Recognition of Prior Learning in Cambodia

Implementation Guideline

June 2020

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBACS	Competency-based Assessment and Certification System
CBT	Competency Based Training
CQF	Cambodian Qualification Framework
DGTVET	Directorate General of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
HRD	Human Resource Development
IA	Intervention Area
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
MRM	Monitoring and Results Measurement
NCTP	National Committee for Tourism Professionals
NTB	National Training Board
PDoLVT	Provincial Department of Labour and Vocational Training
PDoT	Provincial Department of Tourism
PTC	Provincial Training Centre
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDP	Skills Development Programme
ToA	Training of Assessors
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Groups
VSC	Vocational Skills Certificate

1. WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH COLLEAGUES AND CUSTOMERS
 អ្នកធ្វើការងារបានយ៉ាងប្រសិទ្ធភាពជាមួយសហការី និងអតិថិជន

2. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
Answer the following questions: ចូរឆ្លើយនឹងសំណួរខាងក្រោម

a. What is a benefit of maintaining a positive and co-operative manner?
តើការប្រព្រឹត្តិនាពភាពវិជ្ជមាន និងការធ្វើការសហការ ផ្តល់អត្ថប្រយោជន៍អ្វីខ្លះដល់អ្នក?

b. Why is it important to help team members?
ហេតុអ្វីបានជាការជួយក្រុមការងារមានសារៈសំខាន់?
ការជួយសម្រួលការងារ សារៈ កំណត់ ន៍ណ

...responsibilities
ប្រសើរនៅក្នុងក្រុមវី ងប់បេ ...(មុខងារសួរក្បួនខ្លួន)

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1 SDP at a Glance

The Skills Development Programme (SDP) is mandated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The first phase of the SDP (2016 to 2020) has been implemented by Swisscontact in partnership with INBAS. The programme aims to increase income and employment opportunities for young women and men in three rural provinces of Cambodia: Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, and Kratie. It also contributes to the creation of an inclusive, relevant, and well-coordinated national Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) system. To accomplish this, the SDP comprises activities in three intervention areas: dual vocational training, hospitality training, and national policy and TVET reform. Gender equality and social inclusion are integrated as transversal themes in all intervention areas.

1.2 Purpose of the Implementation Guideline

The following guideline outlines the process and implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). It identifies lessons learned from phase 1 of the SDP and guides the reader through the entire cycle of RPL in the first four years of the programme. The document provides guidance to understand each step of the implementation process and refers to several additional documents, which can be found in the annexes. Last the achievements and outcomes are highlighted.

This guideline proposes a process as a model for replication. It provides an overview of what has been done, how it was carried out and the benefits if applied in other provinces or sectors. The guideline was written for an audience with at least basic knowledge of TVET and RPL.

1.3 Structure of the Documentation

The document is divided into four chapters. After this initial introduction, the second section briefly presents the role of the SDP, the evolution of RPL in Cambodia in the last four years, and shows the collaboration between the ministries and the SDP. The third chapter explains the development and implementation of RPL as well as the applied process and approach. Further, it presents key activities and indicates relevant source documents. The fourth and last chapter describes outcomes and achievements and lessons learned during phase 1 and draws a final conclusion. The source documents are stored in a separate folder and are indexed according to the table numbers of this guideline.

1.4 Users and Use

The users of the document are primarily the SDP team members, but also includes other programmes or partners such as relevant ministries.

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2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Skills Development Programme

The SDP is funded by the SDC and implemented by a consortium led by Swisscontact. The first four-year phase of the SDP started in July 2016 and will be followed by a second and possibly a third phase. Detailed documentation of the first phase can be found in the Skills Development Programme Documentation Phase 1. The SDP aims at increasing the income and employment opportunities for disadvantaged young women and men from three rural provinces in Cambodia: Preah Vihear, Stung Treng and Kratie (see Figure 1). For the second phase, two new provinces will be added, namely Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri. The programme consists of three Intervention Areas (IAs) to tackle the various inconsistencies of the TVET system, such as standardisation or mismatch between industry needs and training provision, encountered in the target provinces. Through the IAs the SDP provided access to market-relevant skills training in occupational areas with employment opportunities.

