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2025 STRATEGIC 2028 PLAN

By 2028, Cambodia is a more harmonious and inclusive society with sustainable development through economic empowerment, better management of climate risks, inclusive policies, good governance, and respect for democratic principles, human rights, and GEDSI.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



Abbreviation	Full Term
API	Advocacy and Policy Institute
BoD	Board of Directors
CAF	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CIP	Commune Investment Plan
CDP	Commune Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSDGs	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
DCA	DanChurchAid
DRWG	Disability Rights Working Group
EU	European Union
FY	Fiscal Year
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
HR	Human Rights
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
NCDDDS	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution (Climate Agreement Framework)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OWSO	One Window Service Office
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
SADD	Sex-, Age-, and Diversity-Disaggregated Data
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNAs	Sub-National Administrations
SP4All	Social Protection for All Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Abbreviation	Full Term
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UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
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USAID	United States Agency for International Development
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WB	World Bank
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1 PREFACE



Since 2003, the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) has been committed to ensuring that the rights of Cambodia’s citizens, particular of the most disadvantaged are guaranteed by law and promoted and protected. It has been API’s mandate to “build capacity for change” to enable citizens to raise their concerns and seek solutions.

We are proud of our excellent achievements in the previous planning period, 2019 – 2023, including several projects that greatly exceeded their targets.

These good results would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff and we thank them for their contributions to make this period a success.


We would also like to express our gratitude to our Board of Directors who contributed their valuable time, advice and support to make these achievements possible.

For the period of 2025 – 2028, API has set the following goal: By 2028, Cambodia is a more harmonious and inclusive society with sustainable development through economic empowerment, better management of climate risks, inclusive policies, good governance, and respect for democratic principles, human rights, and GEDSI.

This document presents the road map for the realization of this goal.

We look forward to the continued cooperation of API’s current partners and welcome new partners to share our efforts to make Cambodia’s society more inclusive and democratic and consequently its development more sustainable.

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
BoD approved first version on 14 January 2024
BoD approved second updated version on 09.08.2025



Lam Socheat
Executive Director



Soeurng Chandara
Chairperson, Board of Directors

1. Executive Summary



For more than two decades, the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) has worked to advance democratic governance, human rights, and inclusive development in Cambodia. API’s work has centered on empowering citizens and strengthening institutions to promote transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making at both national and sub-national levels.

This **Strategic Plan 2025–2028** builds on that legacy while responding to Cambodia’s new development realities: economic transition, climate challenges, digital transformation, and the need for stronger civil society resilience. The plan maintains API’s approved vision, mission, and strategic goal, while modernizing its structure and integrating lessons from the previous period.



API’s Vision

Cambodia has a national culture of harmony, with political and economic stability, sustainable development, democratic governance, and protection of human rights for a prosperous future for all.



Mission

To serve the long-term democratic and social development needs of Cambodia through the empowerment of people to interact with their government and protect their rights.



Strategic Goal (2025–2028)

By 2028, Cambodia is a more harmonious and inclusive society with sustainable development through economic empowerment, better management of climate risks, inclusive policies, good governance, and respect for democratic principles, human rights, and GEDSI.



API’s Strategic Direction, 2025–2028

To achieve this goal, API will pursue four interlinked program objectives that reflect its evolving role as a trusted actor in governance reform, social inclusion, and civic empowerment. These objectives position API to contribute to the Royal Government of Cambodia’s Pentagonal Strategy, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2025–2028), and Cambodia’s Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs).

Program Objective 1: Inclusive Policies, Democratic Governance, and Human Rights

API will strengthen sub-national administrations, civil society networks, and citizen engagement in policy processes. Through capacity development, dialogue, and advocacy, API will help local and national institutions uphold principles of good governance, public financial management, decentralization, and respect for human rights. Special attention will be given to integrating Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles in all governance reforms.

Outcome (by 2028):

Sub-national administrations, CSOs, and citizens are better equipped to exercise their rights and responsibilities within a transparent, inclusive, and democratic governance structure.

Program Objective 2: Economic Development and the Informal Economy

API will support women and youth entrepreneurs, self-employed workers, and smallholder farmers to strengthen their economic resilience and participation in policy dialogue. The program promotes inclusive business ecosystems, financial literacy, skills development, and partnerships linking informal and agricultural economies with markets and social protections.

Outcome (by 2028):

Women, youth, and smallholder farmers enjoy stronger economic agency, improved access to information, and more supportive policies for sustainable livelihoods.

Program Objective 3: Climate Action and Environmental Justice

API will apply its access-to-information and social accountability expertise to climate governance. By empowering youth, local communities, and vulnerable groups, API will promote environmental transparency, community-based climate adaptation, and responsible business practices. The program aligns with Cambodia's Climate Change Strategic Plan (2024–2033) and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0).

Outcome (by 2028):

Communities, institutions, and enterprises collaboratively drive sustainable environmental governance, climate adaptation, and equitable development.

Program Objective 4: Civil Society Sustainability and Resilience

API and its partners will strengthen internal governance, financial sustainability, and collaborative networks across civil society. This includes developing **API's Development Consulting social enterprise**, expanding local fundraising, and promoting inclusive, transparent management within partner organizations.

Outcome (by 2028):

A sustainable, well-governed, and resilient civil society sector contributes to democratic governance and inclusive development in Cambodia

Cross-Cutting Commitments

All program objectives integrate cross-cutting themes essential to API's mission:

- Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)
- Do No Harm and Rights-Based Approaches
- Digital Technology and Innovation
- Climate Change Integration

These principles guide API's work at every stage, from program design and implementation to monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL).

Implementation and Monitoring

API's approach combines constructive engagement with government and empowerment of citizens and rights-holders, ensuring accountability on both the supply and demand sides. Capacity development, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and evidence-based advocacy remain central methods.

Monitoring and learning are anchored in API's Online MEL System, which tracks progress using sex-, age-, and diversity-disaggregated data (SADD). Findings are regularly analyzed and shared with partners, donors, and the public to promote transparency and adaptive learning.

Partnerships and Alignment

API works closely with:

- The Royal Government of Cambodia (Senate, National Assembly, NCDD, relevant ministries);
- Civil society coalitions and working groups (A2IWG, DRWG, CPDD, BWG, SP4All, NGO Forum, CCC, etc.);
- Private sector associations (EuroCham, AmCham, local chambers of commerce);
- International and regional partners (EU, GIZ, DCA, Oxfam, BftW, Wilde Ganzen, CARE, Mission Alliance, WaterAid, and others).

Through these collaborations, API aligns national policy advocacy with global frameworks, including the CSDGs, notably Goals 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 16.

Summary Statement

API's 2025–2028 Strategic Plan reaffirms its role as a trusted national actor advancing transparency, accountability, and inclusion. Through its four program objectives and cross-cutting commitments, API will contribute to a more just, equitable, and climate resilient Cambodia.

3. About the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)



3.1 Overview

Founded in 2003, the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) is a leading Cambodian civil-society organization promoting democratic governance, human rights, and social inclusion. API works to ensure that citizens, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups, have the knowledge, confidence, and opportunity to engage with government institutions and influence decisions that affect their lives.

For over two decades, API has played a bridging role between citizens and state institutions, advancing laws, policies, and practices that strengthen participation, transparency, and accountability. Through its mission to “build capacity for change,” API empowers communities to raise their concerns, engage in dialogue, and co-create solutions with decision-makers.



API's Vision

Cambodia has a national culture of harmony, with political and economic stability, sustainable development, democratic governance, and protection of human rights for a prosperous future for all.



Mission

To serve Cambodia's long-term democratic and social-development needs through the empowerment of people to interact with their government and protect their rights.



Strategic Goal (2025–2028)

By 2028, Cambodia is a more harmonious and inclusive society with sustainable development, economic empowerment, climate resilience, good governance, and respect for democratic principles, human rights, and GEDSI.



Core Values

Transparency, accountability, independence, non-partisanship, and professionalism, guided by peaceful conflict resolution and a rights-based approach.

Recognitions and Awards

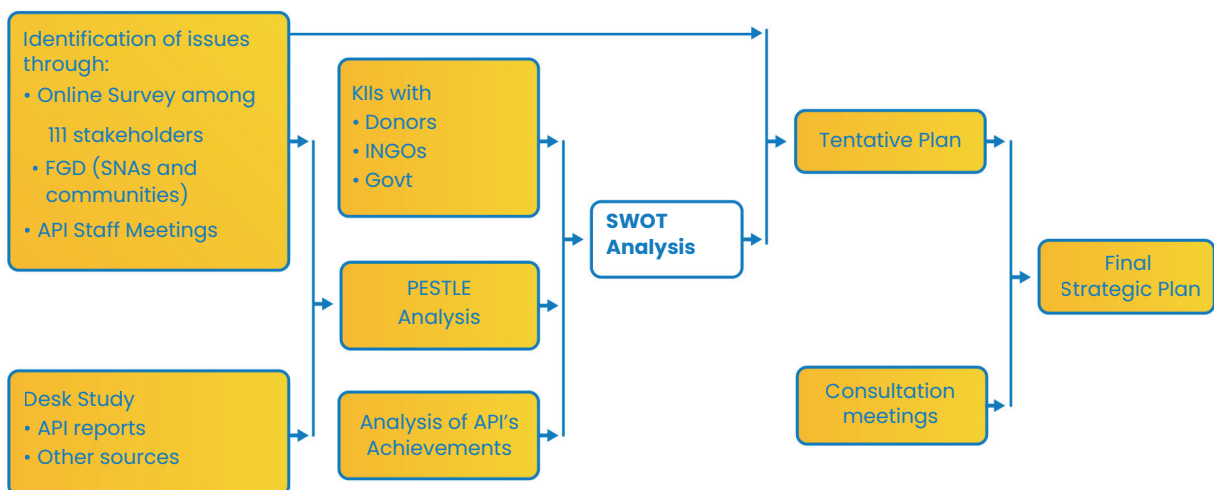
API's contributions to governance reform and institutional integrity have been recognized nationally and internationally.

- CARE Partnership Award (2018) for advancing social accountability.
- USAID/Pact Best Performance Partner (2023) for organizational capacity and partnership excellence.
- Governance and Professional Practice Certificate (2019, 2023) awarded by the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC).
- Governance and Professional Practice Certificate (2023, 2028) awarded by the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC).

3.2 Strategic Plan Design Process

This Strategic Plan was developed through a participatory, evidence-based process engaging API staff, partners, government representatives, and community stakeholders.

The process included a PESTLE analysis, SWOT assessment, stakeholder mapping, and extensive consultations to ensure broad input and alignment with national and global frameworks. The graphic below describes this process visually.



Consultation Process

- Online survey and interviews with 111 external stakeholders.
- Focus-group discussions with commune councils, youth, and community-based organizations.
- Workshops with API staff and management to integrate lessons from program implementation.
- Partner and donor feedback sessions to refine strategic priorities.

This process ensured that the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan is rooted in lived experience, grounded in data, and reflective of both national priorities and community aspirations. The plan aligns with the Royal Government of Cambodia’s Pentagonal Strategy (Phase I), the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs), and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2024–2028).



4. Strategic Context

Cambodia's development trajectory continues to show progress in economic growth, infrastructure expansion, and regional integration. At the same time, social and environmental challenges, ranging from the impacts of climate change to digital disruption and demographic shifts, are redefining the governance landscape. The 2025–2028 period presents both opportunity and urgency for strengthening inclusive, transparent, and adaptive institutions.

4.1 Governance and Political Context

The Royal Government of Cambodia has prioritized good governance, decentralization, and public-financial management reform as central pillars of the **Pentagonal Strategy (Phase I)**. Laws such as the forthcoming *Access to Information Law* and the continued expansion of the *Social Accountability Framework* create space for constructive engagement between citizens, government, and civil society. However, decision-making remains highly centralized, and institutional accountability varies across provinces. API's expertise in facilitating dialogue and civic participation remains vital to ensuring that decentralization translates into real responsiveness.

4.2 Economic and Social Context

Cambodia's economy continues to grow steadily, driven by manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism. Yet over **80 percent** of the workforce operates in the **informal economy**, with limited access to social protection or formal recognition. Economic shocks, such as those from COVID-19 and climate impacts, disproportionately affect women, youth, and marginalized communities. API's focus on inclusive policy, economic empowerment, and local governance reform aligns directly with these national priorities.

4.3 Environmental and Climate Context

Cambodia is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in Southeast Asia. Deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity threaten rural livelihoods and national resilience. The government's *Climate Change Strategic Plan (2024–2033)* and *Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)* emphasize community participation, transparency, and green investment. API contributes by linking climate governance to access to information, environmental education, and youth leadership.

4.4 Digital Transformation and Civic Space

Rapid digitalization is reshaping governance and communication in Cambodia. Digital platforms are expanding opportunities for information sharing, civic participation, and public service delivery. However, digital divides between urban and rural populations, along with concerns about online safety, privacy, and misinformation, pose new governance challenges.

