FREEDOM
OF INFORMATION

Advancing Research & Actions

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Conducted by:

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Access to information is a fundamental human right. Article 19, of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenants of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) assures the right of everyone to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media.

On December 23, 2010 a draft of the access to information law was submitted to the Cambodian National Assembly by a member of parliament from the opposition Sam Rainsy Party. Since then, civil society organizations working on human rights and democracy, Freedom of Information Working Group, and various United Nations agencies have increased pressure on the government for a right to information law. Such pressure is not new. Since 2005, human rights organizations such as ADHOC, in cooperation with other NGOs, worked to submit draft laws on access to information. Unfortunately, success in these endeavors has been elusive. However, in response to these efforts, the Ministry of National Assembly and Senate Relation and Inspection (MoNASTRI) drafted the policy framework on access to information. To date, the policy framework has been in the hands of this Ministry.

This report provides information gleaned from a research study commissioned by the Cambodia Center for Independent Media (CCIM). The purpose of the study was to measure the Cambodian public's opinions on the Access to Information Draft Policy and obtain feedback from key stakeholders on public's opinions.

The data were collected using qualitative and quantitative methods including interviews with 30 key informants, six focus group discussions, and a quantitative survey (with a sample size of 1522). The study was conducted between October 2011 and January 2012.

Key Findings

- More than 80% of respondents agreed they had the right to access public information. These respondents noted they should have access to information such as national budgets, national expenditures, as well as salaries of public employees.

- More than 80% of respondents agreed that government and public bodies, including elected bodies, should be obliged to provide public information by publishing such information.

- 19.1% of respondents reported having sought information about national statistics, commune budgets and expenditures, and the cost of civil registration. Of those who have sought such information, 32.5% faced difficulty in seeking such information. At the same time, 82% of respondents said information is important to them.

- Almost all respondents tended to be confused between the concept of public information and general news as the majority (98%) reported they had access to public information and they do this mostly by radio (79%), followed by television (78%), and word of mouth (50%)

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Public information and the right to access such information should be well defined and guaranteed by law, whose development should be widely consulted with civil society and the general public at the community, sub-national and national levels.

Recommendation 2: Mechanisms and tools to access information, such as means and procedures for accessing information, should be developed with meaningful involvement of relevant stakeholders. The national congress should enact a constitutional law and strengthen or create mechanisms for obtaining such information.

Recommendation3: Further research on freedom of information and freedom of expression should be conducted. Moreover, the Cambodian Ministry of Planning should consider including questions related to freedom of information or access to information on future national surveys.

Recommendation 4: Ongoing discussions to raise awareness about freedom of information and public information should be engaged at various levels of society.

INTRODUCTION

In 1946, the UN General Assembly recognized that "access to information is a fundamental human right and the touchstone to all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated." The right to information has long been recognized as underpinning all other human rights because without information people cannot effectively protect and promote their own rights. In the Asia Pacific region, access to information is often limited to being an issue for the media. A fair and independent media is indeed essential to effective democracy. However, it is also important to recognize that the public's unfettered access to public information is a necessity for empowering ordinary members of the community to better participate in their own governance and civic development. By being able to access information about what their government is doing, what services it provides, and what programs are implementing, members of the public can engage with the development activities around them at their own pace and in their own way.

Article 19, of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenants of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)underscore the right of everyone to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media. While the 1993 Cambodia Constitution stipulates the right of Cambodian citizens to access information, in reality access to information is very limited not only for the community and vulnerable populations, but also for government civil servants and high-ranking officials, development partners, media, civil society organizations, etc. Since1993 signing of the Paris Peace Accords, Cambodia has had good legal and operational mechanisms in place, but the level of implementation and enforcement often has been limited. Government accountability, transparency, genuine participation, non-discrimination, and the rights to access to public information are major concerns for Cambodia today and the next few decades.

RATIONALE

The draft law on Access to Information was submitted by a member of parliamentary from the opposition Sam Rainsy party to the National Assembly on 23 December 2010.The draft law was proposed against the backdrop of growing momentum in Cambodia to adopt a law on the right to information in Cambodia.

A key driver behind the momentum has been the 2007 policy framework on *Access to Information: A Clear Policy Framework for Cambodia.* Over the years, various groups of civil society organizations working on issues of human rights and democracy (e.g., Access to Information Working Group and other United Nations agencies) have increased pressure for an Access to Information law. Such a law would be a positive step toward comprehensive protection of the right to access to information in Cambodia. Main objectives of the Cambodian draft policy and also the draft law are to empower citizens, gives everyone a legal right of access to the information and place statutory duties on the bodies covered by the law to make certain information public.

A contributing factor to the bottleneck in progress surrounding the adoption of a policy framework on access to information by the Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of National Assembly and Senate Ration and Inspection (MoNASRI), and the Cambodian National Assembly is a lack of research on public opinions regarding the demand of such policy.

Past survey work has shed some light on the need for such a policy framework and law. For example, results from the 2010Independent Media Survey suggested that there would be a more welcoming environment for free and independent media with the adoption of the Access to Information policy. Results of this survey indicated that further research should take a population-based approach to capture the levels of understanding of media, a professional code of ethics, and the Access to Information law.