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2.2. Recognition of Prior Learning in Cambodia

RPL is a process to officially recognize and validate competencies gained outside the formal training system for the purpose of certification. RPL provides the opportunity for workers to certify their knowledge and skills from the informal and non-formal acquisition of competencies (mostly in the workplace). Formal qualification enables workers with informally and non-formally acquired skills to access the formal training and education system. The idea behind RPL is a) to accredit and value workplace-based learning and experience, and b) to create a bridge between the world of work and the formal education and training system for workers without formal qualification. Workers are given credit and official recognition if they can demonstrate having the required knowledge and competencies aligned with level 1 of the Cambodian Qualifications Framework (CQF). This idea is in line with the concept of lifelong learning, which advocates for seamless transition between working and upskilling throughout life.
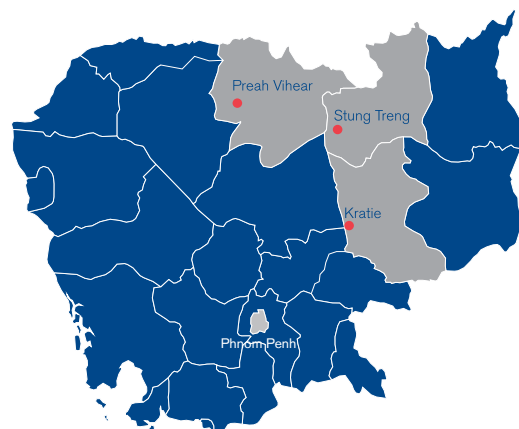
Target Provinces of SDP

Figure 1, Target provinces of the SDP (grey)

For the ASEAN economic community, development of human resources is a priority, as it plays an important role for economic growth in each of its member states, including Cambodia. The success of all Human Resource Development (HRD) activities depends largely on a process of life-long learning and training, for which the main goal is to maintain and enhance employability. Thus, ASEAN requires its members to have strong TVET systems.[1] RPL is an important cornerstone to formalise, standardise, and upgrade the qualifications of the workforce in Cambodia, since only 40%[2] of all economically active people have formal employment.

During the first phase of the SDP, significant achievements were made. These are related to the endorsement of policies and standards, proving the utility of a functioning RPL system, and piloting competency-based assessments in 8 occupations.

2.3 Beneficiaries

RPL helped workers to formalize their skills and knowledge and gain official recognition in accordance with national and regional qualification frameworks. The assessment included skills obtained through previous formal, non-formal and informal learning. This included knowledge gained within school, college or university as well as outside formal learning situations such as life and work experiences or even through a hobby. RPL was open to a wide range of workers either to help them re-enter the formal learning system or simply to evaluate their skills against the agreed occupational standards in order to progress their careers. A tracer study[3] disclosed that the candidates were on average 28.5 years old and had 5 years of experience in their respective field of work.

The SDP assisted the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) and the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), their respective subdivisions as well as Provincial Training Centres (PTCs), which acted as the assessment points, to operationalise their certification systems and to create an education programme for Training of Assessors (ToA). The trained assessors were gradually integrated into the work of the assessment points. The process included an introduction to the workflow of the PTCs as assistant assessors and after participating in several assessments, depending on each individual's progress, they performed the tasks of national assessors for RPL in the provinces. Additionally, the workers could attend courses and training, also at the PTCs, to prepare themselves for the assessments.

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1 ASEAN, Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems. Retrieved from: https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/Guiding-Principles-for-Quality-Assurance-and-Recognition-of-Competency-C....pdf
2 ASEAN, Regional study on informal employment statistics to support decent work promotion in ASEAN. Retrieved from: https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/13-Regional-Study-on-Informal-Employment-Statistics-to-Support-Decent-Wo....pdf
3 Fourth Round of Tracer Studies on Graduates of the Skills Development Programme, Angkor Research and Consulting May 2019

2.4 Collaboration with the Ministries and Key Stakeholders

Piloting RPL in Cambodia entailed close collaboration with the two ministries (MoLVT and Ministry of Tourism (MoT) at the national level and their provincial counterparts and subdivisions. The two approaches the two ministries apply are not harmonized yet. This is because the MoT aligns with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework at the regional, whereas the MoLVT aligns with the national Competency-based Assessment and Certification System (CBACS), which links to the CQF. The two have not been integrated with each other yet.