API's experience with the **Citizen Budget App, Facebook Chatbot on public One Window Service, Digital Citizen Scorecard App, Environment E-Learning Program, online MEL systems, Online Change the Game Academy on Mobilising Support, Advocacy, Local Fundraising, Social Accountability**, and digital training programs positions it to promote ethical and inclusive digital transformation.

4.5 Strategic Implications for API

These shifts, political, economic, environmental, and technological, create both complexity and opportunity. API's next phase of work focuses on strengthening *citizen empowerment, responsive institutions, and sustainable systems* through four interconnected objectives:

1. Inclusive Policies, Democratic Governance and Human Rights;
2. Economic Development and the Informal Economy;
3. Climate Action and Environmental Justice;
4. Civil Society Sustainability and Resilience.

A more detailed assessment of Cambodia's socio-economic and governance context is provided in **Annex A**, which outlines the evidence base informing this strategic direction.

API's strategy responds to a rapidly evolving national landscape, linking governance, economy, climate, and digital transformation through inclusion, dialogue, and accountability.

5. Major Achievements and Lessons Learned (2019 – 2024)



The previous five-year period demonstrated API’s capacity to translate its mission: **empowering citizens and strengthening democratic governance** into measurable national and sub-national results. Between 2019 and 2024, API implemented more than 50 projects in 19 provinces, reaching over two million citizens through programs in governance, access to information, environmental accountability, and inclusion. These experiences shaped the learning that now informs the 2025–2028 strategy.

5.1 Policy Influence and Governance Reform

- Contributed to eight national laws and policies, including the draft Access to Information Law, the Public Procurement Law, and the National Policy on the Informal Economy.
- Supported evidence-based advocacy that strengthened decentralization and public-financial-management reform.
- Facilitated policy dialogue platforms connecting citizens, CSOs, and local authorities, ensuring that community priorities informed national decisions.

5.2 Citizen Engagement and Accountability

- Trained 111 community-based organizations (CBOs), 55000 youth (including over 25000 women), and 545 Community Accountability Facilitators (CAFs).
- Enabled citizens to monitor commune and district budgets, health and education services, and local development plans.
- Strengthened social-accountability mechanisms that improved service quality and trust between citizens and authorities.

5.3 Access to Information and Digital Transparency

- Empowered citizens to claim their right to information through innovative tools such as the **Citizen Budget App, Facebook Chatbot on One Window Services**, and community budget dialogues.
- Supported more than 678 government institutions in disclosing budget and service information.
- Advanced the Access to Information Law through sustained advocacy, positioning API as Cambodia’s leading voice on open data and transparency.

5.4 Climate and Environmental Governance

- Integrated environmental and climate accountability into social-accountability and budgeting work.
- Mobilized youth and communities to lead climate-action initiatives, including waste management and local environmental education programs.
- Developed sub-national models for climate-responsive budgeting and advocated for stronger public investment in resilience.

5.5 Organizational Growth and Recognition

- Expanded staffing from 17 to 38 (45 percent women) and enhanced technical capacity across governance, climate, and digital fields.
- Launched an **Online Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system** to track results and support learning.
- Earned the *Governance and Professional Practice Certificate (2019 and 2023) from the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)*, confirming API's commitment to excellence and accountability.

5.6 Lessons Learned

- **Constructive advocacy builds trust.** Sustained dialogue with government partners is more effective than confrontation for policy change.
- **Digital tools enhance transparency when paired with training.** Technology alone is not enough; citizen literacy and institutional readiness are crucial.
- **Engaging rights-holders and duty-bearers together creates mutual accountability.** Empowerment of citizens and responsiveness of institutions must advance in tandem.
- **Cross-sector collaboration amplifies impact.** Linking governance, economic inclusion, and climate action produces more sustainable results.

5.7 Continuity and Transition to 2025 – 2028

The lessons from 2019–2024 directly shape the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan.

API will build on its achievements by:

- Deepening policy engagement through evidence and collaborative dialogue.
- Scaling digital and social-accountability tools for greater reach and impact.
- Integrating climate and economic resilience into local governance.
- Strengthening its organizational and financial sustainability to support long-term impact.

A comprehensive record of program results and evaluation data is presented in **Annex B: Achievements 2019 – 2024**.

5.8 Target Locations

During the 2025–2028 period, API will continue its work in strategic geographical areas along the **Tonle Sap Basin, Mekong River Region, Coastal Provinces, and Phnom Penh Municipality**, the same regions where API implemented programs during the 2019–2023 strategy. This geographic continuity allows API to deepen partnerships, sustain capacity gains, and strengthen local networks.

API's activities in these areas will focus on:

- Supporting community fishery networks and local natural-resource governance;
- Promoting **women- and youth-led** micro and small enterprises (MSMEs);
- Empowering **self-employed workers** to advocate for improved livelihoods and social protection; and
- **Advancing eco-economic empowerment and biodiversity** protection in coastal ecosystems.

These locations represent the intersection of Cambodia's key development challenges: economic inclusion, environmental resilience, and equitable governance, and serve as priority laboratories for API's integrated approach.

The continuity of API's presence in these strategic locations ensures that community partnerships, institutional relationships, and local learning remain strong. These geographic anchors also reflect API's broader theory of change: **sustainable governance begins where citizens, ecosystems, and economies meet**. Insights from these local experiences inform API's national advocacy, program design, and strategic partnerships, creating a feedback loop between field practice and policy influence.

The following section outlines how API connects this on-the-ground experience to its national vision through an integrated theory of change.

6. Theory of Change (2025 – 2028)



6.1 Overview

API’s Theory of Change is grounded in a simple but powerful premise:

When citizens have access to information, confidence to participate, and responsive institutions that listen, democratic governance and inclusive development become possible and sustainable.

Over the next five years, API will strengthen the relationship between citizens and the state through three reinforcing pathways:

1. **Empowered Citizens and Civil Society** – people and organizations who understand their rights and have the means to influence decisions.
2. **Responsive and Accountable Institutions** – public officials and systems that provide information, deliver services, and act on citizen feedback.
3. **Collaborative Policy and Practice** – constructive engagement between citizens, civil society, private sector, and government that produces better laws, fairer policies, and sustainable results.

These pathways together generate the outcomes that move Cambodia toward API’s vision of harmony, stability, and rights-based prosperity.

6.2 How Change Happens

1. **Access to Information** creates transparency and evidence for dialogue.
2. **Capacity and Confidence** allow citizens, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups, to use that information to advocate for change.
3. **Participation and Partnership** link empowered citizens with duty bearers through inclusive platforms for policy influence, service improvement, and climate action.
4. **Institutional Responsiveness** turns dialogue into reform, embedding accountability, gender equity, and environmental responsibility in governance systems.
5. **Learning and Adaptation** ensure that data, reflection, and feedback continuously strengthen practice and impact.

6.3 Cross-Cutting Logic

Each step of this change process integrates API's cross-cutting commitments:

- **Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)** ensures that participation represents the whole community.
- **Do No Harm and Rights-Based Approaches** safeguard people and reinforce legitimacy.
- **Digital Technology and Innovation** expand reach and transparency.
- **Climate Change Integration** anchors development in environmental sustainability.

6.4 Intended Impact by 2028

- Citizens, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups, actively influence local and national decision-making.
- Public institutions routinely share information and respond to community priorities.
- Policies across economic, environmental, and social sectors reflect inclusive and sustainable principles.
- Civil society networks demonstrate resilience, collaboration, and financial independence.

A table with the detailed Theory of Change is included in **Annex G**.



7. Program Objectives



API's four program objectives for 2025 – 2028 translate its vision and theory of change into practical action. They represent the organization's long-standing strengths: policy influence, civic empowerment, transparency and its newer priorities in economic inclusion, climate governance, and organizational resilience. Each objective builds on what API already does well while positioning it to respond to emerging national and global trends. Together, the objectives form a single framework for **inclusive, accountable, and sustainable governance in Cambodia**. They are mutually reinforcing: progress in one area expands opportunity and capacity in the others.

Objective 1 – Inclusive Policies, Democratic Governance and Human Rights

Purpose

To strengthen democratic governance and citizen participation at national and sub-national levels so that policymaking, budgeting, and service delivery reflect the voices and rights of all Cambodians.

Strategic Rationale

Cambodia continues to decentralize public functions while facing growing expectations for transparency and service quality. API's two decades of experience in access-to-information, social accountability, and policy advocacy position it to bridge citizens and state institutions.

The next five years will focus on deepening that bridge, helping government become more responsive and citizens more confident to engage.

Key Strategies (2025 – 2028)

1. Support participatory policy development and reform

- Facilitate citizen, CSO, and sub-national input into laws, regulations, and national reform agendas (e.g., Access-to-Information Law, Public Financial Management, Decentralization).

2. Promote inclusive local governance

- Build capacity of commune and district councils, local officials, and community facilitators to apply GEDSI and human-rights principles in planning and budgeting.

3. Strengthen civic dialogue and accountability mechanisms

- Expand social-accountability tools such as Citizen Scorecards, Open-Budget dialogues, and online feedback platforms to monitor public services.

4. Advance human-rights awareness and protection

- Provide legal-literacy and rights-awareness training for citizens, journalists, and CSOs; engage government counterparts to uphold international commitments.

Cross-Cutting Integration

- **GEDSI:** targeted leadership programs for women, persons with disabilities, and indigenous communities in local governance.
- **Digital Innovation:** expand use of API's online tools for consultation and information sharing.
- **Do No Harm / Rights-Based Approach:** ensure that advocacy and dialogue remain constructive and safe for participants.
- **Climate Responsiveness:** integrate environmental considerations into local-development planning and budgeting processes

Expected Outcomes by 2028

- Citizens and CSOs in at least **15 provinces** actively participate in dialogue on law and policy reform.
- Sub-national administrations routinely disclose information and integrate community priorities, including GEDSI and environmental issues into annual plans.
- Public institutions demonstrate measurable improvements in transparency, responsiveness, and respect for rights.
- Stronger trust and collaboration exist between citizens and government, reducing polarization and improving service delivery.

Contribution to National and Global Frameworks

- *Pentagonal Strategy Phase I (2023–2028):* Governance Reform and Public Administration Modernization.
- *Cambodia SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.*
- *UN Cooperation Framework Outcome 1: Governance, Rights and Participation.*

Through Objective 1, API reinforces its long-standing role as a trusted catalyst for dialogue and democratic governance, helping Cambodia realize inclusive, accountable, and rights-based development.

Objective 2 – Economic Development and the Informal Economy

Purpose

To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth by empowering informal-sector workers, smallholder farmers, and micro-entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, to improve their livelihoods, engage in policy dialogue, and access fair economic opportunities.

Strategic Rationale

The informal economy remains the backbone of Cambodia’s employment and production but is often excluded from policy and protection frameworks. Building on its governance and rights, experience, API will bridge the gap between informal-sector realities and formal economic systems. Through research, advocacy, and partnerships, API will promote policies that value informal work, improve local economic governance, and strengthen social protection.

Key Strategies (2025 – 2028)

1. Evidence-Based Policy Advocacy

- Conduct participatory research on the status and contribution of informal workers to inform inclusive national and sub-national policies.
- Advocate for the implementation of the National Policy on the Informal Economy and link it to local development plans.

2. Economic Empowerment and Financial Literacy

- Provide training for women and youth entrepreneurs on business planning, savings, and access to financial services.
- Promote gender-responsive and inclusive budgeting for economic programs.

3. Partnerships for Local Economic Development

- Facilitate dialogue between informal-sector representatives, local authorities, and private-sector partners to co-design solutions for market access and fair labor practices.
- Support sub-national administrations to integrate informal-sector priorities into commune and district investment plans.

4. Social Protection and Labor Rights Awareness

- Raise awareness among workers about social-security schemes and occupational safety.
- Engage employers and government agencies to improve coverage and compliance.

Cross-Cutting Integration

- **GEDSI:** Ensure women, persons with disabilities, and minority groups are equitably represented in trainings, producer groups, and advocacy networks.
- **Digital Innovation:** Use digital tools for market information, mobile-based surveys, and online learning.
- **Do No Harm / Rights-Based Approach:** Uphold dignity and safety of vulnerable workers in all interventions.
- **Climate Responsiveness:** Promote environmentally responsible small-enterprise practices and green-skills development.

Expected Outcomes by 2028

- Informal-sector workers and micro-entrepreneurs in at least 12 provinces demonstrate improved financial literacy and access to markets.
- Local and national policies incorporate informal-sector concerns and provide mechanisms for representation in decision-making.
- Women and youth report higher confidence and income diversification.
- Partnerships between local governments, cooperatives, and private actors result in sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Contribution to National and Global Frameworks

- *Pentagonal Strategy*: Economic diversification and private-sector development.
- *Cambodia SDG 8*: Decent Work and Economic Growth.
- *UN Cooperation Framework Outcome 2*: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Transformation

Through Objective 2, API connects governance reform with livelihood realities, ensuring Cambodia’s economic growth benefits those whose work sustains it.

Objective 3 – Climate Action and Environmental Justice

Purpose

To strengthen environmental governance, climate adaptation, and natural-resource accountability by empowering citizens, youth, and local institutions to participate in decision-making, access information, and act collectively for sustainable and just development.

