. In some cases, officials abuse human rights.

• **56 Non-Government Organisations and 9 CSO networks:** NGOs would be more effective if not constrained by a need for space for fruitful and meaningful communication and collaboration with local authorities and a requirement for coordination amongst themselves. NGOs are essential to provide support and empowerment to communities. NGOs are recognised by both communities and the Government as important development partners.

• **Eight key National Government Ministries/institutions and 184 Members of Parliament (123 Law makers at National Assembly and 61 Senators):** The executive and legislative are responsible for policy and law development and implementation. They need knowledge and understanding.

• **Three private sectors and Trade Association and Labour Union Federations:** There are a number of private sector associations in Cambodia addressing issues similar to those dealt with by NGOs, for instance corruption. They need knowledge and coordination to work together such as CAMFEBA - Cambodian Federation of Employers & Business Associations, the National Working Group for Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Sector (Public Forum between Government and Private Sector).

• **The 5 media channels:** Three radio stations and two printed media; Voice of Civil Society (105 FM), Women Media Centre - WMC (102 FM) and Voice of Democracy-VOD (106.5FM), Phnom Post Newspaper, The Cambodia Daily Newspaper, collaborate with API run media and social media programmes and issues key articles on access to information. Media plays a vital role in supporting advocacy actions through communicating to mass audiences in support of an advocacy issue. Knowledge is needed to work better with civil society organisations.

The main **beneficiaries** of API actions are 179,359 members of disadvantaged groups of the 447,245 population in the 49 communes and 13 districts. Indirect beneficiaries are a major part of the Cambodian population given the predicted dissemination of results by partners and stakeholders.
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<th>Component</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| 1.Access to Information (A2I) | Increased information availability and disclosure on critical issues at sub-national. | 1. Increased from 48.12% to 60% of the population, at least 55% women actively accessing (both demanding and receiving) public information from local authorities for their own and community in 2016. | - Organise community awareness forums and outreach activities.  
- Develop and produce information and education materials (booklets, posters, etc.).  
- Work with independent media (national and provincial) to organise campaigns (radio and social media) in support of key issues and active citizenship.  
- Develop interaction with social internet sites, such as Facebook, blogs, etc. targeting youth engagement and discussion.  
- Develop targeted training materials and training sessions for CSOs.  
- Build the capacity of issue-based network organisations to raise awareness on access to public information and public information disclosure.  
- Develop and organise information campaigns on the national budget, land concession, contracts with companies, etc.  
- Support development of mechanisms for information management and disclosure.  
- Publicise success stories and positive case studies regarding access to information.  
- Arrange and carry out a pilot project on open district budgeting to promote public access to budget information and budget formation. |
| | | 2. Increased from 39.81% to 70% of people's access rights are recognised and promoted by of local Government and Councils' in development plans by 2016. |  |
| | | 3. Increased from 66.04% to 75% of target Communes and Districts with information management systems where there is free flow of information and easily accessible public (both men and women; youth: girls and boys) access to specific information by 2016. | |
| Access to information and information disclosure legislation and policies debated and adopted | 1. Draft law on access to information debated and adopted by sub-national and national Government officials, the Cambodian Parliament, UN agencies, civil society organisations and donors attended in the project activities by 2016. | | - Organise access to information (A2I) workshops and conferences with relevant stakeholders at sub-national and national levels to gain support for A2I legislation.  
- Coordinate and support dialogue with Parliament on A2I law development.  
- Organise debriefing meetings with Members of Parliament and |
| 2. Local Democratic Development | 1. Increased responses from 84% to 90% of cases of social and environmental issues and needs (particularly issues and needs of women) brought by CSOs and communities to district and Commune councils and Government line offices that are responded to by 2016. | Government officials.  
- Map key stakeholders and conduct an assessment to understand their position in supporting the access to information legislation and information disclosure.  
- Compile, analyse and publish an A2I report to support A2I legislation and policies.  
- Form and support a Legal Expert Team to work with the responsible ministry and Parliament on A2I legislation and policy framework.  
- Work with relevant networks, legal organisations and the media to identify strategies for an A2I legislation campaign.  
- Organise discussion forums with stakeholders and the private sector and business associations in Cambodia to support the A2I law campaign and information disclosure policies. |
|  | 2.12 CSO networks and groups met with the Parliament and Government institutions to dialogue on 12 national policies, laws and plans by 2016. |  
- Produce guidelines and a framework for engagement and dialogue with government institutions.  
- Produce civil society toolkits on social accountability based on survey results and citizen feedback.  
- Produce a training needs assessment to produce a curriculum for training CSOs to improve their ability to effectively interact with local government.  
- Organise and support citizen and government forums on critical issues.  
- Produce a Citizens’ Claim List to state the community concerns and needs which have been identified in forums and support advocacy actions.  
- Invite young or new politicians or officials to learn about their roles and address social issues in their area.  
- Organise policy dialogue to identify gaps and provide practical recommendations for better enforcement.  
- Connect CSOs with relevant ministries and Parliament to raise concerns and strengthen the collaboration between CSOs and the Government.  
- Facilitate and support communication between and the |
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<th><strong>Cambodian Parliament and Government institutions about critical issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Facilitate collaboration between CSOs and the private sector to promote partnership and Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR).</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Increased capacity development of local government and councils to improve functions, transparency, accountability, human rights, information disclosure, and collaboration with communities, local civil society and the national Government.</strong></td>
<td>1. Increased from 46.21% to 55% of citizens confirmed local Government and councils provide faster and reliable administrative public services and respond to their needs, particularly for women and girls. 2.70% of the 49 target communes and 13 districts, the transparency and accountability mechanisms are functioning well. 3. Increased from 84% to 90% of citizens (equal men and women interviewed) are satisfied with the elected bodies performance by 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Increased from 46.21% to 55% of citizens confirmed local Government and councils provide faster and reliable administrative public services and respond to their needs, particularly for women and girls.</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Revise and update the API publication relating to A2I and distribute widely.</strong>  <strong>- Use training materials based on the demands of local government to train on topics such as good governance, human rights, the principles of democracy and access to information.</strong>  <strong>- Support citizen feedback for improving local government decision making, accountability and public services.</strong>  <strong>- Support government officials in the development of a social accountability framework and mechanisms for accountability and transparency at the sub-national level.</strong>  <strong>- Support Commune and District Councils to demand greater information disclosure from higher levels of Government;</strong>  <strong>- Provide technical assistance, follow-up and coaching for local government and councils to strengthen their capacity to provide public access to public information</strong>  <strong>- Organise study visits within or outside of Cambodia to promote A2I and local governance.</strong>  <strong>- Create a local human rights mechanism to identify violations and the responses to them.</strong>  <strong>- Produce a human rights report.</strong>  <strong>- Organise and facilitate partnership and reflection meetings to encourage and support better involvement of relevant partners and stakeholders in local administration.</strong></td>
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### 3. Supporting Civil Society Organisations