MoT is in charge of coordinating and developing the tourism sector[4]. For this purpose, MoT endorsed the ASEAN toolboxes[5] and guidelines for RPL in the tourism and hospitality sector. The Provincial Departments of Tourism (PDoTs) and the National Committee for Tourism Professionals (NCTP) are the key stakeholders in charge of RPL implementation in the sector.

As part of MoLVT, the Directorate General for TVET (DGTVET) and the National Training Board (NTB)[6] are in charge of the implementation of the RPL policy for all sectors other than tourism and hospitality. The Provincial Departments of Labour and Vocational Training (PDoLVTs) and the Technical Working Groups (TWGs), installed for each occupation, assisted the NTB and DGTVET in the piloting of RPL and took the role as facilitators between the national assessors and PTCs. The PTCs received the status of assessment points to pilot RPL. The assessment points were prepared with the necessary facilities and tools to start the process of RPL and to carry out the assessments as well as certification ceremonies.

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4 MoT, the ministry of Cambodia. Retrieved from: https://www.tourismcambodia.org/the-ministry
5 ASEAN, tourism toolboxes. Retrieved from: https://asean.org/asean-economic-community/asean-tourism-ministers-meeting-m-atm/other-documents-2/
6 NTB, profile and history. Retrieved from: http://www.ntb.gov.kh/profile.htm

3. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RPL

Through its Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023[7], which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has announced a greater commitment to providing inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. In line with this plan, the SDP collaborated with MoT and MoLVT to develop standardised PRL procedures in line with the CQF (see Figure 2). This led to the introduction of officially recognized vocational certificates (level 1 of the CQF, see red circle Figure 2) for the selected occupations (masonry, welding, motorcycle servicing, small engine servicing, electrical wiring, front office, room attendant, food and beverage services).

Knowledge sharing and buy-in from relevant stakeholders, such as the local industry and training providers, were crucial and was achieved through close collaboration with MoT and MoLVT. Local expertise (including expertise from local enterprises) needed to be developed through ToA to be able to run the RPL pilots and to meet the required standards of level 1 of the CQF. The ToA programme was designed for PTC staff and industry workers from the provinces and enabled them to access the skills needed to later assess the workers in the target provinces.

Competency assessment packages for the selected occupations were developed by MoLVT. The packages include selection criteria for candidates, the process for the assessments as well as the forms for the official recognition. Assessors along with the staff and management of the assessment points were trained to being able to pilot RPL. This was done in collaboration with the PTCs in the target provinces. After the setup of the assessment points, RPL was piloted at the provincial level. The following subchapters give detailed information about the RPL process and approach.

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Figure 2, CQF of Cambodia

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7 RGC Education Strategic Plan 2019-2020. Retrieved from:
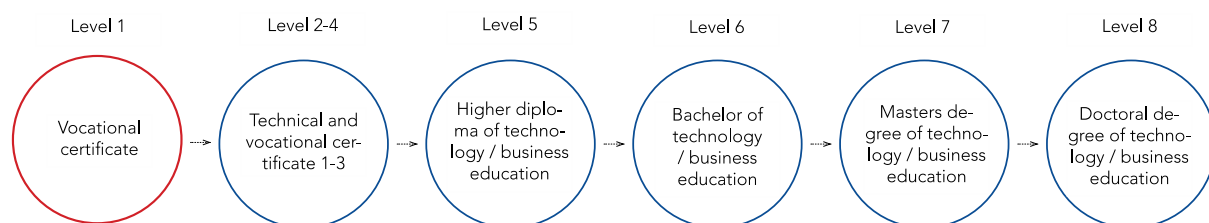https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-10-education_sector_plan-cambodia.pdf
8 RGC Education Strategic Plan 2019-2020, Page 14. Retrieved from:
https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-10-education_sector_plan-cambodia.pdf
9 Cambodia Qualification Framework. Retrieved from:
http://119.82.251.165:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/287/Cambodia%20qualification%20framework.pdf?sequence=1