Strategic Rationale

Cambodia faces growing environmental challenges: deforestation, land degradation, water scarcity, and climate-induced disasters, that threaten livelihoods and stability. API recognizes that environmental governance is inseparable from access to information, social accountability, and citizen participation. Through partnerships with government, civil society, and communities, API will help make environmental data transparent, decision-making inclusive, and responses equitable.

Key Strategies (2025 – 2028)

1. Enhance Environmental Transparency and Access to Information

- Support implementation of the Access to Information Law in environmental and natural-resource sectors.
- Promote open-data tools, including API’s Citizen Budget App, to track climate-related spending and land-use allocations.

2. Strengthen Community and Youth Climate Leadership

- Train and mentor youth networks and community-based organizations to design and lead local environmental and climate initiatives.
- Partner with schools and universities to integrate environmental education and climate-awareness programs into curricula.

3. Promote Climate-Responsive Budgeting and Policy Advocacy

- Support sub-national administrations to include climate priorities in commune and district budgets.
- Provide data and analysis for evidence-based advocacy on green financing and sustainable resource management.

4. Advance Environmental Justice and Rights Protection

- Empower women, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups to advocate for equitable access to natural resources and fair compensation mechanisms.
- Engage the private sector in dialogue on responsible investment and environmental compliance.

Cross-Cutting Integration

- **GEDSI:** Ensure equitable participation of women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities in environmental decision-making and project design.
- **Digital Innovation:** Expand use of geospatial and digital tools for transparency and community monitoring of environmental data.
- **Do No Harm / Rights-Based Approach:** Safeguard communities and activists through constructive engagement with authorities.
- **Climate Responsiveness:** Embed environmental considerations into all API objectives and organizational practices.

Expected Outcomes by 2028

- Sub-national administrations in at least **10 provinces** integrate climate priorities and environmental budgeting into their annual plans.
- Youth and community leaders across **400 communes** implement climate-action initiatives with measurable local impact.
- Environmental data and decisions are more transparent and publicly accessible.
- Vulnerable groups exercise stronger voice and protection in environmental governance processes.

Contribution to National and Global Frameworks

- Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (2025–2033)
- Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)
- Cambodia SDG 13: Climate Action
- Cambodia SDG 15: Life on Land
- UN Cooperation Framework Outcome 3: Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

Through Objective 3, API applies its proven access-to-information and accountability expertise to Cambodia’s most urgent challenge, building the trust, knowledge, and partnerships required for climate resilience and environmental justice.

Objective 4 – Civil Society Sustainability and Resilience

Purpose

To strengthen the effectiveness, collaboration, and financial sustainability of Cambodian civil society so that community organizations, networks, and API itself can continue advancing inclusive governance, human rights, and climate-responsive development.

Strategic Rationale

Cambodia’s civil society operates in a rapidly changing environment marked by donor transitions, tightening regulatory conditions, and digital transformation. API recognizes that resilient, transparent, and well-governed organizations are essential for sustaining democratic space and service delivery.

Over the next five years, API will focus on consolidating its own institutional strength while supporting partner organizations and networks to do the same.

Key Strategies (2025 – 2028)

1. Strengthen Governance and Institutional Systems

- Maintain high standards of internal governance and accountability consistent with API’s Governance and Professional Practice Certification (CCC, 2019 & 2023).
- Support partner CSOs and community-based organizations to apply similar standards of transparency and ethical management.

2. Enhance Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization

- Diversify funding sources through local philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and regional collaboration.
- Expand API’s **Development Consulting social enterprise** to provide training, research, and advisory services that generate unrestricted income.

3. Invest in Staff Capacity and Organizational Learning

- Strengthen leadership, digital literacy, and program-management competencies across the team.
- Promote a culture of reflection and adaptive learning through API’s online MEL system and internal knowledge-sharing platforms.

4. Foster Collaboration and Solidarity Across Civil Society

- Build coalitions and thematic working groups to advocate jointly for policy reform, civic space, and environmental justice.
- Facilitate exchanges between provincial NGOs and national networks to bridge local experience with national dialogue.

Cross-Cutting Integration

- **GEDSI:** Promote gender-balanced leadership within API and partner organizations.
- **Digital Innovation:** Adopt cloud-based data management, online training, and communication tools for efficiency and security.
- **Do No Harm / Rights-Based Approach:** Strengthen ethical standards and safe-guarding policies across all partners.
- **Climate Responsiveness:** Apply environmentally responsible practices in API's operations and encourage green management within CSOs.

Expected Outcomes by 2028

- API and at least **100 partner** organizations demonstrate improved governance, accountability, and financial resilience.
- The **Development Consulting** arm generates sustainable income that covers a growing share of API's core costs.
- Staff retention, gender balance, and professional-development indicators show year-on-year improvement.
- Civil-society networks coordinate advocacy more effectively and engage constructively with government and private-sector partners.

Contribution to National and Global Frameworks

- *Pentagonal Strategy:* Strengthened Institutions and Effective Public Administration.
- *Cambodia SDG 17:* Partnerships for the Goals.
- *UN Cooperation Framework Outcome 4:* Inclusive and Accountable Institutions.

Through Objective 4, API ensures that its own house and the wider civil-society ecosystem it belongs to remains strong, credible, and future-ready. Resilient organizations make resilient democracies.

Note that a full articulation of the Program Objectives is included in **Annex H**.

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8. Cross-Cutting Themes



API applies a set of cross-cutting principles across all program objectives to ensure that its work is inclusive, ethical, adaptive, and sustainable. These themes are not standalone activities; they are embedded in program design, implementation, and learning.

Together they define *how* API works and safeguard the integrity of its mission.

8.1 Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

API promotes gender equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups as both rights-holders and agents of change. Programs ensure that women and men benefit equitably from information, capacity building, and participation in decision-making. API supports gender-responsive budgeting, inclusive local planning, and leadership development for women and youth in all sectors.

8.2 Do No Harm and Rights-Based Approach (RBA)

API's advocacy and dialogue processes are guided by Do No Harm principles that prevent unintended social or political tension. A rights-based approach frames every intervention around accountability, transparency, participation, and non-discrimination. This ensures that empowerment initiatives strengthen, rather than destabilize, community relationships and public trust.

8.3 Digital Technology and Innovation

Building on its experience with the Citizen Budget App, One Window Service and Facebook chatbot (Pidor Smart Villager), Digital Citizen Scorecard App, Environment E-Learning Program, online MEL systems, Online Change the Game Academy on Mobilising Support, Advocacy, Local Fundraising, Social Accountability, API integrates digital tools to expand civic participation, data transparency, and efficiency. Digital innovation includes online learning platforms, mobile surveys, and secure data management. API is committed to ethical technology use, protecting data privacy and reducing digital divides between urban and rural communities.

8.4 Climate Change Integration

Recognizing the cross-sectoral nature of climate challenges, API integrates environmental awareness and climate-risk management into all programs. This includes applying climate-responsive budgeting, promoting sustainable operations within API, and ensuring that environmental resilience is considered in policy, economic, and governance initiatives.

8.5 Learning and Adaptation

Each theme is tracked through API's monitoring and evaluation framework, using sex-, age-, and diversity-disaggregated data (SADD). Regular reflection sessions and partner reviews translate learning into program adjustments, ensuring that the principles of inclusion, safety, innovation, and sustainability remain active in practice.

These cross-cutting commitments express API's organizational ethos: inclusive in participation, ethical in action, innovative in approach, and responsible toward people and the planet.

9. Implementation and Partnership Approach

API's implementation approach is grounded in constructive engagement between citizens and the state. It combines evidence-based advocacy, community empowerment, and institutional collaboration to ensure that change is both participatory and sustainable. The focus is on how API delivers results: through inclusive processes, strong partnerships, and continuous learning.

9.1 Constructive Engagement and Dialogue

API positions itself as a **bridge** linking people, local authorities, ministries, and the private sector. The organization uses policy dialogue, consultation workshops, and multi-stakeholder forums to encourage open communication and trust. This approach allows government partners to see API as a collaborator, not an adversary, while maintaining the organization's independence and advocacy role.

9.2 Partnerships and Coordination

API works within a broad network of partners at national and sub-national levels:

- **Government Institutions:** Senate, National Assembly, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Environment, NCDD, and line ministries responsible for planning, finance, and social affairs.
- **Civil-Society Coalitions:** A2I Working Group, NGO Forum, CCC, CPDD, DRWG, SP4All, BWG, and thematic advocacy networks.
- **Community-Based Organizations:** local CBOs, CAFs, and youth networks implementing social-accountability and environmental initiatives.
- **Private Sector and Academia:** business associations, universities, and research institutions contributing to inclusive economic and policy dialogue.
- **Development Partners:** EU, GIZ, Oxfam, DCA, BftW, Wilde Ganzen, Mission Alliance, WaterAid, CARE, and other donors supporting governance, climate, and inclusion agendas.

Through these partnerships, API leverages complementary expertise and aligns its work with national frameworks and the **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024–2028)**.

9.3 Program Delivery Methods

- **Capacity Development:** training, mentoring, and peer-learning to strengthen citizens, CSOs, and local officials.
- **Research and Evidence Generation:** policy studies, surveys, and community feedback systems to inform advocacy.

- **Digital Engagement:** online tools for information sharing, consultation, and monitoring.
- **Advocacy and Communication:** strategic messaging, media engagement, and public campaigns promoting transparency and rights.
- **Pilot and Scale Approach:** testing models locally before expanding to provincial or national levels.

9.4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Integration

Implementation is guided by API's **Online MEL System**, which collects data from all programs and partners. Findings are reviewed quarterly to assess progress, document learning, and adapt interventions. Evaluation focuses on outcomes such as policy influence, institutional responsiveness, and citizen participation rather than activity counts.

9.5 Resource Mobilization and Sustainability

API applies a dual approach:

1. **Program-Based Funding:** through partnerships and grants.
2. **Social-Enterprise:** Income via API Development Consulting, which provides research and training services. The strategy aims for progressive diversification so that at least a portion of core operational costs is covered by self-generated revenue by 2028.

9.6 Risk Management and Accountability

API maintains governance and financial controls aligned with the **Governance and Professional Practice Certificate** standards. Regular audits, board oversight, and donor compliance reviews ensure transparency. Risk-management, safeguarding, and data protection frameworks are applied across all projects and partnerships (see Annex A).

API's implementation approach embodies its values: collaborative, evidence-driven, and adaptive ensuring that every partnership contributes to a stronger, more inclusive Cambodia.



10. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)



Purpose

To ensure that API's programs are accountable, adaptive, and continuously improving through systematic data collection, reflection, and knowledge sharing.

10.1 MEAL Framework

API's MEAL system is designed to track progress toward the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan outcomes across all program objectives. It measures both **quantitative** and **qualitative** change, capturing not only what was delivered, but how it contributed to inclusive governance, human rights, and sustainable development.

The framework is guided by four principles:

1. **Accountability:** transparency to citizens, partners, and donors.
2. **Learning:** using evidence to refine approaches and inform policy.
3. **Participation:** involving beneficiaries, local officials, and partners in data collection and reflection.
4. **Equity:** ensuring sex, age, and diversity-disaggregated data (SADD) to reveal inclusion gaps.

10.2 Tools and Systems

API's **Online MEL Platform** serves as the central data repository for all projects. It enables real-time monitoring, automated reporting, and visualization of key indicators. Complementary tools include:

- **Citizen Scorecards** for service feedback and satisfaction tracking.
- **Community Monitoring Forms** for sub-national planning and budgeting processes.
- **Partner Learning Logs** documenting lessons and best practices.

Quarterly data reviews and reflection workshops with partners convert information into insight, driving iterative program improvement.

10.3 Evaluation and Reporting

- **Internal Reviews:** Conducted semi-annually to assess progress toward each program objective.
- **External Evaluations:** Commissioned at mid-term (2026) and end-line (2028) to assess relevance, effectiveness, and impact.
- **Annual Reports:** Publicly shared summaries of progress, achievements, and lessons learned.

Evaluation findings will be disseminated through learning briefs, policy papers, and dialogue forums, reinforcing API's role as a knowledge-driven organization.

10.4 Accountability and Feedback Mechanisms

API promotes downward accountability through feedback channels such as:

- Community consultations, suggestion boxes, and hotline communication.
- Digital surveys allowing citizens and partners to share feedback anonymously.
- Transparent publication of program results and financial audits.

All feedback is analyzed and responded to within a defined time frame, ensuring responsible follow-up and trust.

10.5 Learning and Adaptation

API views MEAL as a **learning cycle**, not a linear process.

Evidence gathered from projects informs strategic decisions, partnership adjustments, and advocacy priorities. Regular reflection meetings, joint partner learning events, and thematic reviews ensure that knowledge is translated into practice. Through a robust MEAL system, API will not only demonstrate accountability but also generate learning that strengthens its programs, partners, and Cambodia's broader governance ecosystem.