The aim of the research project described in this document was to seek public opinions on access to information in Cambodia and provide strategic policy recommendations to politicians, decision makers,

development partners, and civil society organizations on how to accelerate the adoption of the Access to Information law.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research project were to:

1. Involve the general public and key relevant stakeholders in expressing opinions on the right to access information via survey research;
2. Involve the general public and key relevant stakeholders in making and consolidating recommendations on rights to access to information for policy makers;
3. Provide a floor for discussions on the draft law and survey finding via public roundtable debate;
4. Develop a position paper on the Access to Information law before the law passes via key finding on the survey report and radio roundtable debate; and
5. Urge Cambodian policy makers to respond to the perception and recommendations addressed by the public and other stakeholders on the issues of right to Access to Information.

METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

The data were collected using qualitative and quantitative methods. These included30 key informant interviews, six focus group discussions, and a large-scale survey of general citizens.

SAMPLE

The team at Advanced Research Consultant Team calculated the sample size using Yamane's (1960) formula of n = N / (1 + N* e2) where, n is the sample size (respondents), N is the total population, and e is precision (5%) at a 95% confidential interval. According to the above formula, with a total population of direct beneficiaries of 4,539,036 (population of 11 provinces where Radio Sarika and VOD is broadcasted) the sample size was 1,522 (866 females and 636 males). The sampling was done in multiple stages. First a cluster sampling was done to select provinces, districts, communes, and villages. In the second stage a random sample was taken using the technique of probability proportionate to size. This was conducted in four provinces: Takeo, Kamong Speu, Prey Veng, and Phnom Penh Municipality. Citizens were selected from all households in the selected villages. A sampling framework was created by mapping households in each village.

The Cambodian journalists engaged in the focus groups were selected from the list of journalist provided by the Cambodian Journalist Association.

TRAINING OF SUPERVISORS AND ENUMERATORS

The data collection team consisted of university students who have studied survey methodology. The data collection team received extensive hands-on training for one day provided by Advanced Research Consultant Team. The objectives of the training workshop were to: (1) provide basic information about the project; (2) ensure that participants understood the goals and methods of the research; (3) develop the team members' interviewing skills; (4) ensure the team members were proficient in their delivery of the questionnaire; and (5) ensure compliance with ethical guidelines.

INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaire was developed by the Advanced Research Consultant team in consultation with CCIM and various consultants. The questionnaire was rehearsed in pairs by the field enumerators and pre-tested with university students before the fieldwork began. Modifications were made based on reflection by the data collection team especially with regard to translation of the instrument from English to Khmer. All instruments were developed in English and translated into Khmer.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collectors were divided into four teams, each led by a team leader. Team leaders worked under the supervision of members from the consultant team. Each team was responsible for the fieldwork in a project location. Each team leader checked all questionnaires for completeness before leaving the field site. Field reporting forms were provided to assist the team in managing data in the field. Members of the consultant team conducted random spot checks and observations of at least 10% of all fieldwork and random checks of questionnaires to ensure they were complete. The questionnaires took approximately 30 minutes to complete and each data collector was able to collect information from 12 to 15 respondents per day.

INFORMED CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All investigators and researchers used an informed consent protocol to orally obtain consent from respondents before conducting the surveys. All data were collected anonymously. Each respondent had the right to decline the interview or to refuse to answer any survey question. The data collection team did not keep adequate records of refusal rates but the researchers have no reason to believe that these rates would be any higher than similar social science research studies in Cambodia.

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Data editing, coding, entry, and analysis were done by the Advanced Research Consultant Team. The data were entered into SPSS, a quantitative computer analysis package. In an effort to minimize data entry errors, the data collection team randomly checked a small percentage of questionnaires against data entered into SPSS. Finally, the data were analyzed following the objectives of the survey.

STUDY TIMELINE

Main Activities	Time Period
Overall agreement from CCIM and consultants	October 2011
National documents collection	October 2011
Methodologies and tools created	October 2011
Consultation meetings held	October 2011
Data Collection and Analysis	
Data collection tools and plan	November 2011
Field work	November 2011
Data checking, processing, cleaning, and analyzing	November 2011
Data organization and interpretation	November 2011
Secondary data analysis	December 2011
Preliminary findings development	December 2011
Preliminary Findings Consultation	

Preliminary findings consultation	January 2012
Online submission and feedback	January 2012
Incorporate feedback and inputs	January 2012
First draft submissions	January 2012
Second draft submission	January 2012
Inputs from CCIM, consultants, and stakeholders	January 2012
Incorporate comments and feedback	January 2012
Final report	
Final product submission	January 2012
Dissemination workshop	January 2012
Internal and external communication of findings	January 2012
Radio broadcasting and advocacy	January 2012

LIMITATIONS

This study has a few limitations. First, the survey only included four provinces that were purposely selected from the 11 provinces where Radio Sarika and Voices of Democracy are broadcasted. The selected provinces were Phnom Penh, Kampong Speu, Takeo, and Prey Veng. Therefore, data collected from these provinces may not represent the Cambodia population as a whole. Nonetheless, we believe these provinces are relatively representative.

Second, in the questionnaire interviews the researchers asked some questions that could have been perceived as sensitive. There may have been a social desirability bias where respondents reported what is socially desirable and not necessarily what is actually practiced or perceived by them. It may have also been the case that some respondents thought the concepts of *freedom of information* and *access to information* were the same.

Third, due to limited time and budget, the research team did not conduct an adequate piloting process. Using university students in the pilot did not allow the researchers to discern nuances of meaning in the questionnaire. Further, the Khmer surveys were not back translated into English to ensure the questions captured the content and intent of the concepts.

Finally, during data collection some data enumerators from Advanced Research Consultant Team, especially in the province of Kampong Speu, were arrested by local authorities. So some data collected in areas such as this may have environmental bias where respondents may have given favorable answers to questions that were sensitive due to threat of possible negative action by local authorities. From our experiences, this is not uncommon in rural areas of Cambodia.