3.1 Approach and Process of RPL

Advocacy with the objective of influencing policy development was central for the implementation of RPL. The SDP's strategy focused on promoting TVET development in collaboration with the above-mentioned ministries. The SDP created two platforms, one for the hospitality sector and one for MoLVT, to improve the coordination of the provincial TVET implementers in line with national policies to kick off the piloting of RPL. After establishing a coordination mechanism, RPL was piloted in the three target provinces. The complete process consisted of six steps, from setting up the pilot to the assessment and certification of the beneficiaries. (see Figure 3).
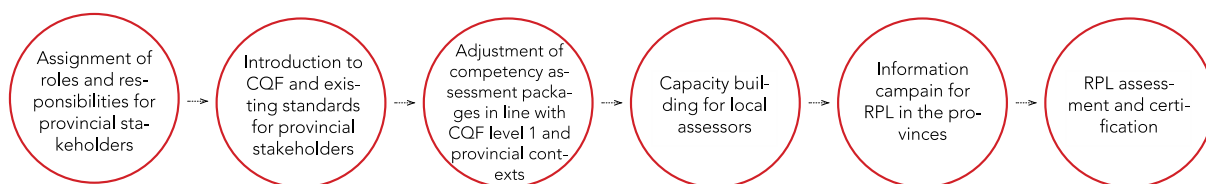
Assignment of roles and responsibilities for provincial stakeholders → Introduction to CQF and existing standards for provincial stakeholders → Adjustment of competency assessment packages in line with CQF level 1 and provincial contexts → Capacity building for local assessors → Information campain for RPL in the provinces → RPL assessment and certification

Figure 3, Steps to pilot the RPL assessment

Assignment of roles and responsibilities for provincial stakeholders

The preparation of Terms of References (ToRs) was important to assign roles and responsibilities and to guarantee buy-in from relevant provincial government bodies, namely the mentioned PDoT and PDoLVT. This established a mutual understanding of RPL for all parties and acted as a base for further negotiations. In practice, the ToRs were prepared by the PTCs and approved by the MoLVT.

Introduction to CQF and existing standards for provincial stakeholders

Challenges often occur in the interpretation and implementation of national policy at the provincial level. Therefore, it was vital to engage with PDoLVT and PDoT as well as the PTCs and carry out an introduction to the National RPL strategy. This not only helped to ensure an understanding of RPL at the provincial level but also secured buy-in from provincial stakeholders.

Adjustment of competency assessment packages in line with CQF level 1 and provincial contexts

Competency assessment packages were created in line with the CQF level 1 and with reference to the provincial context. Subsequently, standards and training packages were developed. The standards and training packages were needed to train and prepare the assessors to carry out the RPL. Furthermore, the PTCs had to be prepared for the assessments in areas such as venue set up and administration for the certification.

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Capacity building for local assessors

After the preparations were finished, suitable candidates to become assessors for RPL were identified, trained, and certified. It was important to carry out the capacity building in the provinces, to use local resources and synergies, and create a provincial assessor pool.

Information campain for RPL in the provinces

Awareness-raising and information dissemination for the RPL pilot in the provinces was carried out through informational events, to make workers aware of this opportunity to have their skills recognized. Awareness-raising also communicated the benefits of official recognition such as an increase in status and income.

RPL assessment and certification

The RPL assessment consisted of both a theoretical and practical evaluation of competencies. The theoretical part incorporated an assessment of the specific knowledge related to the given occupation in the form of a written or oral test (depending on literacy levels) and the practical part consisted of an oral examination on the practical experiences and attitudes of the worker. It was guided by the assessors in collaboration with the PTCs and followed by the certification. The successful candidates were included in the official data system of the country for tracking and data analysis. Proper consultation and guidance for the workers after the assessment was important to enable them to re-enter formal education following the certification process.

These steps were necessary to successfully pilot RPL in the target provinces. Only through close collaboration with MoLVT, MoT, and the provincial stakeholders, the SDP manages to strengthen the capacity of existing training structures and thus prove the potential for the application of RPL throughout Cambodia.

