

1. Description

- 1.1. Name of Coordinator of the grant contract: DanChurchAid (Folkekirkenes Nødhjælp)
- 1.2. Name and title of the Contact person: Eva Pineda Hansen, Head of Global Partnerships and Donor Relations (GPDR) Unit
- 1.3. Name of Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies) in the Action:
- Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
 - Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
- 1.4. Title of the Action: “Promoting good governance by increasing access to information and strengthening the independent media”
- 1.5. Contract number: DCI-NSAPVD/2014/348-051
- 1.6. Start date and end date of the reporting period: 1 Jan. 2015 – 30 June 2018
- 1.7. Target country(ies) or region(s): Cambodia (21 Communes, 7 districts of 4 provinces)
- Pursat Province (Pursat Municipality, Bakan District)
 - Kratie Province (Chetr Borei District)
 - Banteay Meanchey Province (Thmor Pouk District, Phnom Srok District)
 - Kampong Thom Province (Santuk District, Brasat Balank District)
- 1.8. Final beneficiaries &/or target groups¹ (if different) (including numbers of women and men):
- Final beneficiaries:**
- 8.5 million Voice of Democracy (VOD) radio listening audience members nationwide
 - 227,905 residents of the 21 targeted communes
- Target groups:**
- 28 citizen journalists (CJs)
 - 4 provincial broadcasters (PBs)
 - 120 local authorities (LAs)
 - 120 leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs)
 - 6,300 community members
- 1.9. Country(ies) in which the activities take place (if different from 1.7): N/A

¹ “Target groups” are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the Project Purpose level, and “final beneficiaries” are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

2. Assessment of implementation of action activities

2.1. Executive summary of the action

The “*Promoting good governance by increasing access to information and strengthening the independent media*” project was implemented from Jan. 1, 2015, to June 30, 2018, and was coordinated by DanChurchAid (DCA) and implemented by the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) and the Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM) in 21 communes and 7 districts of Pursat, Kratie, Banteay Meanchey and Kampong Thom Provinces.

The action faced significant obstacles in achieving its **overall objective** of “*contributing to a more equitable, open and democratic Cambodia by increasing access to information, a demand for good governance and an independent media.*” These challenges were particularly pronounced in the context of a crackdown by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) on press freedom and freedom of expression throughout 2017 that accompanied a broader closing of civic and political space in the lead-up to the 2018 national elections. In the autumn of 2017, the RGC ordered the shutdown of at least 32 radio stations carrying independent news and information, including stations broadcasting CCIM’s VOD news programming, levied espionage-related charges against two journalists and arrested at least seven people over political opinions expressed on social media.

In this highly restrictive atmosphere, the action and its beneficiaries were forced to make significant changes to adapt to the changing context, maintaining project relevance and usefulness to target groups while continuing to make progress toward its objectives. With this aim, the Coordinator sought and received permission from the EUD to refocus the project around dissemination of online independent news content during a six-month no-cost extension (NCE) from January through June of 2018.

Despite these challenges, an external, end-of-project (EOP) evaluation found that the action had made significant progress toward its overall and specific objectives related to access to information (A2I) and media and that the changes introduced during the NCE period had helped the action to remain relevant. Key successes of the project as outlined in the final evaluation report (Appendix A) included:

A strong demand for and use of information by communities was facilitated, and a trend of informal, peer-to-peer information sharing was triggered. Supply of information from local authorities was particularly strengthened. Relationships between sub-national local authorities and media improved despite challenging national trends, and media targeted by the project became more competent and professional in their reporting.

Additionally, the evaluation found that the project’s approach of increasing both demand and supply for and of A2I at the local level had significant impacts in targeted communities, including:

Local authorities, CBOs and citizens all reported a significant increase in the level of service access as well as an improvement in the quality of public services through increased citizen knowledge on rights and details of services. Citizens reported being able to pay the correct services for prices in addition to more timely document processing and friendlier service.

2.2.1. Progress Against Overall Objective Indicators

The action’s success in these areas is concretely demonstrated by its progress against the following overall objective (OO) indicators:

OO Indicator 1: Cambodia’s National Assembly passes a draft Access to Information Law that meets international standards.

Baseline:	Cambodia had no A2I law at the start of the project
Achieved:	An A2I Draft Law was finalized with input from civil society (including API and CCIM) and is expected to be passed in 2019
Rating:²	Good

² Evaluators rated achievement of each indicator according to DAC standards. The scale is as follows: very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, clearly inadequate, and the project/programme is useless.