FINDINGS

In Table 1 below, the survey results show the status of access to information and the level of accessing to information:

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

		Male	Female	Total
		%	%	n
Location				
	Kampong Speu	40.7	59.3	376
	Prey Veng	47.5	52.5	387
	Takeo	35.4	64.6	376
	Phnom Penh	43.3	56.7	383
	Total	**41.8**	**58.2**	**1522**
		Male	**Female**	**Total**
		n=636	**n=886**	**n=1522**
Age		%	%	%
	<24	16.5	14.7	15.4
	25 – 34	22.2	26.6	24.8
	35 – 44	21.9	23.6	22.9
	45 – 54	20.1	19	19.4
	55 – 64	12.1	13.2	12.7
	>65	7.2	2.9	4.7
Education		%	%	%
	None	6.1	16.5	12.2
	Primary school	39.6	46.7	43.8
	Secondary school	29.7	26.5	27.9
	High school	22.8	9.9	15.3
	Bachelor	1.7	0.3	0.9
Marital Status		%	%	%
	Single	18.4	11.6	14.5
	Married	77.2	72.1	74.2
	Widowed/Divorced	4.4	16.3	11.3
Occupation		%	%	%
	Unemployment	3.0	8.7	6.3
	Farmer	56.4	57.2	56.9
	Motodup	2.4	0.2	1.1
	Laborer	11.2	9.1	10
	Seller	7.9	17.2	13.3
	Government staff	4.4	1.8	2.9
	NGOs/Company staff	2.8	1.0	1.8
	Student	9.7	3.6	6.2
	Other	2.2	1.1	1.6

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by age and gender. Among the 1,522 individuals surveyed, 41.8% were male and 58.2% were female.

In terms of education, 44% of participants completed a secondary school and 56% completed primary school or never attended school.

Table 1 also shows the main occupation of the respondents. The primary occupation of the respondents was farming (56.9%), followed by small sellers (13.3%), NGO and private sector staff (1.8%), and government staff (1.0%). Unemployed respondents account for 6.3% of the sample.

Table 2 below shows that the average income of household ranked lowest (30US$ per month), low (50US$ per month), medium (80US$ per month), high (150US$ per month and highest (300US$ per month).

TABLE 2: MONTHLY INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS

Category (USD$)	Quintile	%	Range of income (USD$)	Average income (USD$)
< $30-$50	1	17	$25-$45	$28
$50-$80	2	11	$45-$72	$52
$80-$150	3	33	$72-$120	$86
$150-$300	4	17.7	$120-$197	$146
> $300	5	21.7	>$197	$344

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Survey respondents were asked about the extent to which they accessed different types of information. Information here refers to public information such as news, traffic accidents, disaster information, deforestation information, weather (including climate change), economic land concession, forced evictions, national minerals, poverty, corruption, law (including policies, procedures, and guidelines), enforcement of the law, national budgets (e.g., income, expenditures, loans, grants), commune budgets for development, human rights, health, HIV, and education.

The majority of respondents (98%) reported trying to access these types of information through some means. Figure 1below details that the respondents accessed information predominantly via radio (79%) and television (78%) followed by word of mouth (50%),meetings or workshops (24%), newspapers or magazines (12%), online sources (2%), and village/commune information board or information and education communication material/posters presentation (1%).

FIGURE 1: MEANSBY WHICH RESPONDENTS ACCESS PUBLIC INFORMATION
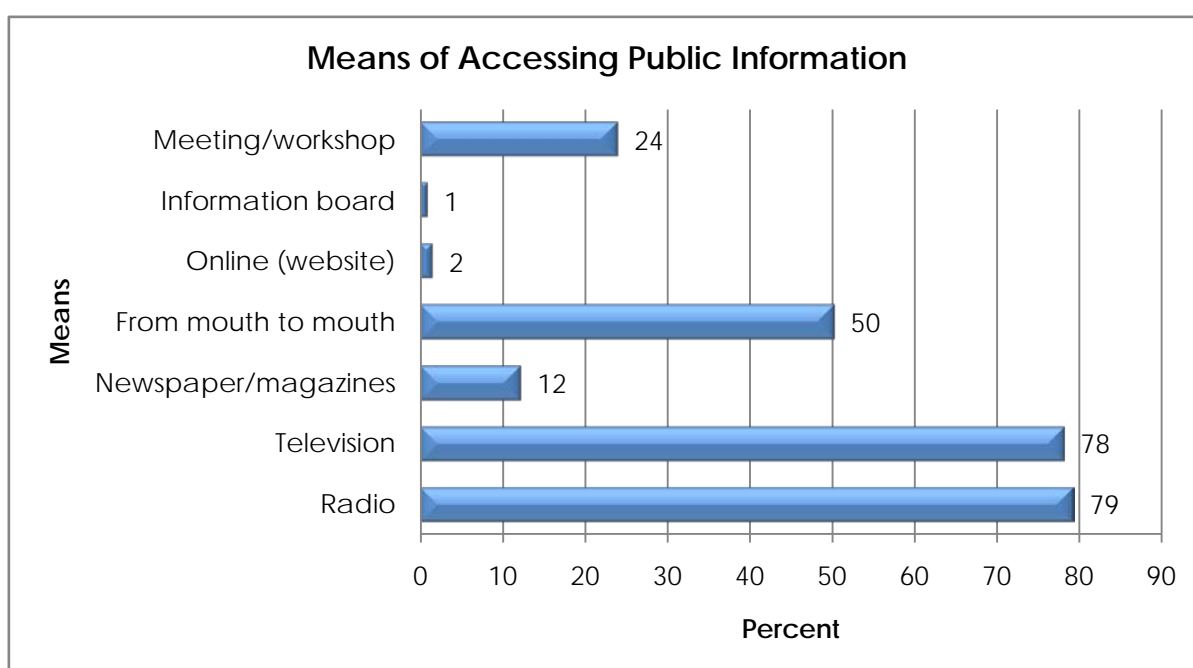
Table 3 details levels of preferences for means to accessing information. Radio is the preferred means of accessing information (59.7%), followed by television (50.8%)and word of mouth (48.5%). A negligible percent of respondents reported newspaper/magazine, online (website), and information boards as priority for accessing information.