3.2 RPL Activities and Supporting Documents

Developing, operationalizing, and piloting an RPL concept and mechanism in collaboration with key stakeholders requires significant preparation and negotiation. This subchapter summarises key activities and responsibilities of RPL stakeholders. Relevant source documents and tools are linked to the respective sections. During the first phase, the SDP elaborated several additional documents and tools, which will be listed in the annex.

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Table 1: Development of RPL procedures and guidelines

Main Activities	Roles and Responsibilities		Relevant Documents/Tools
	Lead Persons	Tasks	
Duration: 2 months			
Development of RPL procedures and guidelines for target provinces	MoLVT: DGTVET, MoLVT officers MoT: NCTP, MoT officers	Create the procedures and guidelines for RPL	• Example guidelines and flowcharts • RPL lessons learned presentation • Stakeholder engagement strategy presentation • Understanding TVET in Cambodia presentation
	SDP: IA manager, IA team	1. Support and facilitate development of procedures and guidelines 2. Mobilize relevant stakeholders	
Awareness raising and consultation with private sector stakeholders and low skilled workers about the RPL guidelines developed by MoT and MLVT (procedures, roles, aims of RPL)	MoLVT: DGTVET, MoLVT officers, TWG, PDoLVT officers, private sector MoT: NCTP, MoT officers, PDoT officers	Conduct awareness-raising and consultation with private sector and workers	• Stakeholder engagement strategy presentation • Understanding TVET in Cambodia presentation
	SDP: IA manager, IA team, PTCs	1. Facilitate the consultation and awareness-raising 2. Mediate the negotiations	
Review and develop workable guidelines for the local context according to input received during consultations	MoLVT: DGTVET, MoLVT officers, TWG, PDoLVT officers MoT: NCTP, MoT officers, PDoT officers	Finalize the procedures and guidelines for RPL according to the context and inputs	• Example guidelines and flowcharts
	SDP: IA manager, IA team	Support and facilitate the development of procedures and guidelines	

Table 2: Development of RPL instruments for relevant occupations

Main Activities	Roles and Responsibilities		Relevant Documents/Tools
	Lead Persons	Tasks	
Duration: 2 months			
Review toolbox/CBTP and develop RPL instruments for specific occupations (for example, small engine mechanic, electrical house wirer etc.)	MoLVT: TWG MoT: TW	1. Review the existing instruments 2. Develop missing instruments	• RPL instrument examples
	SDP: IA team	1. Support and facilitate the development 2. Mobilize relevant stakeholders	
Provision of ToA[10]	MoLVT: TWG (master assessors) MoT: TWG (master assessors)	TWGs and PTCs carry out the training and certification	• Assessor certification template • Speaker certification template • RPL guideline
	SDP: IA team, PTCs	1. Facilitate and supervise the ToA 2. Follow up on progress and challenges	
Orientation for private sector stakeholders and low skilled workers on the RPL process according to sector and occupation (how to apply, how to gather evidence, etc.)	MoLVT: TWG (local assessors) MoT: TWG (local assessors)	Mobilization and preparation of upcoming RPL processes Conduct RPL orientations in the provinces	• RPL event booklet • RPL event planner and agenda • RPL event backdrops • RPL I-stand
	SDP: IA team, PTCs	Follow up on progress and challenges	
Abbreviations and Descriptions	ToA Local Assessors	Training of Assessors Technical experts from provincial departments, PTCs and industry.	

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10 ToA was provided at an early stage of piloting RP. Therefore, certified assessors performed their first assignments after the completion of the ToA.

Table 3: Implementation of RPL assessment for certification level 1

Main Activities	Roles and Responsibilities		Relevant Documents/Tools
	Lead Persons	Tasks	
Duration: 3 months			
Announcements (Should be made at least 30 days prior to training)	MoLVT: Assessment committee MoT: Assessment committee	1. Mobilization and preparation of upcoming RPL processes 2. Conduct RPL orientations in the provinces 3. Announcements for the upcoming RPL (dates, location, conditions, etc.)	• RPL event booklet • RPL event planner and agenda • RPL event backdrops • RPL I-stand • RPL promotional videos[11]
	SDP: IA team, PTCs	Follow up on progress and challenges	
Accept applications, counselling and facilitation	MoLVT: Assessment committee MoT: Assessment committee	1. Assessment committee carries out the collection of applications for each occupation and worker 2. Assessment committee analyses applications received	• Assessment verification tools
	SDP: IA team, PTCs	Follow up on progress and challenges	
Submission of portfolios (evidence) by the applicants or through facilitation, review, and final decision.	MoLVT: Assessment committee MoT: Assessment committee	Assessment committee reviews each application	• Assessment verification tools
	SDP: IA team, PTCs	Follow up on progress and challenges	
If sufficient evidence is provided, committee requests certificate	MoLVT: Assessment committee MoT: Assessment committee	Ministries prepare and print a certificate for each graduate	• MRM Guideline
	SDP: IA manager, PTCs	Follow up on progress and challenges	

