

Guidelines for Partner organisations to implement harmonised procedures for identification of poor households in rural areas

1. Introduction and background information

In Cambodia, a range of governmental and non-governmental institutions currently use different procedures for identifying poor households. As a result they obtain results which are not comparable, and in some cases carry out identification in the same areas, duplicating effort and resulting in inefficient use of resources. The criteria for such identification activities are mostly project- and sector-specific, and the results are often not shared with other organisations, projects or programmes.

A National Forum organised by the Ministry of Planning and GTZ in February 2005 showed broad consensus on the need to develop standardised national guidelines for identification of poor households. A Working Group on Identification of Poor Households was established in June 2005 as a sub-working group of the Technical Working Group on Planning & Poverty Reduction. A smaller Core Group was created, which worked in 2005 and 2006 on the development of standardised procedures and criteria for identification of poor households in rural areas (procedures for urban areas were not considered to be a top priority). Core Group members included representatives of the ministries of Planning, Health, Education, and Interior, as well as organisations including GTZ, World Bank, World Food Programme and URC.

The Ministry of Planning, in consultation with the Working Group on Identification of Poor Households, and with the support of GTZ¹, has now developed standardised Procedures and a Questionnaire for Identification of Poor Households, and is implementing these in the target provinces of Siem Reap, Kratie and Prey Veng. In the areas covered by the Ministry of Planning identification process, standardised procedures and criteria implemented by local government structures will provide a single source of data on poor households that will enable service providers to target those who most need assistance.

Harmonisation of Procedures for Identification of Poor Households

The Ministry of Planning (MOP) is still building capacity and seeking additional resources to expand its identification activities to other areas of the country. Meanwhile, the MOP wishes to encourage other organisations and institutions that are currently implementing or planning to implement identification of poor households in rural areas, to harmonise their procedures as much as possible with the national Procedures for Identification of Poor Households. This will enhance their ability to obtain widely accepted results that are comparable from area to area, and to target services to the poor in a coordinated way. Use by partner organisations of similar procedures for identification, involving Commune Councils and ensuring the participation of local people in the process, will also help to create a foundation that the Ministry of Planning can build on when expanding its own identification activities to other areas of the country. The overall goal of the Ministry of Planning is to build the capacity of local structures to implement the Procedures for Identification of Poor Households, including the Provincial Departments of Planning, Provincial Departments of Local Administration, and Provincial and District Facilitation Teams; and especially Commune Councils and villagers themselves (in the form of Village Representative Groups).

¹ In April 2006, the Identification of Poor Households Project, supported by the German Government through GTZ, was established to assist the Ministry of Planning to finalise standardised procedures for identifying poor households and to put them into practice in selected provinces, as well as to reach consensus at national level regarding the common use of these procedures for wider implementation.

With the above goals in mind, the Ministry of Planning has prepared these Guidelines for Partner Organisations, which outline some principles and requirements to assist partner organisations to harmonise the procedures and criteria they use for identification of poor households in rural areas.

Note: the Ministry of Planning (MOP) has not yet developed Procedures or a questionnaire for urban areas (however, it is intended to do so in the near future). The current procedures and tool are only intended for use in rural areas and are **not suitable for use in urban areas**.

Management

At the national level, the Ministry of Planning has a small team, supported by GTZ, responsible for management of identification of poor households. The team:

- Prepares and updates the Procedures for Identification of Poor Households and Questionnaire, in consultation with stakeholders.
- Develops all training materials.
- Prepares all supplementary forms, documents, guidelines required for implementation at the local level.
- Carries out training of Core Trainers and staff of the Provincial Departments of Planning (PDOPs) and Provincial Local Administration Units (PLAUs), as well as provides guidance and support to training at lower levels.
- Coordinates with Provincial Departments of Planning to implement identification activities in target areas.
- Provides guidance and support, as well as carries out monitoring, during implementation of Identification activities at the sub-national level.
- Consults with and disseminates information to stakeholders at the national and provincial levels.
- And other tasks...

In provinces that the Ministry of Planning is implementing identification of poor households, the PDOP is responsible for overall management, coordination and monitoring of the process. The PLAU also takes part in coordinating and guiding activities of the Provincial and District Facilitation Teams (PFTs and DFTs), as well as in monitoring implementation at the commune and village level. PFTs and DFTs are responsible for training commune and village-level implementers of the Procedures; for providing guidance and support during implementation; and for coordinating the distribution of equipment and funds for implementation, as well as ensuring that all funds are properly accounted for at the local level.

Cascade Training

Training is carried out using a cascade approach. Core Trainers from the national level train PDOP and PLAU staff, PFTs and DFTs. In turn, PFTs and DFTs train commune representatives and commune-level trainers. These commune-level trainers are then responsible for training Village Representative Group members in the technical aspects of implementation of the Procedures.