TABLE 3: PREFERENCE FORACCESSING INFORMATION

Preference	First Preference	Second Preference	Third Preference
Radio	59.7	19.5	5.1
Television	28.2	50.8	10.0
Newspaper/Magazine	0.7	3.2	13.0
Via word of mouth	8.7	19.3	48.5
Online via website	0.3	0.2	0.8
Information board	0	0	0.5
Meeting /Workshop	2.4	6.9	22.2
Other	0.1	0.1	0

Figure 2 below shows that more than 71% of respondents agreed (agree or strongly agree) that information should be accurate, fair, and is important to them.

FIGURE 2: PERCEPTIONS OF INFORMATION ACCURACY, FAIRNESS, AND IMPORTANCE
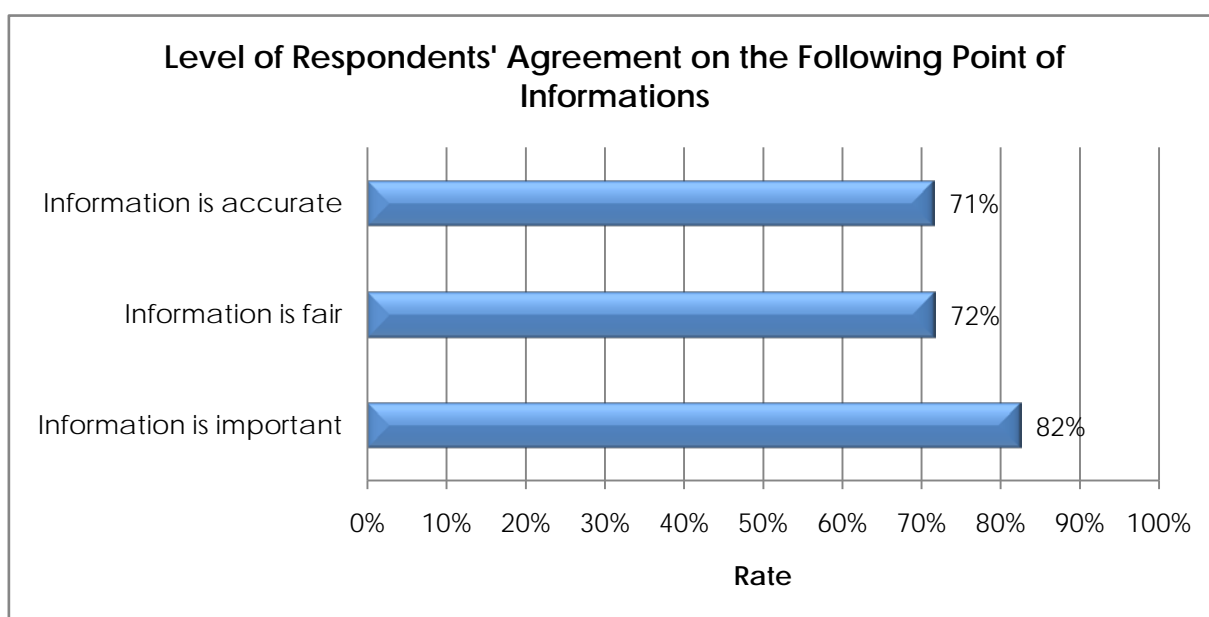
The researchers were concerned that a limitation of the survey questions (and a limitation of Cambodian people knowledge regarding access to information) was that respondents were not able to respond specifically to issues that are considered to be news (e.g., weather, traffic, etc.) versus information that is referred to as public information (such as that commonly referred to when discussing a freedom of information). Therefore the focus group interviews and interviews with key informants were utilized to provide context to these findings. For instance, information concerning national holidays, Cambodian delegation visits (both domestic and international), and Khmer ceremonies are often deemed accurate. But information regarding the national budget, national income and expenditure, trends of debt, statistics of human rights violation, border conflicts, deforestation, illegal lodging, and unlawful fishing are perceived as being overwhelmingly manipulated by government agencies.

In the radio talk show program produced by Voices of Democracy, members of parliament were invited to be guest speakers. The public was invited to call in to express their opinions about the finding of the survey.

Eight members of the parliament participated in the radio talk show. They were from the ruling party, Cambodian People Party (CPP), opposition party the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), and the Human Rights Party (HRP).