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11 The promotional videos can be accessed through the following links:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSUZfCQ72RE / https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s28gHti4tSM

Main Activities	Roles and Responsibilities		Relevant Documents/ Tools
	Lead Persons	Tasks	
Duration: 3 months			
If insufficient evidence is provided, assessment test (oral, written, practical demonstration) is conducted	MoLVT: Assessment committee MoT: Assessment committee	1. Assessment committee must prepare the test 2. Assessment committee must prepare the scoring sheet 3. Assessment committee carries out the skills test and assigns scores 4. Assessment committee submits the final scores to the SDP database	• Assessment verification tools
	SDP: IA team, PTCs	Follow up on progress and challenges	
Make decision, provide feedback and recommendations and prepare assessment report, validation, and award of qualification	MoLVT: Assessment committee MoT: Assessment committee	Ministries prepare and print a certificate for each graduate (Note: Certificates are awarded by NTB for MoLVT)	MRM Guideline
	SDP: IA manager	Follow up on progress and challenges	
Description	Assessment committee	Assessment Committee is comprised of observers (likely to be from industry), assessors (technical expert), assurance (likely to be from MoLVT, should ideally be from Sector Skills Council) in the future.	

Table 4: Support for scaling up RPL

Main Activities	Roles and Responsibilities		Relevant Documents/Tools
	Lead Persons	Tasks	
Duration: 2 months			
Support the development and implementation of RPL guidelines and instruments for other levels of certification, other occupations and expand to additional provinces	MoLVT: DGTVET, MoLVT officers	Replicate the procedures and guidelines for RPL for other occupations, places and levels	• RPL instrument examples
	SDP: IA manager, IA team	1. Support and facilitate the development of procedures and guidelines 2. Mobilize relevant stakeholders	

4. OUTCOMES AND LESSONS LEARNED

This final chapter summarises the outcomes and achievements made, as well as challenges encountered during the first phase. It will highlight lessons learned and adaptations in order to help the reader to understand the experience gained from the first phase.

4.1 Outcomes and Achievements

By the end of the first phase, the SDP supported 1709 candidates to engage in RPL tests (level 1 of the CQF). 152 assessors received ToA and accreditation for the RPL assessment. The overall results proved that 983 of the candidates are fully competent, 520 are partially competent and 206 candidates are not yet competent in their chosen skills area. The following table displays the candidates divided by occupation and the corresponding ministry.

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Table 4: Support for scaling up RPL

Ministry	Occupation	Female	Male	Total
MoLVT (542 candidates)	Motorcycle servicing	1	239	240
	Small engine servicing	0	100	100
	Electrical wiring	0	58	58
	Masonry	0	72	72
	Welder	0	72	72
MoT (1167 candidates)	Food and beverage services	172	265	437
	Room attendant	272	158	430
	Front office staff	117	183	300

24 training programmes (competency-based curricula) were created and are functioning in at least 4 sectors throughout the TVET system. The SDP assisted the ministries in developing these standards which will help to scale up RPL in the future.