National Procedures and Questionnaire

Procedures for Identification of Poor Households

In brief, the national Procedures for Identification of Poor Households consist of a number of key steps and activities:

<p>Step 1: Establish and train the Planning and Budgeting Committee Representative Group (PBCRG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold meeting of Commune Planning and Budgeting Committee to select representatives• Conduct training of PBCRG members• Conduct training of commune-level trainers <p>Step 2: Establish and train Village Representative Groups (VRGs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct First Village Meeting to select members of VRG• Commune-level trainers train VRGs, conduct interview practice <p>Step 3: VRG compiles list of households, conducts household interviews, and compiles First Draft List of Poor Households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compile list of households• Conduct household interviews• Count scores, prepare Draft Household Poverty Categorisation List• Discuss household circumstances in VRG and modify classifications of some households as required• Hold Commune Review Meeting to check Draft Household Poverty Categorisation List• Prepare First Draft List of Poor Households <p>Step 4: Conduct Village Consultation Meeting on First Draft List of Poor Households, receive villager complaints, and prepare Final Draft List of Poor Households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post First Draft List of Poor Household in public place in village• Conduct Village Consultation Meeting• Receive villager complaints• Prepare the Final Draft List of Poor Households, submit to Commune Council <p>Step 5: Commune Council reviews and approves Final List of Poor Households, Priority Access Cards are prepared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commune Council reviews Final Draft Lists of Poor Households for each village, resolves any outstanding complaints• Commune Council approves Final List of Poor Households• PBCRG members copy household member data onto Priority Access Cards, wait for photos to be processed• Commune Council sends Final List of Poor Households, Questionnaires and Approval Form to Provincial Department of Planning <p>Step 6: Provincial Department of Planning enters Final Lists of Poor Households and Questionnaires into Provincial Database of Poor Households</p> <p>Step 7: Photography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photography Teams photograph Poor Households• Provincial Department of Planning enters photos into Provincial Database• Provincial Department of Planning prints photos, distributes to Commune Councils• VRG Coordinators affix photos and distribute Priority Access Cards to villagers

Please refer to the *Procedures for Identification of Poor Households* for more details.

Questionnaire for Identification of Poor Households

The standard questionnaire for identification of poor households comprises a set of scoring and non-scoring questions which are used as a guide by Village Representative Group (VRG) members to decide what poverty category to assign a household to. In summary, these questions cover the following factors:

Scoring questions

- Housing – roof, wall, floor area, general condition
- Land area in hectares / fishing equipment / other income source
- Animal raising (including fish raising)
- Borrowing rice (indicates ability or inability to meet own food needs)
- Ratio of dependent household members to productive members
- Electronic assets
- Means of transportation

Non-scoring questions

- Unexpected problems or crises which caused household to lose income, produce less food, sell assets, or borrow money in last 12 months
- Number of children aged 6-11 years who missed school for at least 1 month in the last 12 months
- Special household situation (disabled, sick, elderly, divorced/widowed with young children, no adults, other)

Questionnaire Scoring System

The questionnaire contains a number of scoring questions which are weighted according to the perceived strength of their relationship to poverty. When the scores for each answer are added up, the final score is used as a tool to allocate households to different categories. These categories are presented below:

Category	Score Range	Expected Proportion of HHs in Category (on average)
Poor Level 1 (RkkMTI1)	59 to 68 points	≈ 15-16%
Poor Level 2 (RkkMTI2)	45 to 58 points	≈ 18-19%
Others (epSg)	0 to 44 points	≈ 66%

Poor Level 1 is the poorest category, and Poor Level 2 is the next poorest category. A household falling into the “**Others**” category is not considered to be poor enough to require targeted assistance, and will not be included in the List of Poor Households. However, there may be other special circumstances which take priority over the score and result in the Village Representative Group making a decision to change the Poverty Category of the household to Poor Level 2 or Poor Level 1).

It is expected that the scoring system alone will, on average, result in approximately 15-16% of households falling into the Poor Level 1 category, around 18-19% falling into the Poor Level 2 category, and around 66% of households being classified as “**Others**”. However, the final poverty category assigned to any individual household **will depend on the Village Representative Group’s consideration of other special circumstances relating to that household.**

2. Ministry of Planning Guidelines for Implementation of Procedures for Identification of Poor Households in Rural Areas

Use of National Procedures for Identification of Poor Households in Rural Areas

Partner organisations are requested to carry out identification activities in rural areas following as closely as possible the **most recent version** of the national Procedures for Identification of Poor Households.

The Ministry of Planning has the latest Procedures and the Questionnaire for rural areas, as well as other key documents, available on the MOP website at:

www.mop.gov.kh/ProgramsProjects/IDPoor/tabid/154/Default.aspx

Alternatively, they may be obtained from Mr Chea Chantum, Director of the Social Planning Department, Ministry of Planning (Tel: 012 867867; email: chantum@online.com.kh or chantumchea@yahoo.com).