Son Chhay, a member of parliament from the Sam Rainsy Party acknowledged that this research is important for parliamentarians as well as the Cambodian people. He said that "this is a message to the government to respect human rights especially freedom of information."Yem Ponhearith, a member of parliament from the Human Rights Party, agreed adding that the finding reflects the situation of access to information in Cambodia. He said, "This research gives a clearer view of the situation of access to information." Cheam Yeap, a member of parliament from the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) stated "I agree with this research and I'll take it to discuss with partners to make new mechanism to respond to the needs of Cambodian people."Tep Nun Ry, a representative from FUNCINPEC party, noted that people should have access to public information in saying "I agree that Cambodia should pass the law on freedom of information." Finally, Pen Sangha, spokesperson from the Norodom Ranarith's Party, acknowledged that freedom of information "in Cambodia is not widely open because there are less independent media, poor knowledge of people, and lack of mechanisms for providing information to all areas of Cambodia."

> "This is a message to the government to respect human rights especially freedom of information. The government should rush to develop the freedom of information law."

Eleven guests from various NGOs working on issues relevant to freedom of information, freedom of expression, and human rights were invited to participate in the radio shows. Lam Socheat, deputy director of Advocacy and Policy Institute that coordinates efforts of over a dozen NGOs, said, "I agree with the result of this research…information is hard to find because of knowledge limitation and a lack of sharing information from the local authority. So the government should rush to develop the freedom of information law."

> "The government should rush to develop the freedom of information law."

There were 44 callers into the radio talk shows. Each provided comments and concerns about freedom of information. Most of them said they have asked for information from their local authority, but faced many problems and sometimes they were refused access by the local authorities.

Sreymao, a caller from Kandal province said, "I used to be able to locate public information in my commune, but now it is hard to find. Most information is provided by NGOs because government officials and local authorities often hide public information." Chan, another caller from Kandal province noted, "I agree with the findings of this research because a lot of public information is hidden." Kolbot, a caller from Kampot province said, "freedom of information is very important. If the government keeps information secret, Cambodia will fall into trouble like we experienced under the Pol Pot regime." Panha, a caller from Kampong Chnang province, said that "most Cambodians have poor knowledge so they not aware the importance of information. I agree with the idea that information in Cambodia is not balanced."

> "Freedom of information is very important. If the government keeps information secret, Cambodia will fall into trouble like we experienced under the Pol Pot regime."

Table 4 below presents data from respondents who sought information and faced difficulty in seeking information (news or public information). 19.1% of respondents reported to have at some point sought information and 32.5% of those faced difficulty in seeking such information.

TABLE 4: DIFFICULTY OFSEEKINGINFORMATION

	Experiences seeking information	Response	Faced difficulty in seeking information	Response
Education	%	n	%	n
Never study	11.4	175	20	20
Primary school	14.7	651	34.4	96
Secondary school	20.8	414	22.1	86
High school	32.0	231	45.9	74
Bachelor	50.0	14	28.6	7
Age Category				
<24	26.8	231	50.0	62
25 – 34	19.3	374	19.4	72
35 – 44	18.5	336	35.5	62
45 – 54	21.3	286	26.2	61
55 – 64	12.6	190	33.3	24
>65	2.9	68	50	2
Occupation				
Unemployment	13.7	95	46.2	13
Farmer	17.3	840	27.6	145
Motodup	23.5	17	50	4
Laborer	14.5	145	23.8	21
Seller	14	200	25	28
Government staff	45.5	44	20	20
NGOs/Company staff	25.9	27	28.6	7
Student	40.9	93	63.2	38
Other	29.2	24	28.6	7
Income Quintile				
Quintile 1	14.3	251	50.0	36
Quintile 2	17.4	155	37.0	27
Quintile 3	22.1	484	29.9	107
Quintile 4	18.4	267	16.3	49
Quintile 5	19.5	328	37.5	64
Total	**19.1**	**1485**	**32.5**	**283**

Participants of the focus groups discussed why it can be difficult to obtain information. Analysis of the discussions revealed that:

- People reported seeking information pertinent to events that directly impacted themselves or their relatives.
- There was a predominantly negative response from a service provider related to a person's request for information from the government.
- While the means of accessing information is growing (e.g., Internet access, newspapers, and other publications), many Cambodians still rely on radio and TV access for information.
- People with less education or who live in poverty are not versed in the norms regarding accessing public information.
- The culture and values of politicians and local authorities has not historically supported the provision of public information to Cambodian citizens.
- Some citizens believe they will be subjected to threats for seeking information.

- Sensitive information, such as land concession data, information on land disputes, and forced evictions are difficult to access.

Additionally, the participants of the focus group discussed information that people found difficult to access. This included:

- Land issues
- Corruption issues and cases
- Job advertisements, especially public positions
- Education information at all levels
- Social and legal issues
- Deforestation

Other topics included national budget, identification cards, and flood information. It was interesting to note that these topics are personal issues related to the wellbeing of persons versus nationally pertinent issues.

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICY

More than 90% of respondents of the survey agreed that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression without interference and everyone has the rights to seek, receive, and disseminate information freely (see Table 5). Most all respondents agreed that government and public bodies, including elected bodies, should be obliged to provide public information and everyone should be aware of the income and expenditure of the government (i.e., national budget). Respondents also reported believing that mass media can influence the government and public bodies to improve transparency and accountability.

TABLE 5: PERCEPTIONS ABOUTACCESSTOINFORMATION

	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression without interference	93.5%	5.5%	1.1%
Everyone has the right to seek, receive, and disseminate information freely	91.3%	7.6%	1.1%
Government and public bodies should be obliged to publish key information	91.8%	7.4%	.9%
Media has influenced the government and public bodies to improve transparency and accountability	77.8%	17.5%	4.7%
Everyone should be aware of the income and expenditure of the government (National Budget)	84.5%	10.7%	4.8%

Data from focus groups and key informant interviews provided insights as to what types of public information the government and public bodies should be obliged to provide. It was found that economy, land concessions, national property procurement processes, national debt, national income and expenditures, as well as mineral exploration and investments should be disclosed publicly and transparently.