The SDP helped to establish assessment points and supported the ministries to develop assessment criteria. Trainings in the 8 selected occupations were piloted and rolled out in the target provinces. The PTC in Kratie was accredited as a recognized assessment point for RPL and the PTCs in Preah Vihear and Stung Treng are in process. Kratie was selected first since it is home to several minority groups and a key area for the development of the MoLVT. Furthermore, the SDP supported the MoLVT in the development of 4 competency-based assessment packages at the Vocational Skills Certificate (VSC) level for the professions of masonry, building electrician, small engines servicing, and motorcycle servicing. The procedures, process, and tools for implementing RPL have been adopted by MoLVT for the nationwide rollout. Building on SDPs successes, RPL will be introduced in 5 additional assessment centres (Preah Kossomak Polytechnic Institute, Battambang Institute of Technology, National Polytechnic Institute of Cambodia, National Polytechnic Institute of Angkor, and one additional training facility in Kratie) for 600 candidates according to MoLVTs development plan 2020-2021. MoT will continue to focus on integrating RPL with the ASEAN standards, using the ASEAN mutual recognition arrangement for tourism professionals and assessors and the respective guidelines[12].

The pilots were completed successfully, and recommendations and lessons learned were shared with the government through an RPL event. The satisfaction of the participating ministries can be seen through the following two statements: First, H.E Teang Sak, Director of Department of Standard and Curriculum states: "RPL contributes to the life-long learning policy of the Cambodian government, and it is also a concept of social inclusion." Mr. Khim Yorm, Deputy Director of the Department of Standard and Curriculum adds: "RPL is a strategy to develop human resources. With proper skills and official recognition of their competencies, the workers can access higher wages." From the candidates' perspective and based on the tracer study[13] the RPL assessment changed their careers and improved their salaries (for 32% of the candidates) as well as their knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses (29% of the candidates). Around 13.5% of the candidates reported that they have received a promotion because of the RPL assessment and over 70% reported that they will continue their learnings. Overall, RPL candidates were more likely to report that they perceived benefits from the assessment (57% of the candidates) than not.

Figure 4: H.E Teang Sak at the RPL event

Figure 5: Mr. Khim Yorm at the RPL event

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12 Guidelines ASEAN MRA-TP Trainers and Assessors, ASEAN 2018. Retrieved from:
https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ASEAN-MRA-TP-Handbook-2nd-Edition-2018.pdf
13 Fourth Round of Tracer Studies on Graduates of the Skills Development Programme, Angkor Research and Consulting May 2019

The RPL system is ready for full implementation and roll-out. The SDP will focus on improving the PTCs service provision at provincial level in phase 2 to improve the training quality as well as institutionalize RPL. To improve the implementation of the CQF, the SDP has established strategies with DGTVET and the PTCs to develop school development plans for the PTCs and master plans for overall TVET school development in the country.

4.2 Challenges

The implementation of RPL faced three main challenges.

1. <u>Mobilization and preparation of candidates</u>

One of the main difficulties was the low number of registered candidates from the hospitability sector that attended the assessment. This low participation rate was related to many factors, including:

- The mobilization visits and meetings of the PDoT/NCTP with employers (hotel owners, management) and employees (potential candidates for RPL assessment) were not as efficient and effective as

envisaged. The process proved to be slower than anticipated and the private stakeholders did not prioritize RPL assessments amongst competing concerns.

- The time gap between mobilization meetings and the actual assessments is 1.5 months, which ideally should be closer to 1-2 weeks. This is due to the process of mobilization itself since the PTCs staff have to go directly to the field to recruit and meet the workers and private sector, which are based in remote areas. It has proven difficult, because of the lack of financial resources or time, to gather potential participants for informational events in the provincial towns.

- Mobilization was also hampered by a lack of market demand and knowledge about RPL in the hospitality sector in the target provinces, combined with the relatively low hotel operational standards and low numbers of foreign visitors in the regions. Workers, owners, and managers do not know about the benefits of or how to use RPL after successful recognition. Therefore, it was initially difficult to advocate for RPL and convince them to participate.

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2. Organizational and legal aspects of RPL assessment and certification

Since the SDP supported the piloting of RPL under both MoT and MoLVT there was a risk it could result in the disintegration of the two approaches (see section 2.2.) rather than the harmonisation. Differences between the two streams also results in inconsistencies in certification. There will be three types of awards under the CQF, according to the MoLVT:

- A Qualification is awarded if the worker proved to have all competencies and were assessed successfully
- A Certificate of Competence is awarded if the worker proved to have some parts of the competencies and were assessed successfully
- A Unit Credit may be awarded if the worker proved to have a single competency and was assessed successfully

Under this framework, RPL candidates from the hospitality sector can only be awarded the certificates of competence since so far, no CQF-aligned qualification for the hospitality sector exists. There is a need for further collaboration between both ministries to align the ASEAN standards with the CQF of MoLVT. This will integrate RPL fully into the national system and open the possibility of awarding workers from the hospitality sector the full range of certificates and opportunities.

2. Scale-up and funding of RPL

Without direct support from the SDP or in the future from the RGC, the major difficulty for MoLVT and MoT will be to scale up RPL assessment to more occupations, to engage with larger numbers of candidates, and to add further locations/provinces for the assessments. These three challenges are interlinked and affect each other. For example, if the cost of assessments is too high, they will not be affordable for the government, candidates, and employers, meaning it will not be possible to roll it out to a substantially larger number of candidates. If the number of assessments cannot be substantially increased not many employers and workers will become aware of RPL and demand will remain low. Certificates will not become credible if the quality of assessment and certification cannot gain major recognition or be improved. Therefore, though scaling up is a challenge it is imperative for the future success of RPL. To effectively reduce the costs, assessors at the assessment points are required to be based in the provinces and represent local enterprises. The cost of materials for the tests also have to be carefully calculated.

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4.3 Lessons Learned and Adaptations

Four key lessons learned during the first phase are highlighted below. The SDP incorporated lessons on an ongoing basis during the first phase.

- Private sector participation in TVET programmes in the target provinces was limited. For example, weak buy-in from the private sector in implementing the RPL test was an issue and was addressed by the SDP through improved communications, such as informational events, creation of information material, and direct facilitation with the partners.

- The collaboration with MoLVT was time intensive in the beginning and required a lot of facilitation from the SDP. This was due to the fact that the CBACS was relatively new to MoLVT and the government of Cambodia and they initially struggled to see the benefits and had difficulties with the implementation. Therefore, the SDP requested to pilot RPL and helped MoLVT to develop the processes needed. After a difficult start, the ministry allocated technical officials and managers from the Department of Standards and Curriculum and national technical training institutes and gathered support from companies. MoLVT appointed two experts from the Department of Standards and Curriculum working directly with the SDP to support the implementation of RPL tests in the target provinces.

- Initial negotiations with MoT took more time than anticipated since the NCTP Secretariat, which was in charge of carrying out RPL, did not have a standard implementation process. To help the NCTP, the SDP assisted them in converting the ASEAN toolbox into VSC credits, which are required for the CQF, and created various additional documents to guide the NCTP to develop their process. The MoT eventually came on board, allocating NTPC members to work with the SDP and helping to create ownership from industry partners.

- Overall, the RPL assessments proved to be satisfactory in terms of difficulty level with around 80% of the candidates stating that it was possible or easy to pass. However, the remaining 20% declared the assessment was difficult or very difficult. This discrepancy revealed that there were certain inconsistencies in the exam format. For example, the provision of the instructions was sometimes carried out in oral or written form or even with both formats. To avoid bias in the candidates' outcomes, exam instructions should be provided consistently. To streamline the procedures the SDP shared these findings from the fourth round of tracer studies with MoT and MoLVT[14].

Piloting and setting up RPL proved to be successful after some initial difficulties in generating buy-in from MoLVT and MoT. The pilots helped over 1700 candidates to be officially recognized and integrated again into the formal training system. Still, there is a long way to go to fully implement RPL throughout the country and with all occupations. The SDPs work is a first step and baseline for replication has been created.

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14 Fourth Round of Tracer Studies on Graduates of the Skills Development Programme, Angkor Research and Consulting May 2019

ANNEXES

The source documents are stored on SharePoint and are indexed according to the table numbers of this guideline and can be accessed through the SDP Cambodia team. The following three resources complement this guideline and provide detailed information, templates, and guidance for anyone who would like to understand the RPL implementation.

- Angkor Research and Consulting (2020), Fourth Round of Tracer Studies on Graduates of the Skills Development Programme
- SDP (2020), Monitoring and Results Measurement Implementation Guideline
- SDP (2020), Skills Development Programme Documentation Phase 1

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