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<th>Improved, effective participation and contributions from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and networks on democratic governance, human rights, environmental governance, decentralisation, transparency and accountability, information disclosure and development processes at the sub-national and national levels</th>
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<td><strong>1. Nine NGO network members, wish to strengthen their individual advocacy strategies, legal knowledge and improve their relationships with the media, improve documentation and M&amp;E system, communication, coordination and solidarity among networks and gain more support from both local and national Government for their advocacy campaign goals and objectives.</strong></td>
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<td>2. <strong>Improved space for wider participation of other NGOs and civil society organisations such as academic institutions, associations, community based organisations, and other groups like Commune council members in the formulation of the Government plans and in the 19 Technical Working Group (TWGs) of the Government and nine commissions of both houses of the Parliament, will make these plans more inclusive and reflective to the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups and women group.</strong></td>
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<td>3. <strong>More NGO input, comments/suggestions in Government plans and policies are included. Contributions of civil society recognised and responded to by Government institutions.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Provide capacity building to CSOs and networks to enable them to advocate for change on topics such as local governance, human rights, democratic development, practical advocacy skills, environmental law and policies, and access to information.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Provide technical assistance, follow-up, and coaching for CSOs and networks on advocacy and lobbying activities.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Review, update and reprint API publications on advocacy, access to information and lobbying skills.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Redefine strategies and strengthen the NGO Access to Information Working Group.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Support and build the capacity of the Working Group for Partnerships in Decentralisation to become more effective in promoting decentralisation and democracy.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Work with relevant groups on the social accountability framework and to strengthen D&amp;D implementation.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Engage with donors with strong relations with the Government and who work in promoting good governance, human rights, decentralisation and access to information.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Join regional and internal advocacy campaigns to ensure strong support to enhance the civil society mandate in working in partnership with the Government and private sectors.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Engage with NGO’s with expertise in current issues (such as extractive industries, budgeting, natural resource management, people with disabilities, climate change, etc.), support them to promote and support A2I. Provide advocacy training and support as necessary.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>- Support NGOs to work with sub-national government to disclose information.</strong></td>
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