Slightly over 15% of the respondents disagreed or had no opinion when asked if everyone should be aware of the national budget. Slightly over 22% of respondents had no opinion or disagreed with the idea

that the media has influenced the government and public bodies to improved transparency and accountability. While this does not represent the majority opinion, it is large enough to ask why it might be the case that people hold these perceptions. It is possible that some Cambodian citizens do not believe political issues are their business. This is particularly the case for citizens who were raised in a Cambodian political culture of the 1970s where being involved in politics was a frightening prospect.

Freedom of expression is related to freedom of information. CCIM believes that there is a link with a person being able to find information, discuss information, and express their feelings about that information in a manner that is non-threatening. Table 6 below shows that 4.4% of respondents experienced being threatened and 16.3% felt fear of being threatened due to expressing themselves. It is possible that more people would feel threatened if they tried to express themselves or were more knowledgeable of their rights to express themselves.

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED FEAR OR THREATS

Experience	Percentage
Have been threatened	4.4%
Felt afraid of being threatened in the future	16.3%

CONCLUSIONS

Issues of accountability, transparency, participation, and non-discrimination are major concerns for present day Cambodia and will continue to exert pressure on political and social systems in coming decades. In real and in practical ways however access to information is tremendously intricate and complicated; not only for community members and vulnerable populations, but also for government civil servants, high-ranking officials, development partners, and civil society organizations to name a few.

Nearly one third of the respondents experienced seeking public information and a third of respondents faced difficulty in seeking that information. These numbers are less for poorer and less educated Cambodians.

More than 80% of respondents agreed that Cambodian citizens should be aware of income and expenditure of the government (i.e., national budget). More than two thirds of respondents agreed that government and public bodies should be obligated to provide that information.

More than 83% of participants agreed that everyone has the right to seek, received, and disseminate information freely and nearly all participants agreed that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expressions without interference. However, more than 16% of respondents felt afraid of being threatened in the future of seeking information and expression of their interests.

Participants found it difficult to access information specifically about land issues, corruption documents, job findings, education information, social related issues, deforestation information, and the national budget.

More than 70% of respondents agreed that information (i.e., news) that they get through radio, TV, and from mouth to mouth should be accurate, fair, and relevant to them.

Recommendation 1:Public information and the right to access such information should be well defined and guaranteed by law, whose development should be widely consulted with civil society and the general public at the community, sub-national and national levels.

Almost all respondents reported a need for a Freedom of Information law. Civil society together with development partners should jointly advocate to the Royal Government of Cambodia to finalize the draft of Freedom of Information law and urge the House of representative to adopt it. Civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders should advocate for the adoption of the Freedom of Information law.

Local democratic spaces such as Commune Committee for Women and Children, Health Centre Management Committee, Commune Committee for Education for All, Commune Committee for Commune and Village Safety, Commune Committee for Disasters, etc. should be strengthened technically and financially to increase access to information at the grassroots, community level.

The government should promote the meaningful involvement of civil society and the general public in municipal/provincial, district/Khan, and commune / Sangkat councils meetings as indicated in the Law of Commune and Sangkat Administrative Management and the Law of Administrative Management of the Municipal / Provincial and District / Khan.

Recommendation 2: Mechanisms and tools to access to public information, such as means and procedures for accessing to public information, should be developed with meaningful involvement of relevant stakeholders.

There is a need to develop clear mechanism for the public to access information. These mechanisms should be created with the involvement of a variety of stakeholder to ensure buy-in, utility, and usefulness.

Recommendation 3: Further research on freedom of information and freedom of expression should be conducted within Cambodia. Moreover, the Cambodian Ministry of Planning should consider including questions related to freedom of expression and access to information in future global surveys.

Development partners and civil society institutions should mobilize funds and resources to further study the general public's opinions about access to information and freedom of expression. The Ministry of Planning could include questions related to freedom of information into its national survey as a way to monitor progress.

Nevertheless, findings from this study should be disseminated and discussed among relevant government and civil society stakeholders as a way to develop future research agendas.

Recommendation 4: Ongoing discussions about freedom of information and public information should be engaged at various levels of society

Media outlets such as radio, television, websites as well as face-to-face interactions should be considered as potential and effective means to continue the discussion about freedom of information. Further, politicians should use these lines of discussions to engage the general population.

ACRONYMES AND ABBREVIATIONS

ART   Advanced Research Consultant Team

CCIM   Cambodia Center for Independent Media

NGO   Non Government Organization

SPSS   Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire code: _____|_____|_____ |_____

Cambodia Center for Independent Media (CCIM)

Survey on

Public's current perception on the Draft Access to Information Law

Date of interview: _____|_____ |_____

Day   Month   Year

Province	Code	District	Code	Commune	Code
Kg. Speu	1	Samraong Tong	1	Tumpoar Meas	1
Prey Veng	2	Me Sang	2	Voa Sa	2
Takeo	3	Prey Kabbas	3	Chi Phok	3
		Treang	4	Angkanh	4
Phnom Penh	4	Dangkao	5	Dangkao	5

Signature of interviewer: _____; Name: _____

Signature of Team leader: _____; Name: _____

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of CCIM's survey is to obtain information on the public's current perception of the Access to Information.

INTERVIEWER:

Hello. My name is _____ I'm working for CCIM. The purpose of the interview is to know the people's perception of the Access to Information. The information you provide will be collected, summarized and analyzed in a general report. Your name will not be identified anywhere in the report. It will take 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time, but each question is an important area that we would like to get your feedback on.