Note:

- Before implementing identification of poor households in any area, partner organisations should check with the MOP staff responsible for Identification of Poor Households whether the MOP currently covers or plans to cover these areas (to avoid duplication).
- The current Procedures relate to implementation in **rural areas only**. The Ministry of Planning (MOP) and its partners have not yet developed national procedures or a questionnaire for urban areas (however, it is intended to do so in the near future). The current procedures and tool for rural areas are **not suitable for use in urban areas**. Until the MOP and its partners develop procedures and a questionnaire for identification of poor households in urban areas, partner organisations may implement their own procedures as necessary.
- Partner organisations may make modifications to the Procedures according to their own needs and capacity to implement them; however, these changes should be in line with the Principles and Guidelines for Field Implementation described below.
- The Ministry of Planning welcomes suggestions from partner organisations on how to improve the national Procedures, based on their own implementation experience.

Use of Questionnaire for Identification of Poor Households in Rural Areas

The most recently updated standard questionnaire developed by the IDPoor project for rural areas must be used, **in full**. Partner organisations should check with the IDPoor Project to ensure they use the correct version. **All scoring and non-scoring questions** must be asked. The same scoring system, and the same two categories of poor households (Poor Level 1 and Poor Level 2) must be used.

Partner organisations may add a **small** number of additional questions if more information is needed to provide targeted services to poor households, but these questions should not be used for assigning poverty categories to households.

The Ministry of Planning welcomes suggestions from partner organisations on how to improve the questionnaire, based on their own implementation experience.

Principles and Guidelines for Field Implementation

- 1) Senior representatives of the Provincial Department of Planning must be involved in the provincial-level committee or group that organises the process for identification of poor households in the province. Preferably they should head the committee or group.
- 2) Training of commune and village representatives may be done by any sufficiently trained group of trainers established by the partner organisation conducting identification.
- 3) Implementation of the process for identification of poor households may be carried out simultaneously in all communes, or may be done on a rolling basis.
- 4) Local people involved in the process should be compensated for their time and/or expenses to some extent, in a fair manner, using rates similar to those used by the Ministry of Planning. Some voluntary contribution by villagers of their time is also encouraged. Incentives are provided in recognition of the time investment required to carry out the procedures for identification of poor households, which means that villagers are not available to carry out other income-generating activities. In order to further empower the Commune Council and enhance its ownership of the process, the Commune Council should be entrusted with these funds and given responsibility for distributing them. The Commune Council should be encouraged, if possible, to make a contribution to the costs of implementation out of the Commune Fund.
- 5) A group of commune representatives should be established, using a transparent method of selection and including women. Their role is to coordinate the process in the Commune, to monitor implementation, and check the Draft Household Poverty Categorisation List. Where possible, members of existing structures should be used (e.g. the Commune Council, Planning and Budgeting Committee, Village Development Committee, village health volunteers, etc.)
- 6) A Village Representative Group (VRG) should be established, using a transparent method of selection, preferably election by villagers themselves. A VRG Coordinator should be appointed either by the Commune Council or the VRG members themselves. The VRG's role is to implement the identification process in their own village. The VRG should include recognised and respected members of the community, and there should be sufficient representation of both men and women, ethnic and religious groups, and different geographical areas of the village. All members who will carry out interviewing must be able to read and write in Khmer (with some exceptions for ethnic groups in remote areas: please see the Procedures for Identification of Poor Households), and most members should be able to do simple arithmetic.
- 7) Interviewing should be done by VRG members, but may be assisted by trained interviewers from outside the village if needed.
- 8) The VRG should prepare a Draft Household Poverty Categorisation List, discuss the scores and the special circumstances of households, and make necessary modifications to the list based on those special circumstances. The VRG should consider for each household whether the poverty category assigned on the basis of the scoring system is fair, or whether there are any special circumstances that need to be considered. The VRG **should not rely only** on the scoring questions in the questionnaire to decide what poverty category to place households in.
- 9) A Commune Review Meeting should be held, with participation from Commune-level and VRG representatives, to consider the Draft Household Poverty Categorisation List for each village and to compare the proportions of poor households in each village in the commune to ensure that the results accurately represent the relative levels of poverty in the commune.
- 10) A First Draft List of Poor Households should be prepared, and displayed and discussed in a Village Consultation Meeting. It is not mandatory to publicly post the First Draft List of Poor Households before the meeting, but it is mandatory to post it for at least 7 days after the meeting.
- 11) Villagers should be given the opportunity to make complaints or provide comments on the First Draft List of Poor Households during and after the Village Consultation Meeting, either to the VRG or to the Commune Council.