11. Organizational Sustainability and Development



Purpose

To ensure that API remains a strong, credible, and adaptive organization capable of delivering its mission effectively and sustaining impact beyond the life of this strategic plan.

11.1 Institutional Governance and Leadership

API maintains a strong governance structure through its **Board of Directors**, which provides policy oversight, financial accountability, and strategic guidance. The Board ensures compliance with Cambodian law, alignment with API's mission, and adherence to international governance standards.

API's **Executive Director and Senior Management Team** translate strategic priorities into operational plans, manage performance, and promote collaboration across programs.

The organization's commitment to good governance is evidenced by the Governance and Professional Practice Certificate awarded by the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) in both 2019 and 2023.

11.2 Human Resource Development and Culture

API's staff are its greatest asset. The organization invests in continuous learning, professional development, and a supportive work culture that values inclusion, integrity, and innovation.

Priorities for 2025–2028 include:

- Expanding leadership and management training opportunities.
- Enhancing digital literacy and MEL competencies across all staff.
- Strengthening internal communication and collaboration systems.
- Promoting gender balance and diversity in recruitment and advancement

11.3 Financial Sustainability

API aims to diversify and stabilize its funding base through:

- **Program Grants and Partnerships:** continued collaboration with long-term donors and alignment with national and international frameworks.
- **Local Resource Mobilization:** expanding outreach to Cambodian private-sector and philanthropic partners.
- **Social Enterprise Development:** scaling the API Development Consulting unit to provide research, evaluation, and training services that generate unrestricted income.
- **Operational Efficiency:** adopting cost-effective technologies and shared-service approaches to maximize impact per resource invested.

By 2028, API targets a growing share of its operational costs covered by locally generated or unrestricted funding, ensuring greater independence and resilience.

11.4 Systems, Processes, and Accountability

API continuously improves its internal systems to ensure efficiency, transparency, and compliance.

Key focus areas include:

- Modernizing financial and procurement systems through digital tools.
- Maintaining regular internal and external audits.
- Strengthening safeguarding and data-protection protocols.
- Documenting policies and procedures for governance, human resources, and partnerships.

11.5 Organizational Learning and Adaptation

API views organizational development as a living process.

Annual strategic reviews, staff reflection sessions, and partner consultations ensure that lessons from implementation are integrated into planning and management.

This culture of learning enables API to remain responsive to Cambodia's changing governance, economic, and environmental landscape.

API's sustainability depends on integrity, adaptability, and collaboration. By strengthening its people, systems, and resource base, the organization will remain a trusted and capable actor in Cambodia's democratic and social development for decades to come.

12. Conclusion and Forward Outlook



The **API Strategic Plan 2025 – 2028** reaffirms the organization’s enduring commitment to democratic governance, human rights, and inclusive development in Cambodia. It honors API’s 25-year legacy of connecting citizens and state institutions, while adapting to the new realities of economic transition, digital transformation, and climate risk.

Over the next five years, API will concentrate on four interconnected objectives: **Inclusive Governance, Economic Empowerment, Climate Action, and Civil Society Resilience**, guided by cross-cutting commitments to gender equality, inclusion, ethics, digital innovation, and sustainability. These priorities are not new directions but **the next evolution** of API’s proven approach: constructive engagement, evidence-based advocacy, and learning through partnership.

Success will be measured not only in completed activities or policies influenced, but in **trust built** between citizens and government, between local realities and national reform, between today’s decisions and the country’s sustainable future. As Cambodia continues its journey toward harmony, stability, and prosperity, API stands ready to play its part as a **trusted convener, capable advocate, and learning organization** dedicated to the long-term wellbeing of its people and planet.

API’s path forward is one of continuity with courage: carrying its values into a changing world, listening first, learning always, and leading by example.



13. Annexes



Annex A: Detailed Strategic Context

Annex B: Achievements 2019–2024

Annex C: Risk Management and Mitigation

Annex D: M&E Framework

Annex E: Strategic Budget Framework

Annex F: References and Endnotes

Annex G: Theory of Change and Alignment with National and Global Frameworks

Annex H: Program Framework Objectives, Results, and Activities

Annex A: Detailed Strategic Context

Cambodia's population grew from about 15 million in 2019 to nearly 17 million in 2023, with women making up a little over half of the total. The annual growth rate has been around one percent. Most Cambodians are of working age, while roughly one-third are under fifteen. The great majority of workers earn their living in the informal sector, where job security and social protection remain limited.

Political Context

The Cambodian People's Party has governed since 1979. Its rule has brought long-term peace and stability, but political competition has narrowed since the dissolution of the Cambodian National Rescue Party in 2017. In the 2022 commune elections the CPP won roughly four-fifths of the vote, and in 2023 it secured almost all seats in the National Assembly. Hun Manet succeeded Hun Sen as prime minister and launched the Pentagonal Strategy, a policy framework designed to sustain national development.

World Bank governance indicators show steady improvement in political stability and government effectiveness, but weaker scores for voice, accountability, and control of corruption. Internationally, Cambodia chaired ASEAN in 2022 and helped finalize the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Border clashes with Thailand in 2025 disrupted trade, migration, and tourism before a cease-fire was reached with ASEAN mediation. Although peace was restored, nationalism and tighter political control further constrained civic space.

Decentralization and Local Governance

The Royal Government has continued to expand the role of sub-national authorities through its Decentralization and Deconcentration reform. The first national program transferred dozens of functions and thousands of staff to district and municipal levels. A second ten-year program, now under way, increases both administrative and fiscal responsibility.

Progress is visible in the operation of One Window Service Offices and in stronger citizen confidence at local level. Remaining challenges include unclear accountability lines, uneven staff capacity, and limited public understanding of SNA roles. Surveys show citizens value transparency but seek better local infrastructure, clearer information, and more use of digital media for public communication.

Governance Awareness and Accountability

API's work confirms that many officials still lack a full grasp of citizen rights and that many citizens are uncertain about what local government is obliged to deliver. The International Budget Partnership rated Cambodia low on budget transparency and public participation. Engagement between citizens and authorities is generally constructive but would benefit from modern communication tools and stronger community-based organizations.

Greater transparency has emerged through the implementation of the Social Accountability Framework. Commune, school, and health-center budgets are now more visible, yet citizens often do not know they can attend council meetings or submit complaints. Improving grievance handling and awareness of ombudsman channels will strengthen local accountability.

Citizen Participation and Human Rights

Democratic space has narrowed. Political opposition and human-rights activism face increasing constraints, and public protests are often restricted. Policy development remains largely ministry-driven with little consultation. Civil-society inputs are seldom reflected in final laws, and marginalized groups rarely have the opportunity to contribute.

Evidence-based policymaking is improving but still limited by scarce resources and research capacity. The government increasingly seeks data and expert input from universities, think tanks, and development partners.

Human-rights monitoring by the United Nations notes continuing concerns about detention of activists, lack of judicial independence, and restrictions on freedom of expression. Cambodia ranked near the bottom of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in 2023. The forthcoming Access to Information Law is expected to be an important step toward greater openness.

Economic Context

Cambodia experienced a decade of rapid growth before the pandemic, averaging about seven percent a year and achieving lower-middle-income status. After a brief contraction in 2020, the economy recovered quickly, led by garment and footwear exports. By 2023–25, growth stabilized around five to six percent.

The 2025 border conflict with Thailand sharply reduced cross-border trade and displaced tens of thousands of people. Increased defense and humanitarian spending diverted resources from development. A proposed U.S. tariff on Cambodian exports also threatens factory employment in the garment sector, which supports hundreds of thousands of workers.

Industrialization and the creation of special economic zones have attracted investment but also concentrated wealth and weakened transparency. Many garment workers still earn less than before the pandemic and rely on informal loans. Household debt and migration have increased vulnerability to exploitation.

Women and youth entrepreneurs, especially street and market vendors, face limited access to credit, training, and representation in policy dialogue. Collaboration among government, business, and civil society remains weak. Expanding opportunities for women- and youth-led enterprises will require better coordination and stronger advocacy.

Social Context

Social protection is provided mainly through two channels: the National Social Security Fund for formal workers and assistance schemes such as the IDPoor and Health Equity Fund for vulnerable households. Informal workers, who form the bulk of the labor force, remain largely excluded. Out-of-pocket health costs account for most household spending on care, creating barriers for the poor.

The *Health Equity Fund* has improved access but needs broader coverage and higher service quality. Compliance issues and limited employer documentation continue to affect the national insurance system.

Legal Environment

Cambodia's judiciary remains weak and lacks transparency; court judgments are rarely public. The country ranks near the bottom of the global Rule of Law Index. Overlap between state and judicial authority undermines independence, while existing NGO and labor laws continue to constrain civil-society activity.

API's long-term advocacy for the Access to Information Law is expected to culminate in its adoption during the current planning period, improving citizen oversight of public institutions.

Technological Landscape

The government's Digital Government Policy 2022–2035 and Digital Economy and Society Framework aim to improve public services and build digital skills. Increased smartphone access and connectivity have accelerated change across all sectors.

The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat promotes the use of digital tools in local administration, enabling real-time monitoring and citizen feedback. Research on the fourth industrial revolution notes that automation will displace some jobs but also create new ones, highlighting the need for investment in skills development.

At the same time, cyber-security measures such as the 2021 National Internet Gateway and a draft Cyber Security Law raise concerns about privacy and freedom of expression. Continued vigilance is required to ensure digital transformation supports, rather than restricts, civic space.

Environmental Situation

Cambodia continues to face major environmental challenges, including deforestation, pollution, and climate vulnerability. Between 2001 and 2022 the country lost nearly a million hectares of tree cover, much of it in protected areas. Economic land concessions for rubber cultivation are a leading cause of forest loss, which in turn affects soil fertility, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods.

The nation is among the most climate-vulnerable in the world. Agriculture, water, forestry, fisheries, and tourism all depend on stable weather patterns. Floods and droughts are expected to intensify and could reduce national income by up to ten percent by 2050. The government has implemented the *Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014–2023* and is preparing a new plan for 2024–2033.

Public awareness and local engagement in climate action remain limited. Sub-national administrations often lack resources to integrate adaptation measures into local development plans. Waste management and industrial pollution continue to strain ecosystems, and marginalized communities bear the heaviest burden.

Annex B: Achievements 2019–2024

API's previous five-year strategy set out to achieve three main outcomes: policy influence, citizen engagement, and access to information and disclosure with a fourth goal to strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability. During this period, API combined evidence-based advocacy, citizen participation, and digital innovation to strengthen Cambodia's governance landscape.

Policy Influence

API worked at both national and sub-national levels to shape laws and policies that promote transparency and accountability. Advocacy contributed to eight national reforms, including the draft **Access to Information Law**, the **Public Procurement Law**, and creation of specific budget lines in the national budget for sub-national administrations and social-service development. API also helped advance the **Informal Economy Policy** and provided input on legislation related to digital rights, national budgeting, public-financial reform, and the Social Accountability Framework.

At the local level, API supported nearly 3,000 citizens to provide feedback to One Window Service Offices. Almost half of the issues raised by communities were resolved through these mechanisms, demonstrating a stronger link between citizens and service providers. More than 170 community-based organizations improved their advocacy, legal, and governance skills, enabling them to participate more effectively in planning and budgeting processes

Digital tools expanded API's reach. Seven platforms were developed, including the **Citizen Score Card**, used by almost 20,000 citizens and 7,000 government officials to improve education, health, and administrative services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, API provided online civic-education resources in Khmer, ensuring continued citizen learning and participation.

Citizen Engagement

Citizen empowerment remained the foundation of API's broader work on transparency and accountability. Between 2019 and 2024, the organization collaborated with 111 community-based organizations, more than 55,000 youth, and hundreds of facilitators and partner NGOs to promote responsive and inclusive decision-making. Citizen monitoring of sub-national services resulted in higher satisfaction among ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and young people. By 2021, most respondents reported noticeable improvements in the quality of local government performance. API operated in 19 provinces and Phnom Penh, engaging citizens in more than 600 communes and 90 districts. The work extended to 116 health centers and nearly 800 primary schools, where communities helped shape service delivery and development planning.

Access to Information, Natural-Resource Governance, and Climate Action.

Over the past five years, API's access-to-information agenda evolved from a focus on transparency in administration to a broader commitment linking information, environmental accountability, and climate resilience. The organization's work empowered nearly two million citizens to exercise their right to information, while 678 public institutions disclosed budget and service data for the first time.

Building on this foundation, API applied its governance and transparency expertise to natural-resource management and climate action. It contributed to Cambodia's **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)** through joint consultations led by the Ministry of Environment and NGO Forum, and continued to co-host the annual **National Advocacy Conference**, a platform for dialogue on access to environmental information.

Through partnerships with local authorities, API improved transparency and accountability in budgeting across 300 communes and 50 districts. The **Citizen Budget** App made real-time budget data from 381 communes and 55 districts publicly available, allowing citizens to engage officials using evidence. Budget analyses showed growth in overall district budgets but minimal allocation for natural resources, environment, and climate change, reinforcing the need for stronger sub-national investment in resilience.

API also empowered youth to lead community-based climate projects. Under the USAID Social Lab initiative, 27 young leaders designed and implemented waste-management projects in Phnom Penh, receiving public recognition for their leadership. Earlier partnerships with UNICEF, the EU, and Oxfam trained more than 700 youth volunteers to participate in local planning and budgeting. As a result, most communes now include youth priorities such as school retention, drug prevention, and waste management in their development plans.

Transparency work extended to environmental and budget data through the Access for All project funded by the U.S. Department of State. Communities submitted 116 formal information requests, of which twenty were fully or partly answered, improving access for almost 6,000 community members.

API's social-accountability projects in health engaged about 400,000 citizens in 400 communes and led to measurable improvements in service quality and waste management across 200 health centers. The organization also supported 170 community-based groups, including youth, women, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, to participate directly in commune and district planning. These groups have become confident advocates, helping ensure local plans reflect community priorities.

Since 2016, API has assisted more than 300 advocacy cases on land and resource rights, benefiting about 400,000 community members nationwide. Through initiatives such as Access for All and *Citizen Voice and Action for Sustainable Development*, indigenous and women leaders received training on rights-to-information and land advocacy.

Environmental education has also expanded. The **A-SASSY** project reached more than 4,000 students in 20 high schools and universities, helping integrate climate-change content into curricula and extracurricular programs. Working with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and other partners, API contributed to the development of a national environmental-education framework, including Khmer-language teaching materials. Students involved in Youth-for-SDG groups have since launched community climate-action projects, demonstrating growing local leadership.

Organizational Development and Partnerships

Throughout the planning period, API strengthened its internal systems and expanded its capacity. The organization’s annual budget increased by 60 percent, and expenditures more than doubled. Staffing grew from 17 to 38, with women representing nearly 45 percent of the team. In 2023, API introduced an online Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning database that tracks results across all projects and supports adaptive management.

API continued to play a coordinating role within Cambodia’s NGO sector, serving as chair of the **Access to Information Working Group** and as an active member of the Digital Rights, Social Protection for All, and Budget working groups. It also sat on the board of the **Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD)**, which evolved from the NGO Working Group on Decentralization and Deconcentration. These networks have strengthened API’s influence and fostered collaboration across civil society.

The organization’s commitment to accountability and good governance was recognized by the **Cooperation Committee for Cambodia**, which awarded API the Governance and Professional Practice Certificate in both 2019 and 2023. Development partners continue to regard API as a trusted and well-managed institution with strong relationships across government ministries, sub-national administrations, community organizations, and civil-society partners.

Annex C: Risk Management and Mitigation

Risk	Impact	Probability	Mitigation
Political matters			
Further shrinking of citizen's and NGOs' space to express their concerns	Increasing difficulty for API to engage citizens.	Low - Medium	API will: i. continue to foster close collaboration with ministries (i.e. Ministry of Interior) and relevant institutions (i.e. NCDD-S) for promoting democratic governance for sustainable development. ii. strengthen trust-building measures with RGC stakeholders iii. remain in close contact with key membership
Lack of transparency, combined with high levels of investment in Cambodia from select Asian countries will contribute to increasing difficulty for citizens to raise their voice about issues of their concern.	Increasing difficulty for API to engage citizens.	Low - Medium	
The Thai-Cambodia border conflict may cause the state of emergency	All projects implementation are freeze and pause the operation	Medium-Hight	API will take an immediate action to inform donors, partners and direct target group on the mitigation plan to ensure they are well informed about the project's pause, and they are safe.
National Election that leads the government are very sensitive to the NGOs actions and intervention related to HRs	The government may shut down the organization member(s) of the consortium for being involved with sensitive issues/high HRs profile case(s) and accuse them of supporting the work against the Government's mandate	Low-Medium	API and partners will maintain relationships and work closely with national NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and NGO networks, independent media institution(s) to seek legal and psychosocial support in this case
Insecure of digitalization	Data and emails could be attacked by hackers and websites and email periodically blocked	Low-Medium	API will build capacity of staff and partners on digital and cyber security; train them how to use licensed software; ensure system definition is up to date; use VPN to access the blocked; back up data.
Financial matters			
Reduction of international funding due to insufficient improvement of Cambodia's democratic governance.	Reduced funding for API's strategic activities	Low - medium	i. Collaboration with other CSOs and private sector to mobilize funds for development activities; ii. Strengthening API's capacity as an NGO is enhance API's eligibility for direct funding. iii. Establishment of API Capacity Development & Consultancy Pvt Ltd
Decreased funding due to (i) international conflicts (e.g. in the Middle East and Ukraine) and (ii) electoral outcomes shifting national budget priorities in Europe and USA.		Medium	

Annex D: M&E Framework

The following table specifies details of results with the indicators.

Overarching change goal Cambodia is a more harmonious and inclusive society with sustainable development through economic empowerment, better manage climate risks, inclusive policies, good governance and respect for democratic principles, human rights and GEDSI.		
Desired changes	(1) Result	(2) Indicator
1. Impact / Objective: Inclusive Policy, Democratic Governance and Human Rights	1. Good governance and democracy are strengthened through enhanced transparency, democratic accountability, inclusive public participation, and effective oversight mechanism in Public Financial Management Reform, Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform, the promotion of Human Rights	1.1. # of PFM & D&D reforms benefiting the citizens influenced by collective advocacy initiatives of CSOs. 1.2. % increased score in Open Budget Survey (OBS) 1.3. % increase in CSO members that feel empowered to engage in PFM & D&D processes.
Outcome/ Specific Objective	1.1. To increase the capacity and coordination of CSOs and their networks in advocating for budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources through joint initiatives and targeted capacity-building activities.	1.1.1. # of demands incorporated into national and local policies, frameworks, guidelines, commune investment or development plans on budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources. 1.1.2. % of civil society organisation members reporting increased confidence in joint initiatives to strengthen collective advocacy for budget transparency, accountability, and oversight.
Outcome/ Specific Objective	1.2. To improve citizen engagement in government policy formulation and enforcement through structured dialogues and by linking local challenges with national level on PFM, budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources, D&D, Governance, Democracy and HR policies and reforms	1.2.1. # of citizen demands related to PFM & D&D reforms through CSO platforms connecting citizens to national-level advocacy. 1.2.2. % increase in citizen satisfaction with opportunities to engage in local policy formulation, budget processes, and PFM reform & D&D reform.
Outcome/ Specific Objective	1.3. To increase public knowledge and exercise their right to access to information and freedom of expression; particularly access to info on comprehensive budget, legal frameworks, gov't plans and public info disclosure.	1.3.1. # of youth, women, and marginalised group representatives actively participating in budget transparency, accountability, and oversight advocacy campaigns or activities. 1.3.2. % increase in awareness of budget transparency, accountability, and oversight among youth, women, and marginalised groups' awareness.

<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>1.5 Increased citizen’s satisfaction and confidence in SNAs’ service delivery and structures.</p>	<p>1.5.1. # of citizens in target areas observing improved SNA performance as appears from citizen’s score cards and face to face dialogues. This % will be broken down by % of women and girls and % of marginalized people.</p>
<p>2.Impact / Objective: Economic Development and Informal Economy</p>	<p>2.The economic resilience and agency of women, youth and smallholder farmers are enhanced through strengthened inclusive policy frameworks, skills development, and market linkages by supportive ecosystem that foster equitable participation in both informal and agriculture economies.</p>	<p># of women, youth owned MSME, and smallholder farmers, self-employed workers are benefited and enhanced their business through API's let activities on inclusive policy dialogues, skills development, and market linkages.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>2.1. To strengthen capacity & voices of women and youth-led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), self-employed workers in informal economy along with the employability and business skills, through inclusive business policy frameworks and a supportive ecosystem.</p>	<p>2.1.1.# of women and youth-led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), self-employed workers strengthened capacity & voices by API.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>2.2. To strengthen the supporting systems, partnerships and enabling environment to enhance smallholder farmers’ agricultural productivity and market participation, technical skills, access to quality agricultural inputs, and market linkages.</p>	<p>2.2.1.# policy recommendations and actions made by API in collaboration with specialised CSOs, private companies, dialogued and implemented with and by the government to strengthen the supporting systems, partnerships and enabling environment to enhance smallholder farmers’ agricultural productivity and market participation, technical skills, access to quality agricultural inputs. and market linkages.</p>

<p>3. Impact/ Objective: Climate Action <u>and</u> Environmental Justice</p>	<p>3.An inclusive, climate-resilient society where empowered youth, vulnerable groups, responsible enterprises, and capable local institutions collaboratively drive sustainable environmental governance, climate adaptation and the equitable development.</p>	<p>3.1.# of policies and actions of API contributed to national and international climate change framework (ASEAN-EU Green Deal and others to achieve % emissions reduction targeting zero net emissions by 2050.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>3.1. To increase knowledge of citizens, esp. youth on the environment and climate change, and the capacity to better manage climate risks and to enhance youth-led initiatives on climate actions and advocacy.</p>	<p>3.1.1. # of citizens, particularly # youth 15-35 have accessed to e-learning platforms and receiving digital environment education program (EEP) learning. # of youth led initiatives and actions contribute actively to reduce impact of climate change and environmental degradation. # of community members benefiting from youth led initiatives and actions to reduce impact of climate change and environmental degradation.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>3.2. To amplify the voices of youth, and most vulnerable group (women, people with disability, indigenous people) from the communities and youth from high schools and universities on Natural Resources Governance and Climate Change at regional, national and sub-national levels.</p>	<p>3.2.1. The civil society, government authorities working with and recognising the roles and voices of youth, and most vulnerable group (women, people with disability, indigenous people) in addressing the climate impacts; environmental protections, delivering SDG; DRR, and fostering the ASEAN Youth- CSO- Local Government partnership outcomes. 3.2.2.# of youth, CSOs (NGOs and CBOs), government authorities have collaborated to act on SDG, climate change impacts, environmental protections and DRR.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>3.3. To support the Small, Medium and Large-scale enterprises to comply with Environmental compliance, responsible business.</p>	<p>3.3.1. # of Small, Medium and Large-scale enterprises engaged with API's activities and improve their compliance and practice with Environmental, Social Governance and (ESG) compliance on responsible business.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>3.4 To improve local community climate resilient and sustainable development.</p>	<p>3.4.1.# of CBOs and # Commune, # Districts allocated their budget in local planning and budgeting process in addressing the climate impacts; environmental protections, delivering SDG; DRR.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>3.5 To increase knowledge of the environment and climate change, and the related capacity of Sub-National Administrations (SNA) to better manage climate risks and enhance local authority-led initiatives on climate actions and advocacy</p>	<p>3.5.1.# of government officials and councillors have accessed to e-learning platforms and receiving digital environment education program (EEP) learning.</p>

<p>4.Impact / Objective: Civil Society Sustainability <u>and</u> Resilience</p>	<p>4. A sustainable and resilient civil society, where API and partners are transparently governed, financially sustainable, and strategically positioned through a dedicated social enterprise and dynamic networks to advancing inclusive development, through leadership, and transformative advocacy at all levels.</p>	<p>4.1.# of CSOs (NGOs and CBOs), gov't institutions, academic and business joined and benefited by API's works to build their resilience and sustainability.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>4.1 To enhance effective governance of API and its implementing partners are governed and managed effectively, transparently, and efficiently.</p>	<p>4.1.1. # awards and certificates and assessment report findings and actions implemented to enhance effective governance of API managed effectively, transparently, and efficiently. # Its implementing partner organisations are governed and managed effectively, transparently, and efficiently.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>4.2 To Develop API Capacity Development & Consultancy established as a separate legal entity/social enterprise and functioning and supporting API's mission and sustainability.</p>	<p>4.2.1.# of consultancy services provided in 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028.</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>4.3 To implement Local Fundraising that improves API's financial stability and strategic resource mobilization.</p>	<p>4.3.1.# of projects developed, funded and implemented by Local Fundraising. # amount of LFR raised in (USD).</p>
<p>Outcome/ Specific Objective</p>	<p>4.4 To enhance Institutional Fundraising and Networking: Enhance the CSOs network by creating joint advocacy platforms to build trust and align on shared goals, while also strengthening access to learning, networking, and exchange opportunities that civil society identifies as crucial for their success.</p>	<p>4.4.1. # of CSOs, Networks, Businesses engaged with API to enhance the CSOs network by creating joint advocacy platforms to build trust and align on shared goals and learning exchanges.</p>

Annex E: Strategic Budget Framework

01 Jan 2024 through 31 Dec 2028 (US\$)

No	Program Objectives	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
1	Inclusive Policies, and Democratic Governance and Human Rights	300K	300K	300K	300K	300K	1.5M
2	Local Economic Development and Informal Economy	300K	300K	300K	300K	300K	1.3M
3	Climate Action & Environmental Justice Development	300K	300K	300K	300K	300K	1.4.M
4	Civil Society Sustainability & Resilience	121K	76K	154K	191K	191K	733K
Total		1.021M	976K	1.054M	1.091M	1.091M	4.933M

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Annex G: Theory of Change and Alignment with National and Global Frameworks

Overarching change goal				
Cambodia is a more harmonious and inclusive society with sustainable development through economic empowerment, better manage climate risks, inclusive policies, good governance and respect for democratic principles and human rights.				
Desired changes	Inclusive Policy, Democratic Governance and Human Rights, and GEDSI Good governance and democracy are strengthened through enhanced transparency, democratic accountability, inclusive public participation, and effective oversight mechanism in Public Financial Management Reform, Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform, the promotion of Human Rights, and the mainstreaming of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles.	Economic Development and Informal Economy The economic resilience and agency of women, youth and smallholder farmers are enhanced through strengthened inclusive policy frameworks, skills development, and market linkages by supportive ecosystem that foster equitable participation in both informal and agriculture economies.	Climate Action & Environmental Justice An inclusive, climate-resilient society where empowered youth, vulnerable groups, responsible enterprises, and capable local institutions collaboratively drive sustainable environmental governance, climate adaptation and the equitable development.	Civil Society Sustainability & Resilience A sustainable and resilient civil society, where API and partners are transparently governed, financially sustainable, and strategically positioned through a dedicated social enterprise and dynamic networks to advancing inclusive development, through leadership, and transformative advocacy at all levels.
	Key Strategic objectives to achieve them	1.1. To strengthen the capacity of Sub-National Administrations and policy makers to exercise their role and responsibilities within the decentralized governance structure, in accordance with relevant laws and policies, to advance public financial management in the areas of education, social protection, public services, natural resources. This includes integrating GEDSI principles to ensure equitable access, representation, and benefits for women, men, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups, while promoting good governance, democracy, and human rights.	2.1. To strengthen capacity & voices of women and youth-led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), self-employed workers in informal economy along with the employability and business skills, through inclusive business policy frameworks and a supportive ecosystem. 2.2. To strengthen the supporting systems, partnerships and enabling environment to enhance smallholder farmers' agricultural productivity and market participation, technical skills, access to quality agricultural inputs, and market linkages.	3.1. To increase knowledge of citizens, esp. youth on the environment and climate change, and the capacity to better manage climate risks and to enhance youth-led initiatives on climate actions and advocacy. 3.2. To amplify the voices of the most vulnerable group (women, people with disability, indigenous people, youths) from the communities and youth from high schools and universities on Natural Resources Governance and Climate Change at regional, national and sub-national levels. 3.3. To support the Medium and large-scale enterprises to comply with Environmental compliance, responsible business.

<p>1.2. To enhance the capacity and coordination of CSOs and their networks in advocating for budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources through joint initiatives and targeted capacity-building activities. All efforts will integrate GEDSI considerations to strengthen the voice and influence of women-led, disability-focused, and community-based organizations representing marginalized groups, ensuring their priorities are reflected in advocacy and policy processes.</p> <p>1.3. To improve citizen engagement in government policy formulation and enforcement through structured dialogues and by linking local challenges with national level on PFM, budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources, D&D, Governance, Democracy and HR policies and reforms. GEDSI approaches will be applied to remove barriers to participation for underrepresented groups, including women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and rural communities, ensuring inclusive and meaningful engagement at all levels.</p> <p>1.4. To increase public awareness and capacity to exercise their right to access to information and freedom of expression; particularly with regard to comprehensive budget information, legal frameworks, gov't plans and public info disclosure. Information will be made available in accessible, inclusive, and gender-sensitive formats to enable equal access for all citizens, including those with low literacy, persons with disabilities, and speakers of minority languages, in line with GEDSI principles.</p>		<p>3.4 To improve local community climate resilient and sustainable development.</p> <p>3.5 To increase knowledge of the environment and climate change, and the related capacity of Sub-National Administrations (SNA) to better manage climate risks and enhance local authority-led initiatives on climate actions and advocacy</p>	
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Based on the assumptions that:

- The activity leverages a combination of constructive engagement with duty bearers combined with more focused support to rights holders, applying GEDSI principles to ensure that gender equality, disability inclusion, and social equity are embedded in all interactions.
- Focusing on women persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, LGBTQI+ individuals, and other people with diverse backgrounds as a social constituency—both as standalone and cross-cutting across the programme objectives. They have the necessary skills, knowledge, productive resources, technology and organization to claim rights and make sustainable and resilient livelihoods.
- API can create, access and facilitate mechanisms and platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue, and both citizens and the relevant national and sub-national authorities will engage and respond positively, resulting in citizens being able to hold their duty bearers to account and successful implementation of key initiatives in the API program.
- Capacity development activities with the different target groups will be successful and empower women, persons with disabilities, and people from diverse social backgrounds to act in multiple ways, overcoming the inherent constraints in their circumstances.
- Evidence-based research and monitoring will integrate GEDSI-disaggregated data to enable advocacy to influence both policy and practice.

Alignment with National and Global Frameworks

Strategic Alignment

The API Strategic Plan aligns closely with Cambodia’s national priorities and international frameworks that guide inclusive, sustainable development

Alignment with National Policies:

- **Economic Development and the Informal Economy**

This priority supports the Royal Government of Cambodia’s Pentagonal Strategy and related policy frameworks, including the National Social Protection Policy Framework (2024–2035) and the National Informal Economy Strategy (2023–2028). API’s work reinforces the government’s progressive efforts to address informality and promote equitable participation in Cambodia’s growing economy.

- **Climate Action and Environmental Justice**

This strategic priority aligns with the Pentagonal Strategy’s environmental sustainability pillar and the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2024–2033. The CCCSP outlines a ten-year roadmap toward carbon neutrality by 2050, addressing gaps in the country’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) and emphasizing inclusive, climate-resilient development. API’s focus on local climate governance, youth engagement, and civic accountability supports these national ambitions.

- **Inclusive Policy, Democratic Governance, Human Rights, GEDSI, and Civil Society Resilience**

These priorities correspond directly with the Pentagonal Strategy’s emphasis on effective governance, fundamental freedoms, and human dignity. API’s strategic plan strengthens the government’s goals on inclusivity and institutional resilience through:

- Advancing gender equality, disability inclusion, and social equity.
- Promoting civic participation and public accountability.
- Supporting civil society organizations to remain vibrant, independent, and sustainable.

- **Alignment with International Frameworks**

API’s strategic direction is fully aligned with the *UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) Cambodia 2024–2028*, particularly the outcome:

By 2028, people in Cambodia, especially those at risk of being left behind, live in an increasingly gender-equal and inclusive society with active civic space and enjoy more effective and accountable institutions.

- **Contributions to the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs)**

API's work contributes primarily to CSDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:

- ▶ **SDG 16.6:** Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.
- ▶ **SDG 16.6.2:** Proportion of the population satisfied with public services.
- ▶ **SDG 16.10:** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

In addition, API's strategy contributes to several cross-cutting Sustainable Development Goals:

- ▶ **SDG 1 – No Poverty:** Equal access to resources, services, and ownership
- ▶ **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** Inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning.
- ▶ **SDG 5 – Gender Equality:** Empowerment of women and girls as a fundamental human right.
- ▶ **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Inclusive, sustainable economic participation and decent work for all.
- ▶ **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities:** Economic, social, and political inclusion for all, promoting equity and non-discrimination.
- ▶ **SDG 13 – Climate Action:** Urgent measures to combat climate change and its impacts.

Annex H: Program Framework Objectives, Results, and Activities

This document outlines the Advocacy and Policy Institute’s (API) programmatic framework for the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan period. It translates API’s vision, mission, and theory of change into operational terms—defining the objectives, expected results, and key strategic activities that guide implementation across all thematic areas. The framework serves as a bridge between strategy and execution, ensuring coherence, accountability, and alignment with national priorities and global frameworks such as the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2024–2028).

Each objective in this document specifies the outcomes to be achieved, the specific issues being addressed, and the strategic actions through which API and its partners will deliver measurable change. The framework is also designed to support adaptive learning, cross-program integration, and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.

Objective 1: Inclusive Policy, Democratic Governance and Human Rights, and GEDSI

This objective anchors API’s commitment to strengthening democratic governance, inclusive policymaking, and human rights at both national and sub-national levels. It focuses on enhancing the capacity of local governments, civil society, and citizens to engage meaningfully in governance and public financial management processes. By integrating Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles, API aims to expand participation, transparency, and accountability—ensuring that marginalized voices are heard and that local governance systems uphold democratic values and human rights for all.

Outcome: SNAs are equipped with the knowledge and institutional capacity to effectively carry out their decentralized functions in alignment with relevant laws and policies, thereby contributing to strengthened public financial management and advancing democracy, inclusiveness, equality, and justice.

Specific issues to be addressed:

1. (D&D) Limited D&D Reform implementation capacity. Capacity development is needed to increase SNA staff’s understanding of their functions and responsibilities to be accountable to the citizens’ needs, particularly on social service, social protection and informal economy sector related issues. Most marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, old age people still do not access to social protection services. Youth limited skills and job opportunities in rural areas.
2. (Democratic governance) Limited youth and women voices and space to participate in local governance addressing the social and economic development issues in the community. They have limited awareness about democratic governance and understanding of their rights, and SNA functions to hold SNAs accountable for their performance, e.g. citizens’ right to attend meetings without invitation.

3. (Inclusive policy) Limited public participation in governance and policy dialogues in formulation and monitoring of laws and policies enforcement. Evidence-based policy research and recommendations have been insufficient. Due to access to information in Cambodia remains restricted, limiting transparency and public engagement, esp. On Public Financial Management Reform; human rights, right to information and digital rights and freedom of expression related to political, social and economic development and climate change.
4. (PFM) Cambodia has made some progress in budget transparency over the past decade, but significant gaps remain. The 2023 Open Budget Survey (OBS) transparency score stands at 43 out of 100, a modest improvement from 33 in 2021 and a significant rise from 15 in 2012. Despite this progress, Cambodia still ranks 72nd out of 125 countries. While the Pre-Budget Statement and Enacted Budget achieved high scores of 72 and 85, respectively, other documents, including the Executive's Budget Proposal (28), the Citizens Budget (42), and the Audit Report (43), scored much lower, indicating uneven transparency. Corruption remains a major challenge, particularly in public procurement. Cambodia's public procurement framework lacks transparency, technical guidelines, and adequate capacity. Cambodia still ranked 158th of the 180 countries on-TI's Corruption Perception Index in 2023. There is considerable scope for improvements, including adopting the A2I law, upholding the right to hold those in power accountable, checks on power.
5. (HR) Restrictions on freedom of expression, with some human rights defenders, political dissidents, and labour union leaders being detained for political reasons. The undermining of multiparty pluralism poses a challenge to democratic governance, highlighting the need to strengthen democratic values through good governance and the rule of law.

Strategic Alignment

- 1.1. To increase capacity of Sub-National Administrations and policy makers to exercise their role and responsibilities in the (decentralized) structure regarding to relevant laws and policies to strengthen public financial management in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources, good governance, democracy, and human rights.
- 1.2. To increase the capacity and coordination of civil society organizations and their networks in advocating for budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources through joint initiatives and targeted capacity-building activities.
- 1.3. To improve citizen engagement in government policy formulation and enforcement through structured dialogues and by linking local challenges with national level on PFM, budget transparency, accountability, and oversight in education, social protection, public services, and natural resources, D&D, Governance, Democracy and HR policies and reforms.
- 1.4. To increase public knowledge and exercise their right to access to information and freedom of expression; particularly access to info on comprehensive budget, legal frameworks, government plans and public info disclosure.

Strategic Activities:

1.1.1. Capacity Development to Sub-National Administration, particularly to new elected councillors and appointed officials, The Budget Office & Women Caucus in both the Senate and National Assembly through partnership with training institutes and organizations to implement capacity development measures on decentralized functions on OWSO, A2I, inclusive local planning (CIP, DIP), social accountability, oversight role of Public Financial Management, Gender Responsive Budgeting. This capacity development is including, training, monitoring, coaching, reflection and learning.

1.2.1. Enhance coalition and technical capacity of civil society organizations (BWG, ACWG, A2I, SP4All, W4All, and ISAF) to enable them to more effectively advocate for budget transparency, feminist financing, and accountability in key sectors based on the identified needs.

1.2.2. Strengthen synergies and collaboration amongst civil society organizations, development partners, governments, and private sector through building strategic partnership with key stakeholders in joint programs implementation and fundraising, conduct regular stakeholder mapping to analyse the synergies and strategic partnership approach and MoU.

1.3.1. Enhance capacity of grassroots youths, especially young women, indigenous people, and women-led Community Based Organizations (community-based organizations) and their members through training and research, to claim rights, demand transparency, and actively participate in local budget processes.

1.3.2. Conduct selected policy based analysis and dialogues between marginalised groups, civil society, private sector and government and parliaments on laws and policies different sectors including education, social protection, informal economy, public services, natural resources, climate change, democracy, local governance and human rights including the current laws on Access to Info Cyber Crime; Cyber Security; Internet Gateway, through leading and participating in the Access to Information Working Group (A2IWG), Digital Right Working Group, Social Protection for All and other civil society organizations and private sector associations (EuroCham, AmCham...etc).

1.3.3. Reinforce meaningful engagement youth, women and marginalised groups with government institutions, parliamentary and development partners to promote inclusive public participation, budget transparency, feminist financing, and oversight in the education, social protection, public services, and natural resources sectors through their existing mechanisms, including the local planning and budgeting in the commune investment plan and district investment plan (CIP, DIP), and social accountability mechanism and other mechanisms at local, national and regional levels.

1.4.1. Public awareness-raising campaigns to educate citizens about their rights and the importance of transparency and accountability, democracy, governance and human right, their right to access public info, public budget, public services in the education, social protection and natural resources sectors through social media, innovative ways and community outreach events and digital technology tools.

1.4.2 To monitor the implementation of the current laws, policies and programs promoting right to info and public disclosure and produce regular monitoring reports on how especially citizens, journalist and business can exercise the rights to information and the importance of info for the transparency and accountability, democracy, governance and their right to access public info and public budget and public services in the education, social protection, and natural resources sectors through joining the global and country base surveys including Open Budget Survey; Anti-Corruption Index; UPR Review Reports, Citizen Surveys on public service delivery and complaint handling of government and CSO's platforms...etc.).

GEDSI & Cross-cutting themes and approaches

Relevant Specific objectives

Objectives: 1.1 and 1.2

- At the national policy level, API – in coalition with WGs and/or concerned thematic/specialized CSO/NGOs – will advocate to decision makers (National Assembly, Senate, Government) to amend (when needed) or pass new legislation and regulations that introduce, enhance and make monitorable the principles and practices of gender equality, disability inclusion, and broader social inclusion. This will ensure that all disadvantaged and under-represented groups, including women, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and LGBTIQ+ communities, are systematically included in all SNA activities and their personnel structures.
- API and its CS allies will strengthen their individual and collective capacity for monitoring GEDSI inclusion (and reporting/communication findings) , and advocate for the creation of a specific Government Unit— independent or attached to one or more Ministries— dedicated to monitoring and publicly reporting on the implementation of inclusive principles, laws, and regulations by SNAs.
- API will train or re-train its staff, especially program/project designers at HQ level and field levels, on Do No Harm and GEDSI principles, enabling them to design and implement projects that are inclusive, equitable, and sensitive to the needs of marginalized groups.

Objectives: 1.3

- API will identify categories of citizens (by social and economic status, education, gender, age, etc.) according to their current level of access and engagement in SNAs activities and services, disaggregating data by urban/rural contexts and by sex, age, disability, and other diversity markers. This will help determine their specific priorities, needs, and self-advocacy capacity levels.
- API will conduct research to identify the citizens priorities and needs, publish the findings to the public and relevant authorities, and design projects based on them. Particular focus will be given to under-represented and disadvantaged groups, including indigenous people, with a particular focus on women, girls, youth (particularly from indigenous uneducated communities) and persons with disabilities in all SNAs processes.

- Particularly in rural contexts, API will advocate for SNAs to link between Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience and the citizens' economic needs, ensuring the active involvement of women (often the most affected by climate impacts), youth (most concerned about the future), and marginalized groups in decision making. This includes strengthening their capacity to monitor and report misconduct by SNAs and service providers.
- API will train or re-train its staff on Do No Harm and GEDSI principles to ensure projects in environmental governance and climate resilience are gender-responsive, socially inclusive, and free from harm.

Objectives: 1.4

- API will advocate for women, youth and disadvantaged groups and minorities of all kinds (including indigenous people) to be prioritized in NGO/civil society organizations' assistance, education and development projects. Proposals to development partners (development partners) will include a strong component of gender-responsive budgeting and targeted support for these groups.
- API will offer particular support to with women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minority representatives in leadership and decision-making roles, promoting gender-balanced and inclusive governance structure.
- API will train, mentor and provide follow-up support to women, youth, disadvantaged groups and minority representatives who aspire to leadership roles in community-based organizations. Training programs will emphasis organizational, advocacy, communication and financial management skills while intending gender leadership frameworks.
- API will advocate for accessible and inclusive information, education and community trainings on Access to Information, ensuring content is available in formats and languages accessible to PwDs and minority language speakers.
- API will advocate to relevant authorities, at all levels, for the implementation of the principle that all citizens—regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, or minority status—have the same right to fully access public information, adapting communication formats as needed. In certain cases, this means adapting the public communication to specific needs of groups (PwDs and indigenous language-speaking communities, among others).
- API will advocate and protect the human right to Freedom of Expression and Communication, ensuring these rights are fully enjoyed by all citizens, including those from marginalized and underrepresented groups.

Objective 2: Economic Development and Informal Economy

Building on API's governance expertise, this objective focuses on strengthening the economic resilience and agency of women, youth, and smallholder farmers. It addresses systemic barriers that limit participation in both the informal and agricultural economies—such as restricted access to finance, markets, and policy influence. Through capacity building, policy dialogue, and partnership development, API seeks to foster inclusive and sustainable economic systems where all citizens, particularly those in vulnerable or marginalized groups, can benefit from equitable opportunities and contribute to Cambodia's economic growth.

Outcome: The economic resilience and agency of women, youth and smallholder farmers are enhanced through strengthened inclusive policy frameworks, skills development, and market linkages by supportive ecosystem that foster equitable participation in both informal and agriculture economies.

Specific issues to be address:

1. Women and youth led entrepreneurs and self-employed workers in the informal economy limited voices in policy environment, business ecosystems, entrepreneurship and employability skills and employment opportunities. Additionally, they are limited access to the finances to start-up businesses, in debt, and lack financial literacy and business management. Women's entrepreneurs lack business leadership (Pact 2019) as less than 2% of women's businesses are formally registered with the government, and 99% of Cambodian MSMEs have less than 10 staff. Women make up many entrepreneurs, but the more formalized and the bigger, the fewer enterprises are women-led.
2. Farmers have limited agricultural skills adapted to the climate change, agricultural inputs, and access to the market and the market linkages. Smallholder farmers in Cambodia are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts including droughts, floods, and shifting growing seasons. Many limited access to updated agricultural knowledge and technologies.
3. Agricultural cooperatives (AC) are critical for scaling sustainable farming and improving market access. However, many ACs in Cambodia face the challenges of weak governance and financial management including limited access to green finance and climate-smart technologies.
4. Systemic barriers to women economic participation, and advocate effectively for more responsive and inclusive government support services, mechanisms and policies, including access to social protections. Limited access to reliable business information, complex and unclear administrative procedures at One Window Service Offices (OWSOs), inconsistent service delivery, restrictive financial requirements including collateral for loans, and high interest rates, all of which mirror the challenges identified in the country and regional assessments.

Specific Objectives:

- 2.1. To strengthen capacity & voices of women and youth-led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), self-employed workers in informal economy along with the employability and business skills, through inclusive business policy frameworks and a supportive ecosystem.
- 2.2. To strengthen the supporting systems, partnerships and enabling environment to enhance smallholder farmers' agricultural productivity and market participation, technical skills, access to quality agricultural inputs, and market linkages.

Strategic Activities:

2.1.1. Strengthen the enabling environment for inclusive economic empowerment through collaborative efforts for advancing policies, institutional frameworks and coordination that support women entrepreneurs and youth in accessing employability and entrepreneurship skills, financial services, and market opportunities. API will facilitate inclusive dialogue, evidence-based advocacy with government authorities, private sectors, NGOs to ensure responsive, gender-sensitive, and youth-inclusive systems that promote equitable access to economic resources and opportunities.

2.1.2. Conduct policy analysis and structured dialogues to elevate the voices of informal business owners, particularly women and youth, between government, civil society, private sector associations (EuroCham, AmCham...etc) on local economic development and informal economy related laws and policies and programs.

2.1.3. Increase awareness and understanding among women entrepreneurs and youth of their business rights, legal and tax obligations, and procedures for formal registration. API will collaborate with relevant government agencies including the One Window Service Offices (OWSO), legal aid providers, and civil society actors to facilitate outreach and capacity-building initiatives that demystify regulatory processes, reduce administrative barriers, and promote equitable access to formalization services and protections.

2.1.4. Facilitate inclusive economic ecosystems by supporting women entrepreneurs and youth to connect with business associations, cooperatives, and peer learning networks. API will promote institutional linkages, and multi-stakeholder coordination to strengthen platforms for shared learning, mentorship, and collective advocacy. These efforts aim to enhance access to market information, business development services, and collaborative opportunities that foster resilience, innovation, and inclusive growth.

2.1.5. Promote meaningful engagement of women entrepreneurs, youths to promote local economic planning, and inclusive local policies through the existing government led mechanisms.

2.2.1. Partner with organizations that specialize in agricultural extension, climate-smart practices, and financial literacy, to strengthen enabling policies, institutional coordination, and inclusive systems that support smallholder farmers, particularly women, with access to climate-smart agriculture (CSA) training, financial literacy, and inclusive markets. API will facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration, policy dialogue, and capacity development to ensure that service providers and local authorities are responsive to the needs of smallholder farmers and aligned with climate-smart and environmentally sustainable practices.

2.2.2 Facilitate inclusive learning platforms and awareness campaigns, and by engaging farmers in participatory processes with local governments to ensure their voices are reflected in climate adaptation strategies, agricultural extension services, and decision-making that shape sustainable land use and resource management.

2.2.3 Strengthen the institutional capacity of Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) to support their members in accessing green finance for sustainable agriculture, and connecting to inclusive markets. API will work with financial institutions, government agencies, and civil society partners to improve ACs' governance, financial literacy, and business planning capabilities, while advocating for enabling policies and mechanisms that facilitate climate-resilient investments and market linkages, and support them to participate in local economic planning, and development of inclusive local policies through the existing government led mechanisms.

GEDSI & Cross-cutting themes and approaches

Relevant Specific objectives

2.2.3 Strengthen the institutional capacity of Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) to support their members in accessing green finance for sustainable agriculture, and connecting to inclusive markets. API will work with financial institutions, government agencies, and civil society partners to improve ACs' governance, financial literacy, and business planning capabilities, while advocating for enabling policies and mechanisms that facilitate climate-resilient investments and market linkages, and support them to participate in local economic planning, and development of inclusive local policies through the existing government led mechanisms.

Objective 2.1:

- API will advocate for economic rights and workers' rights implementation/enforcement for all citizens. In doing so, particular emphasis will be exercised on monitoring implementation (by private companies, State companies and individual business-owners) of these rights, which need to be equally extended to all workers and citizens, without any discrimination, in particular by gender, age, ethnicity, location.

Objective 2.2:

- All citizens working in the informal sector must be supported to achieve full recognition of their worth and contribution to the Country's economy, without penalties of any kinds. They must enjoy the maximum levels of available social protection. Transition to formal status and access to trainings and mechanisms to create MSME should be a focus of API projects.
- Women, in particular, who represent a consistent share of this informal sector, should be protected and assisted with some forms of "positive discrimination". API projects will focus on them in particular, like on workers of the informal sector who live in disadvantaged urban settings, or isolated rural territories.

- Particularly in rural contexts, API will advocate for SNAs to focus on the link between Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience and citizens working in informal and agriculture sectors, to address their economic needs and promote the involvement of women (the most affected by climate emergencies) and youth (the most concerned by the future of their local environment) in local businesses.
- API will train or re-train its Staff, in particular program/project designers at HQ level and Field Staff, on Do No Harm principles and practices, in order to properly design projects and implement them according to DNH.

Objective 3: Climate Action and Environmental Justice

This objective responds to Cambodia’s growing vulnerability to climate change by promoting inclusive, community-driven environmental governance. It emphasizes the empowerment of youth, women, and marginalized groups to participate in climate adaptation, advocacy, and natural resource management. By bridging environmental justice and development, API works to strengthen local institutions, promote responsible business practices, and foster a culture of environmental stewardship and resilience—ensuring that climate action contributes to both ecological sustainability and social equity.

Outcome: An inclusive, climate-resilient society where empowered youth, vulnerable groups, responsible enterprises, and capable local institutions collaboratively drive sustainable environmental governance, climate adaptation and the equitable development.

Specific Issues:

1. (Govt and development partners) Cambodia is ranked as the 12th most vulnerable country to climate change worldwide. It is projected that by the 2040s, approximately 4 million people could be affected by severe river flooding. Additionally, significant floods and droughts are anticipated to result in a loss of 10% of Cambodia’s GDP by 2050. And the government led the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance – Phase 3 represents a policy shift towards recognizing the critical role of non-state actors to address climate change related issues. The government now acknowledges that achieving climate goals requires broad participation from various stakeholders.
 2. The public has very poor knowledge, practice, and participation regarding climate change and environmental issues.
 3. Farmers and community-based organizations (community forestry, community fisheries, and community protected areas) lack knowledge and practice of climate change, climate-smart agricultural techniques, local fundraising, and sustainable practices.
- (Private sector) The discharge of wastewater from factories and private enterprises into water sources, canals, and seas has significant impacts on the environment, human health, and biodiversity. This issue is exacerbated by inadequate legal compliance and environmental enforcement within the private sector.

4. (Local Govt) There is a limited sub-national budget allocation for integrating climate adaptation into Commune Development Plans (development partners) and annual investment programs. Additionally, there is limited governmental capacity for managing garbage and plastic bags in urban and public areas. Poor law enforcement and insufficient political support contribute to the deterioration and exploitation of natural resource management (NRM), disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, who are highly vulnerable. (government)

Specific Objectives:

- 3.1 To increase knowledge of citizens, esp. youth on the environment and climate change, and the capacity to better manage climate risks and to enhance youth-led initiatives on climate actions and advocacy.
- 3.2 To amplify the voices of the most vulnerable group (women, people with disability, indigenous people, youths) from the communities and youth from high schools and universities on Natural Resources Governance and Climate Change at regional, national and sub-national levels.
- 3.3 To support the Medium and large-scale enterprises to comply with Environmental compliance, responsible business.
- 3.4 To improve local community climate resilient and sustainable development.
- 3.5 To increase knowledge of the environment and climate change, and the related capacity of Sub-National Administrations (SNA) to better manage climate risks and enhance local authority-led initiatives on climate actions and advocacy

Strategic Activities:

- 3.1.1 Increase awareness of climate change and environmental issues through education and legal frameworks for youth and communities.
- 3.1.2 Empower local communities in engaging with local governments on climate budgeting.
- 3.1.3 Facilitate dialogues between citizens/youth and private businesses or investment projects to enforce legal measures, educate the community on access to information and participation in environmental and social impact assessments (EIA); promote participation from all relevant stakeholders and strengthen oversight.
- 3.1.4 Support natural resource management within the community (protection, conservation, patrolling) through small advocacy grants, ICT tools, and social media.
- 3.2.1 Involve vulnerable groups in initiatives and governmental decision-making processes to address Nationally Determined Contributions on Climate Change through partnerships with NGOs, international NGOs, and key stakeholders including MoE, MAFF, NCDM, PIN, and ActionAid.

3.2.2 Facilitate policy dialogue on climate change and provide access to information related to climate change policy (NDC 3.0, Green Procurement, Environmental Code, Green Business) at the sub-national administrations and central, regional, and international governments.

3.2.3 Empower citizens, especially women, youth, and the most disadvantaged individuals, to communicate their concerns to government and private sector entities regarding environmental compliance of enterprises.

3.3.1 Partner with local and international businesses, civil society, and government institutions to build capacity and advocate for environmental compliance and responsible business practices in medium and large-scale enterprises.

3.4.1. Improve the capacity and sustainability of NRMs community-based organizations by providing specialized training in governance, financial management, proposal writing, evidence-based advocacy, local fundraising, livelihood, and business skills. Train community-based organizations to use social media as tools to engage the public with natural resources and support community-based organizations in local fundraising efforts and launching local fundraising campaigns. This includes storytelling, photos, videos, NRM conservation work, and community engagement activities, aiming to reduce dependency on donors.

3.5.1 Implementation of Social Accountability focused on environment and climate change.

3.5.2 Implement Green Initiative and manage climate risks at various locations: Regularly train SNA to keep them updated about environmental laws, climate change compliance, and equip them with skills for effective action.

3.5.3 Advocate for local authorities to allocate more budget on climate action.

3.5.4 Develop climate tracking tools for local authorities to report climate change issues in the community.

GEDSI & Cross-cutting themes and approaches

Relevant Specific objectives

Objective 3.1:

- Youth-led environment-related projects will be prioritized. Young individuals (girls in particular) and groups (led by girls, in particular) will be supported and strengthened with trainings, mentoring and, when doable, financial support or other material support.
- API will facilitate the formation of climate-focused youth groups.
- Information and education campaigns, tailored on and aimed at youth will be prioritized and conducted in plain, accessible language. The connection between environmental justice, development and economic rights will be stressed to the youth.
- Rural and indigenous youth will be informed supported tailoring projects and information to their specific interests, needs and priorities.
- Emphasis will be put on women and young girls' equal right to participate in the fight to protect the environment and their potential leading roles in making the overall societies and families more aware of Climate issues, and more active in talking these issues.

Objective 3.2:

- Vulnerable groups will be given priority in all information and education campaigns, with the specific aim of empowering them to speak out and advocate (at local and national levels) about their specific concerns, needs and priorities when it comes to NRM, environmental justice, resilience and climate-related emergencies.
- API will collaborate with partners on, or initiate projects of informal education on climate-related issues, particularly in disadvantaged settings and communities.
- When collaborating with schools and universities, API will request quotas or particular attention to the interests, needs and priorities of young girls, PwDs, and minority students. Study materials and training curricula should reflect this particular attention, and be informed to modern and scientific principles.
- API will train or re-train its Staff, in particular program/project designers at HQ level and Field Staff, on Do No Harm principles and practices, in order to properly design projects related to the environment and implement them according to DNH.

Objective 3.3:

- When monitoring private and State enterprises compliance with environmental rules and legislation, API will focus on identifying and timely reporting instances of violation, and advocating with concerned actors (business owner, managers, workers, affected citizens) and competent authorities for punishment or swift remedial measures.
- The interests, health and rights of citizens, particularly small, under-represented communities without a voice, who are directly affected by environmental crimes or misbehaviour must always be a priority for API and guide its advocacy activities.

Objective 3.4:

- When advocating or training local communities, urban or rural, on livelihoods and sustainable development, API will offer particular support to highly disadvantaged, under-developed and under-represented citizens and groups. Women and youth in both settings should be recognized as pillars and beneficiaries of decent livelihoods and key actors for any more sustainable development. Any project aimed at improving livelihoods and bringing development should be as environmental-friendly as possible and based on sustainability and long-term (not short-term) benefits for the communities and the environment.

Objective 4: Civil Society Sustainability & Resilience

Recognizing that strong civic institutions are essential for democratic and sustainable development, this objective focuses on building API's and its partners' organizational strength, transparency, and financial independence. It seeks to cultivate a resilient civil society ecosystem through capacity development, local and institutional fundraising, and collaborative networks that enable joint advocacy and shared learning. By developing API's own social enterprise and enhancing internal governance systems, this objective ensures that API and its partners remain credible, adaptive, and sustainable actors in Cambodia's evolving civic landscape.

Outcome: A sustainable and resilient civil society, where API and partners are transparently governed, financially sustainable, and strategically positioned through a dedicated social enterprise and dynamic networks to advancing inclusive development, through leadership, and transformative advocacy at all levels.

Specific Issues:

1. **Capacity and Sustainability Challenges:** civil society organizations (NGOs, community-based organizations) face financial instability, legal and institutional constraints, and the need for improved organizational capacity, resource mobilization, and diversifying incomes. These challenges are further complicated by gaps in program-based funding across multiple donors, particularly after the cessation of US grants worldwide.
2. **Reduced Funding and Increased Competition:** The cessation of US grants and reduced foreign aid from the European Union have led to financial pressures and increased competition for limited funds among local and international NGOs.
3. **Lack of Cooperation and Cohesion:** Limited cooperation and cohesion among civil society organizations hamper joint advocacy efforts and development outcomes. Cambodian civil society organizations and civic actors face challenges in maintaining close-knit processes for effective peer-to-peer learning.
4. **Funding Predictability and Skill Gaps:** Donors recognize the need for greater funding predictability to ensure sustainability and resilience for organizations focused on governance, rights, and civil society. Additionally, skill gaps in business, particularly in the informal sector, are a major concern and priority for the Cambodian Government.

Specific Objectives:

4.1 To enhance effective governance of API and its implementing partners are governed and managed effectively, transparently, and efficiently.

4.2 To Develop API Capacity Development & Consultancy established as a separate legal entity/social enterprise and functioning and supporting API's mission and sustainability.

4.3 To implement Local Fundraising that improves API's financial stability and strategic resource mobilization.

4.4 To enhance Institutional Fundraising and Networking:

Enhance the civil society organizations network by creating joint advocacy platforms to build trust and align on shared goals, while also strengthening access to learning, networking, and exchange opportunities that civil society identifies as crucial for their success.

Strategic activities:

4.1 Effective Governance and Knowledge Sharing: API's Executive Committee and BoD will review and, where necessary, update the organizational policies and ensure that all are readily available for donor assessments. API should strengthen its implementing partners and its capacity for internal control, its human resource management system, and update its funding and communication strategy, as well as its monitoring, evaluation, and learning system.

4.2 API Development Consulting: API runs a social enterprise called "API Development Consulting" to provide civil society, development partners, government, and the private sector with the best services to fulfill their needs by social enterprise-based high-quality training and consultancy services. API should also have the internal capacity to share its organizational knowledge, expert staff, and best practices with other NGOs, MSMEs, and, when applicable, to community-based organizations and informal groups.

4.3.1 Local Fundraising: API adopted various methods of local fundraising including community events, partnerships with private sectors, collaboration with youth leaders, and direct outreach to individual donors, to improve strategic resource mobilization and support financial stability.

4.4.1 Institutional Fundraising and Networks: To strengthen collaboration and build trust, API will focus on enhancing relationships and networks among civil society organizations, fostering a cohesive environment for joint advocacy and fundraising efforts. By leveraging shared goals and creating unified platforms, API aims to facilitate collaboration on proposal development, ensuring strategic resource mobilization and sustainable support for civil society initiatives.

GEDSI & Cross-cutting themes and approaches

Relevant Specific objectives

GEDSI & Cross-cutting themes and approaches

Relevant Specific objectives

Objective 4.1:

- All projects, activities, and internal reorganizations of API and partner civil society organizations must be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles and practises of GEDSI. This includes ensuring equitable representation, equal voice, and equal opportunities for all staff, with emphasis on competent female staff and individuals from marginalized or minority groups.
- API will provide initial and refresher training for its Staff, particularly program/project designers at HQ level and field staff, on GEDSI principles as well as on the “Do No Harm” approach. This will ensure that projects are appropriately designed and implemented in ways that promote inclusion, avoid reinforcing inequalities, and prevent any unintended harm.
- API will strengthen its internal capacity to document, disseminate, and to share organizational knowledge, technical expertise, and best practices with other NGOs, MSMEs and, where relevant, with community-based organizations and informal community groups, to promote cross-learning and wider adoption of inclusive practices

Approaches:

Objective 4.1 and 4.2 Please see full API Development Consulting Business Plan 2024-28.

Action 4.4.2: These events leverage the energy and creativity of young people, fostering community engagement and responsibility. They also create opportunities to connect donors and sponsors with community-based organizations, ensuring resources are directed to where they are most needed, enhancing the sustainability and resilience of community-based organizations

Objective 4.4:

The CSO network is strengthened by developing joint advocacy platforms to foster trust and align on shared goals, involving entities including CPDD, DRWG, CPS, CtGA, SP4All, BWG, TrustLaw, A2IWG, EuroCham, AmCham, and by joining regional and international networks. Efforts are made to enhance access to learning, networking, regional network participation, and exchange opportunities identified by civil society as critical for the success of their work.

API will hold 4 general staff meetings per year, 6 Executive Committee meetings per year and 2 Board of Directors meetings per year. API’s Executive Committee and BoD will review and, where necessary, will update the organizational policies and ensure that all are readily available for donor assessments. Also, the actions required by the RGC will be complied with. API’s will also strengthen its capacity for internal control, its human resource management system, and update its funding and communication strategy, as well as its monitoring, evaluation and learning system. A staff capacity plan will be developed in 2024 and implemented in the subsequent years.



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ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

ADVOCACY AND POLICY INSTITUTE

**A leading Cambodian NGO active in advocacy,
policy influencing, capacity building,
good governance and dialogue facilitation
between citizens and state actors**

The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API) is a Cambodian non-governmental organisation active in advocacy, policy influencing, good governance and civic engagement. Capacity building and dialogue facilitation are at the heart of our efforts towards democratic and sustainable development.

We have received widespread acclaim from both local and international organisations for our reliability, relevance and professionalism. Over a time span of almost two decades, API has helped institutionalise advocacy skills and has been striving to make local democratic and accountable governance a reality. To these ends, we have been conducting more than 300 training courses for over 10,000 participants affiliated with civil society and community-based organisations, local councils, media outlets, trade unions, Government institutions and the Cambodian Parliament.

API is unique in the Cambodian civil society in serving as a connector and facilitator for citizens' empowerment in their interaction with government at all levels. API has acquired first-hand experience on policy issues like access to information (A2I) through its grassroots work. Based on this vast experience, we are in the best position to make the voices of ordinary citizens count in policy-making at the national level. Here we have been trying to support government actors serve citizens according to the law and contribute to an enabling environment for citizens and civil society to express their concerns. Finally, we have been playing an important role in helping citizens understand their rights, access to information and make use of the opportunities for engagement offered by various laws and government policies.

Our programmes are guided by a human rights based approach. API serves all Cambodians and values the diversity of gender, sexual orientation and identity, (dis)ability, ethnicity, faith and political opinions. At the same time, we are especially committed to supporting the most disadvantaged in their efforts to make their voices heard.

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