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC AND CHARACTERISTIC OF RESPONDENTS

N^O	QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS	CODE CATEGORIES/ANSWERS	SKIP TO
q1-1	Sex of respondent	Male: 1 Female: 2	
q1-2	How old are you?	Age in years [__|__] Don't know……………………88	
q1-3	What is your highest level of education completed?	Level of education: |__|__| University 13 Specific skill 14 *Please records **OO** if never study*	
q1-4	What is your current marital status?	Single 1 Married 2 Widowed/Divorce 3	
q1-5	Which is your current main occupation?	Unemployment 0 Farmer 1 Motodup 2 Worker 3 Seller 4 Government staff 5 NGOs/Company staff 6 Student 7 Journalist 8 Other_____ 9	
q1-6	How much is your average household income per month?	Riel|__|__|__|__|__|__|__| No response 99	
q1-7	How much are your average household expenses per month?	Riel|__|__|__|__|__|__|__| No response 99	
q1-8	How much is your average household saving per month?	Riel|__|__|__|__|__|__|__| No response 99	

SECTION II: ACCESS TO GENERAL INFORMATION

Information here refer to public information for instance News, Traffic Accidents, Disaster, Deforestation, Weather (Climate Change), Economic Land Concession, Force Evictions, National Minerals, Poverty, Corruption, Law (Policy, procedure and guideline), Enforcement of the Law, National Budgets (Income, Expenditure, Loan, Grant), Commune Budgets for Development, Human Rights, Health, HIV, Education and so on.

N^O	QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS	CODE CATEGORIES/ANSWERS	SKIP TO
q2-1	Have you ever had access to any information?	Yes 1 No 2 No response 99	→ **q3-1** → **q3-1**
q2-2	How do you access information? *Multiple answers*	Radio 1 Television 2 Newspaper/magazines 3 From mouth to mouth 4 Online (website) 5 Information board 6 Meeting/Conference 7 Other _____ 8	

q2-3 Which of the above information distribution means did you have the most access to? (Please rank your top three priorities)

No	Item	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
1	Radio	1	2	3
2	Television	1	2	3
3	Newspaper/magazines	1	2	3
4	From mouth to mouth	1	2	3
5	Online (website)	1	2	3
6	Information board	1	2	3
7	Meeting /Conference	1	2	3
8	Others	1	2	3

q2-4	To what extent do you think information is important to you?	Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5	
q2-5	To what extent do you think information is fair to you?	Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5	
q2-6	To what extent do you think information is accurate to you?	Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5	
q2-7	Have you ever sought information?	Yes 1 No 2 No response 99	 → q2-11 → q2-11
q2-8	Have you ever faced any difficulty seeking and/or accessing information?	Yes 1 No 2 No response 99	 → q2-11 → q2-11
q2-9	If yes, which type of information have you had difficulty in accessing to?	_____	
q2-10	From which sources have you had difficulty accessing information?	Government/public bodies 1 Civil society 2 Private sector 3 Other: _____ 4	

q2-11	To what extent do you agree that it is easy to access information from **government or public bodies**?	Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5 Not applicable 6	
q2-12	To what extent do you agree that information from **civil society organizations** is easy to access?	Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5 Not applicable 6	
q2-13	To what extent do you agree that information from the **private sector** is easy to access?	Strongly agree 1 Agree 2 Neither agree nor disagree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly disagree 5 Not applicable 6	
q2-14	In the last six months, have you ever anonymously voice out your complaints (of true events) on the radio, other media outlets or any forum?	Yes 1 No 2 No response 99	

SECTION III: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICE ON RIGHTS OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The information has the same meaning as mentioned in Section II above.

N^O	QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS	CODE CATEGORIES/ANSWERS	SKIP TO
q3-1	To what extent do you agree that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression without	Strongly agree 1	

		interference?		
			Agree 2	
			Neither agree nor disagree 3	
			Disagree 4	
			Strongly disagree 5	
q3-2	To what extent do you agree that everyone has the right to seek, receive, and disseminate information freely?		Strongly agree 1	
			Agree 2	
			Neither agree nor disagree 3	
			Disagree 4	
			Strongly disagree 5	
q3-3	To what extent do you agree that government and public bodies should be obliged to publish key information?		Strongly agree 1	
			Agree 2	
			Neither agree nor disagree 3	
			Disagree 4	
			Strongly disagree 5	
q3-4	Have you ever been threatened due to your expression of information?		Yes 1	
			No 2	
			No response 99	
q3-5	Do you feel afraid of being threatened in the future due to your expression of information?		Yes 1	
			No 2	
			No response 99	
q3-6	To what extent do you agree that the media has influenced the government and public bodies to improve transparency and accountability?		Strongly agree 1	
			Agree 2	
			Neither agree nor disagree 3	
			Disagree 4	
			Strongly disagree 5	
q3-7	To what extent do you agree that everyone should be aware of the income and expenditure of the government (National Budget)?		Strongly agree 1	
			Agree 2	

		Neither agree nor disagree 3	
		Disagree 4	
		Strongly disagree 5	

SECTION IV: ACCESS TO INFORMATION LAW

N^O	QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS	CODE CATEGORIES/ANSWERS	SKIP TO
q4-1	Have you ever heard/known about the draft law on Access to Information?	Yes 1 No 2 No response 99	→ **q5-1** → **q5-1**
q4-2	If yes, how did you hear/learn about the draft law?	Radio 1 Television 2 Newspaper/magazines 3 From mouth to mouth 4 Online (website) 5 Information board 6 Other _____ 7	