- 12) The Commune Council must consider and approve the Final List of Poor Households. However, the Commune Council may not change the households on the list—only the Village Representative Group has the right to do this.
- 13) Final Lists of Poor Households for each village must be copied and provided to the Provincial Department of Planning for their records.

Database of Poor Households

- 1) The MOP encourages partner organisations to use the standard Database of Poor Households software developed by the MOP for data entry, data management (including household photos) and reporting. **This database is available free-of-charge from the MOP, and user training may be arranged (may be subject to a cost recovery fee).** If possible, partner organisations should support the Provincial Department of Planning to be responsible for data entry and management of the Database of Poor Households. Once data has been fully entered, and approved by the partner organisation, the MOP requests that all data entered into the database be submitted to the MOP to close the final dataset and maintain a copy in the national Database of Poor Households maintained by the Ministry of Planning.
- 2) Partner organisations may transfer approved, closed datasets from the Database of Poor Households to their own database if required, for further use of the data and addition of other fields required by the partner organisation.
- 3) **If partner organisations are not able to carry out full entry of the data** they have collected, using the MOP Database of Poor Households, they are requested to contact the MOP and discuss possible solutions. The MOP hopes that all data will be fully entered in the MOP Database of Poor Households to allow it to be shared with other service providers.
- 4) Partner organisations which have their own database are requested to harmonise the format and definition of key data fields with those contained in the MOP Database of Poor Households, in order to facilitate sharing of data between databases. MOP will make available copies of the database to partner organisations on request.
- 5) Partner organisations are requested to harmonise their identification code format for poor households and household members with the standard format used by the MOP. This format consists of the standard 8-digit geographical code of the Department of Geography, then a hyphen, then a 4-digit household code (for example: 10050304-1234), to make a total of 12 digits.

Note:

- The Gazetteer code consists of a combination of province, district, commune and village codes, each of which has 2 digits (when combined together, the Gazetteer code is 8 digits long).
- The current format used by the MOP for identification of poor households also prefixes a 4-digit Year code to this number (e.g. **2007**-10050304-1234) on questionnaires, forms and Priority Access Cards used during the process for identification of poor households, in order to eliminate confusion between documents used in different years; however, this 4-digit number is not used by the Database of Poor Households. A 2-digit Round Number is instead prefixed to the code (e.g. **01**-10050304-1234 for the first round of identification of a particular household, **02**-10050304-1234 for a subsequent round).

Beneficiary Cards and Photos

- 1) If beneficiary cards are to be issued to poor households, the MOP encourages partner organisations to use the standard Priority Access Card (PAC) format developed by MOP and partners for the national Procedures for Identification of Poor Households, and to attach household photos. However, partner organisations may choose to produce their own beneficiary card instead of the standard PAC if this better suits their needs.
- 2) If household photos are required, photography of poor households should be conducted using digital cameras, or if photos are taken using film-based cameras, they should be digitised. If a

partner organisation uses the standard Database of Poor Households, photos should be entered into the database. This process will match all household photos with the records of poor households in the database.

3. Other documents and assistance

- 1) To assist partner organisations to carry out identification of poor households, the Ministry of Planning can provide the following documents in electronic format, which partner organisations may freely reproduce:
 - a) The full Procedures developed at the national level (in Khmer and English). Partner organisations should use these Procedures as a guide and should follow them to the maximum extent that this is possible (subject to the Guidelines outlined above).
 - b) The Questionnaire developed at the national level, in Khmer and English.
 - c) Teachers Manuals and student Workbooks (in Khmer and English).
 - d) Teaching Chart sets (in Khmer).
 - e) All standard forms required for implementation (in Khmer).
 - f) Detailed spreadsheet for calculating budget and the required number of forms etc (in Khmer and English). **Note:** The current spreadsheet does not cover the operational and equipment costs for photography, the equipment costs for data entry, or national-level monitoring and overheads.
 - g) Instructions for distributing equipment, forms and funds (in Khmer).
 - h) Priority Access Card format (in Khmer).
 - i) Photography Training Manual (in Khmer).
 - j) Database Training Manual (in Khmer).
- 2) Advice and experience-sharing, as required. Training may also be arranged for specific topics. Cost-recovery may be requested.

Modification of Documents

Documents may be modified for use by partner organisations to meet their own specific needs, **with the exception of the Questionnaire and the Priority Access Card**. Documents must conform with the national Procedures to the extent specified in the Principles and Guidelines for Field Implementation section above of these *Guidelines for Partner Organisations*.

Modified documents must include an explanation that they are modified versions of the MOP original documents. Documents modified by partner organisations **must not be presented as being the unchanged, original MOP documents**. Any MOP logos or cover pages should be replaced with those of the organisation which made the modification.

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