

Consultation Meeting of the World Bank Group on Cambodia's Systematic Country Diagnostic
Sihanoukville, 25 November 2016
Summary of discussions with elected government officials at the provincial, district and commune levels

Top Three Issues raised: (i) healthcare; (ii) disaster risk management and resilient infrastructure; (iii) agriculture

Priority areas for action

Healthcare

- If people are poor in terms of health, they cannot be productive in work or in school.
- Access to quality health services in Cambodia needs to be improved, particularly in rural areas.
- Due to the lack of adequate facilities and equipment in health centers, many patients need to be sent overseas for treatment.
- Out of pocket expenditure is a serious concern, and many households have to borrow money when surgery is required.
- Lack of skilled medical workers is also a challenge. This will require additional training for existing workers as well as strengthening the quality of training for people joining the workforce.
- All Cambodians should receive one free health check per year, similar to other countries.
- Improvements are also required in the humane treatment of patients and in medical ethics.

Disaster risk management and resilient infrastructure

- Droughts and floods present major challenges – in addition to destroying infrastructure, they cause many people to lose their assets, including their homes, and become indebted.
- Infrastructure needs to be revamped, including improvements in roads and connectivity, to facilitate everyone's participation in growth. Since the quality of the roads built is low, they need to be continuously rebuilt and repaired. In particular, secondary and rural roads are in bad shape, making it difficult for people in remote areas to transport and trade during the rainy season.
- There is a need to improve infrastructure quality standards, and to address the underlying issues of corruption and cheap bidding in infrastructure projects.

Agriculture

- Cambodia needs to increase its agricultural productivity by expanding irrigation and facilitating the acquisition of equipment.
- Currently, hotels have to import fruits and vegetables due to lack of good refrigeration and facilities.
- There is also a need to improve production techniques; currently Cambodia is behind Vietnam.

Institution, governance, and public service delivery

- This is a cross-cutting priority that would result in improvements in many sectors. Assessments are needed to gain a better understanding of the specific public service delivery needs of different provinces.

Cost of doing business (including informal fees)

- Companies help bring investment and employment into the country. To facilitate additional foreign investment, Cambodia needs to reduce the informal fees that raise the cost of establishing and operating a business.

Education and skills

- Although nearly all children attend primary school, many students at the secondary level (especially girls) are forced to leave. Secondary and higher education are very relevant to respond to firms' needs, and to have well-educated citizens.

Water management

- There is lack of freshwater for use in coastal provinces, particularly Koh Kong and Sihanouk.

Electricity and energy

- The cost of electricity is very high, and it is difficult to access in rural areas.

Violence and crime

- Although there is stability and the incidence of violence is very low, theft and drugs are problems.