SECTION IV: COVERAGE, POPULARITY AND QUALITY of RADIO PROGRAM

NO	QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS	CODE CATEGORIES/ANSWERS	SKIP TO
q5-1	Have you ever listened to SARIKA FM (106.5)/VOD radio program?	Yes 1 No 2 No response 99	 →q5-9 →q5-9
q5-2	What program did you use to listen? ***Multiple answers***	News 1 News plus 2 News analysis 3 Let's Go 4	

		Lovely night 5
		Good service good society 6
		Light health 7
		Asia calling 8
		Other………………………….. 9
q5-3	What programs do you like the most?	News 1
		News plus 2
		News analysis 3
		Let's Go 4
		Lovely night 5
		Good service good society 6
		Light Health 7
		Asia calling 8
		Other………………………….. 9

q5-4 How much you satisfy or dissatisfy with the following components, based on your listening to SARIKA FM (106.5)/VOD Radio Program.

No	Component	Satisfy	Somewhat Satisfy	Neither Satisfy nor Dissatisfy	Somewhat Dissatisfy	Dissatisfy
1	Procedures of Call in, Call out, Response	1	2	3	4	5
2	Open for public engagement (call in)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Open for public engagement (call out)	1	2	3	4	5
4	Master Ceremony	1	2	3	4	5
5	Guest Speaker	1	2	3	4	5
6	Additional item like case story, interview, story.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Additional item like song	1	2	3	4	5
8	Additional item like advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
9	Sound /Frequency	1	2	3	4	5
10	Time of broadcasting	1	2	3	4	5

q5-5	To what extent do you agree that the quality of SARIKA FM (106.5)/VOD radio is good?	Strongly agree 1	

		Agree 2	
		Neither agree nor disagree 3	
		Disagree 4	
		Strongly disagree 5	
q5-6	To what extent do you agree that SARIKA FM (106.5)/VOD radio is independent?	Strongly agree 1	
		Agree 2	
		Neither agree nor disagree 3	
		Disagree 4	
		Strongly disagree 5	
q5-7	To what extent do you agree that SARIKA FM (106.5)/VOD radio is professional?	Strongly agree 1	
		Agree 2	
		Neither agree nor disagree 3	
		Disagree 4	
		Strongly disagree 5	
q5-8	To what extent do you agree that the information you received form SARIKA FM (106.5)/VOD have make change to your decision and/or standard of living?	Strongly agree 1	
		Agree 2	
		Neither agree nor disagree 3	
		Disagree 4	
		Strongly disagree 5	
q5-9	Which radio format did you mostly prefer to listen to? (**Multiple Answer**)	New 1	
		Education 2	
		Edutainment 3	
		Entertainment 4	
		Call in show program 5	
		Radio drama 6	
		Documentary/rapport 7	
		Community forum/dialogue 8	

		Round Table Discussion 9
		Other..10
q5-10	Which radio program did you mostly prefer to listen to?	Sweet FM (88) 1
		Ta Prum(90.5) 2
		Sing Radio (90) 3
		Bayon(95) 4
		APSARA (97) 5
		KhemarakPhumin (98) 6
		WMC (102)7
		River Radio (102.5)8
		Phnom Penh Radio (103)9
		Hang Meas Radio (104.5) 10
		SambukKhmum (105) 11
		SEA Radio (106) 12
		Democracy/VOD Radio (106.5) 13
		ABC Radio (107.5)14
		107 Radio15
		Other....................................16

Thank you for your kind collaboration!

Discuss on the following finding of the FOI survey among more than 1,500 general populations in four provinces Phnom Penh, Kampong Spue, Takeo and Prey Veng on the rights to information.

How does the group think about the following findings? Why?

- The demand of information is more likely weak (only 19.1%) among general population.
- 32% among those who seeking information face difficulty in finding it while source of information that found difficulty 65% from government/public body.
- 71.9% of respondent agree that information they received is fair.
- 71.5% of respondent agree that information they received is accurate.
- 85.1% of respondent agree that people have the rights to expression of information without interfere.
- 82.6% agree that people have the rights to seek, receive and spread information freely.
- 79.8% agree that everyone should aware of national budget.
- 81.74% agree that public bodies should be obligated to publish key information.
- 72.2% agree that media has influenced the government to improve transparency and accountability.
- 4.4% of respondent experienced threatened due to expression of information.
- 16.3% of respondent felt afraid of being threatened in the future due to expression of information.

In the past have you (or anybody you know) ever seek information but could not access to, why? And what you do?

Based on the above situation what would your suggestion and recommendation?

How do you think about the draft FOI Law?

Content of FOI

- What should be included in the FOI law? Why?
- What kinds of information should not be publicly available? Why?
- What are the criteria for what information should be or should not be made publicly available?

Implementation of FOI law

- How should the government protect the right to access public information?
- What should be the procedure for getting public information?
- What should be the procedure for providing public information?

  - Possible prompts
  - Should this be done in writing?
  - Should this be done in person?
  - What should the waiting period be?
  - What should be the procedure when replies are unsatisfactory?

- How should the law be effectively implemented?
- What would be the barriers to effectively implementing the FOI law?
- What should be the punishment for someone who breaks this law?

Impact of FOI law

- Tell us about an instance when you or someone you knew tried to access information but were unable to?
- What could be benefits of a FOI law?
- What bad things might happen if a FOI law is passed?

Conducted by: Implemented by: