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of the Czech Republic

FINAL REPORT OF EVALUATION

**PRIORITY SECTOR EVALUATION:
INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT /
EDUCATION
(CAMBODIA)**

Draft, November 2023



Identification form

Country of implementation: Cambodia	Locations: Phnom Penh, Province Kampong Chhnang, Province Battambang
Title of intervention in Czech and English: 1. Odborná studie zaměřená na analýzu situace a potřeb v sektoru vzdělávání v Kambodži (<i>Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia</i>), 2017 2. Zlepšení odborného středoškolského vzdělávání v oblasti zpracování zemědělských produktů „ACTIVE for Youth“ (<i>ACTIVE for Youth: Agro-processing Career development, Technical Training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth</i>), 2018–2020 3. Zvyšování kapacit vybraných technických oborů na národní a provinční úrovni (<i>Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth)</i>), 2019-2021 4. Partnerství pro zaměstnanost a budování praktických dovedností v provincii Battambang, Kambodža (<i>Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD)</i>), 2020 – 2021 5. Zavedení oboru biomedicínského inženýrství do Kambodži (<i>Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia</i>), 2019 – 2022 6. Tvorba laboratorních úloh biomedicínského inženýrství (<i>Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering</i>) 2019 – 2021	Specialization: Inclusive social development/education
Coordinator: Czech Development Agency	Implementers: EuroPlus Consulting & Management, s.r.o., Člověk v tísni, o.p.s., ČVUT (Faculty of Biomedical Engineering)
Project Start Date: 2018	Project End Date: 2021
Total Contribution from CzDA for interventions: 31,224,436 CZK Breakdown into interventions: 1. <i>Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia, 2017 – 978,640 CZK</i> 2. <i>ACTIVE for Youth: Agro-processing Career development, Technical Training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth 2018 – 2020 – 8,444,966 CZK (annual reports)</i> 3. <i>Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth), 2019-2021 – 9,845,983 CZK (annual reports)</i> 4. <i>Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD), 2020 – 2021 – 7,983,637.75 CZK</i> 5. <i>Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia, 2019 – 2022 – 1,971,209 CZK</i> 6. <i>Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering, 2019 – 2021 – 2,000,000 CZK</i>	Total funds utilised, including co-financing: 40,013,859 CZK Breakdown into interventions: 1. <i>Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia, 2017 – 978,640 CZK</i> 2. <i>ACTIVE for Youth: Agro-processing Career development, Technical Training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth 2018 – 2020 – 8,919,066 CZK (annual reports)</i> 3. <i>Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth), 2019-2021 – 10,391,834 CZK (annual reports)</i> 4. <i>Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD), 2020 - 2021 – 15,743,110.05 CZK</i> 5. <i>Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia, 2019 – 2022 – 1,971,209 CZK</i> 6. <i>Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering, 2019 – 2021 – 2,000,000 CZK</i>
Other donors engaged in the project: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	
Authors of the evaluation report: Marie Körner, Main Evaluator; Jiří Hejkrlik, Junior evaluator & higher education expert; Samram Tuy, Local Rural development and education expert; Hak Sokleang, Assistant and Interpreter	
Period of the evaluation: 01 June 2023- 15 December 2023	
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Phnom Penh
Introduction of biomedical engineering and Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering

Battambang
Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD)

Kampong Chhnang
ACTIVE for Youth FTE 4 Youth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the evaluation

The **main purpose of the evaluation** was to provide specific and feasible recommendations based on consistent findings and conclusions to be used for decisions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (MFA) in cooperation with the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) for decisions on the future focus and method of implementation of development projects in the sector Inclusive Social Development in Cambodia. **Main focus of the evaluation** was on assessment of the extent to which the educational program ensured equal access of Cambodian men and women to affordable, quality, and inclusive vocational and higher education, including university education and to which the acquired skills match the requirements of the labor market. Also assessed was the scope for involving Czech public institutions and the possibility replication. The evaluation used the **OECD-DAC evaluation criteria** with the emphasis on impact, sustainability and replicability potential, and assessed **visibility and application of cross-cutting themes** of the Czech Development Cooperation.

The interventions and the context of evaluation

The evaluation covered six projects in the priority sector of the Czech Development Cooperation – Inclusive social development/education (SDGs 4, 5 and 8.5)¹ which is also the priority sector of the Bilateral Development Cooperation in Cambodia, reflecting the need to tackle poverty and social inequalities and to promote social stability. The *Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia*, provided initial information and framework for the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia, 2018–2023. Three of the evaluated projects, all implemented by People in Need (PIN) aimed to increase the number of young people and adults with vocational and professional skills, relevant for the job market: The *ACTIVE for Youth*, 2018 – 2020, at the King Norodom Sihamoni General and Technical High School (KNHS), *FTE 4 Youth*, 2019 – 2021, within the Provincial training centers (PTC), both in Kampong Chhnang Province and the Trilateral *Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD)* project, 2020 – 2021, implemented the National Vocational Institute (NVIB) Battambang province. Two projects aimed to develop capacities needed for servicing, repairs and operation of medical technologies, missing in many Cambodian health facilities: *Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia* 2019 – 2021 and *Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering*, 2021. Both projects have been implemented by the Faculty of Biomedical Engineering at Czech Technical University (CTU), in partnership with the University of Health Sciences (UHS) and the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC).

The evaluation team

The evaluation was conducted by the evaluation team of 4G eval s.r.o., an independent consulting company based in Prague, specializing in providing comprehensive services in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, environmental management, social development, water supply and sanitation, gender equality and good governance. 4G eval operates worldwide and has implemented projects in Africa, East Asia, Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia regions for a variety of clients including the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU, AFD, UNDP, UNICEF, international finance institutions, Czech and International NGOs and the private sector.

Most important findings and conclusions

Evaluation criteria	Rate of fulfilment
Relevance	Rather high
Coherence	High
Efficiency	Rather high
Effectiveness	Rather high
Likelihood of impacts	Rather high
Sustainability	Rather low

¹ Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic, 2018–2030

Cross-cutting principles	Good governance	Rather high
	Environment and climate	Rather high
	Human rights and gender	Rather high
Visibility of CZ DC		High

Relevance

All evaluated projects addressed the needs and priorities of primary beneficiaries' as well as of relevant central and provincial institutions and were designed in ways that reflect good practices of development interventions. The secondary school training provided under the projects however is not fully relevant to the requirements of potential employers; the design of interventions leading to better networking of schools with the private sector and the generation of financial benefits for the schools was inadequate. The trainings still lack more practical orientation, due to outdated equipment, lack of space in the practical training facilities (including the projects focusing on the university level). Manuals for the laboratory tasks are available only in English and difficult to follow for some students. Launching the Biomedical Engineering program at the level of the Associated degree limits the relevancy of the graduates' possibility of employment at public health institutions. Project progress monitoring was based on activities and outputs; outcomes and assumptions have not been monitored.

Coherence

All evaluated projects were consistent with the priorities of the Czech Development Cooperation in Cambodia and contributed to the outputs of the country Programme, except for the Biomedical Engineering project. The projects also complemented and built upon completed, ongoing and planned projects of the Czech Development Cooperation in the sector; no duplications were detected. They were also coherent with relevant Cambodian policies and strategies. The technical and vocational training projects were complementary and built upon interventions of the Cambodian Government by focusing on the combination of human capacity development, curricula design, training equipment and the involvement of the private sector. They were also complementary and build upon other donors' interventions in the sector. However, there is room for improvement in the more structured discussion with the Government for the Czech cooperation. CR is a leading donor in the Kampong Chhnang province and is highly appreciated by the provincial administration. Czech interventions are notably recognized and welcomed in the provinces of the former implementation of the program – Kampong Chhnang and Battambang. Agricultural education and agriculture, in general, is the sector most often recognized by the stakeholders as the sector with good experience of Czech organizations.

Efficiency

Outputs for the Expert Research study were generated during as per initial schedule. In spite of Modifications of activities and annual work plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the three TVET projects were completed as initially planned. Following two no-cost extensions, the project Biomedical engineering has been completed year and half later than planned, in June 2022. Monitoring was based on activities rather than outputs. Based on the reconstructed intervention logic (Annex C), quality of generated output could be further improved. According to available information, there are no plans for accreditation of the biomedical engineering program. Good cooperation, communication and coordination between the Czech and local partners and presence of PIN in the country facilitated implementation, particularly of the three TVET projects. Main obstacle to smooth implementation of the biomedical engineering project included the lack of accreditation of the programme (potentially effecting employability of the graduates in public hospitals), the lack of qualified teachers and intermittent presence of CTU staff in Cambodia. Output 1 (reconstructed evaluation matrix, Annex C) "Trained permanent and external lecturers deliver classes independently" has not been fully achieved. The need for permanent presence of CTU has not been recognized. Funds for all evaluated projects were utilized in accordance with approve budgets.

Effectiveness

While all technical and vocational training projects developed training capacities in the respective schools, the relevance of training for the private sector leaves scope for improvement. In the KNHS Technical High School supported by the *ACTIVE for Youth* project, the numbers of applicants for the course Processing of agricultural products exceeds the school's capacities. The curriculum has however so far been adopted only by two additional schools (the project documentation planned 10 schools with 160,000 students), and most of the students do not work in the field of their education, giving priority to jobs that help them to sustain financially during university studies which most of the graduates pursue. Employment opportunities for graduates

interested in professional career are limited due to the lack of linkages between the school and agro-processing businesses. Transformation of the KNHS into a profitable Centre of Excellence for learning agro-processing, contributing to the growth of the industry, has not been successful. The *FTE 4 Youth* project provided youth with access to relevant skills matching the needs of the private sector only partially, mainly due to the lack of cooperation with the private sector. Most useful are considered IT skills that can help graduates to find jobs or to get admitted to a university. Over 80% of interviewed graduates stated that they found a decent job. The *PESD* project contributed to improving access to education and training in marketable skills partially. The quality of training at the NVIB has improved, particularly by providing the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classes in practice. The project supported development of curriculum in vegetable and food processing for Vocational Training and TVET Certificate C1 that has not been replicated as initially planned. Partnership building between NVIB and the private sector did not progress as planned; larger companies prefer graduates with better knowledge of modern technologies and professional attitude, small businesses rarely hire external staff. Some graduates reported to have set up own business. The project *Biomedical engineering and Creation of laboratory* has been launched, the laboratory equipped. Key assumptions linking the outputs and the objective have however not been met and the objective not achieved.

Likelihood of impacts

The TVET projects contributed to the Program objectives: *Equal access of women and men to good quality, affordable and inclusive technical, vocational and higher education including university education* by increasing the capacity of vocational training in the three supported schools and creating the potential for adoption of curricula developed and updated during their implementation. Women are typically the majority of students in food processing trainings. Some impacts could not be established due to the lack of statistical data: Contribution to increase of graduates from TVET, to the establishment of new MSEs, or to decrease of unemployment rates of youth in the Battambang and Kampong Chhnang provinces. According to the VOD, the contribution to the increase of graduates from TVET has been significant, although there are not many new graduates yet. 11 graduates from NVIB and PTI (10% of graduates) reported establishment of own business, some contribution is evident. The official unemployment rate for Cambodia in 2022 was 0.36%². With some 40% of graduates/respondents to the quantitative survey stating that they currently do not have a job contribution to decreased unemployment seems unlikely. The statistics however consider only job seekers in the formal sector. Statements from the schools indicate that the majority of graduates finds a job or continues with higher studies (and is not registered as unemployed). It is considered likely that the projects did contribute to formal employment as well as to paid jobs in the informal sector including family businesses. Contribution of the biomedical engineering program to improved operation and maintenance of medical equipment has yet to be seen; the programme is in its second year, the process of accreditation has not yet started. Associate Degree graduates cannot find permanent employment in public hospitals. Chances to find employment in the field of biomedical engineering have however been estimated by the UHS as high.

Sustainability and replicability

Only the projects Active for Youth and FTE 4 Youth included a well-defined exit strategy (sustainability) in the project documents. Assessment of financial sustainability indicates continued dependency on external funding and lack of resources for the maintenance and upgrading of equipment provided under the projects, and for procurement of consumables. Only the UHS advised that that they have sufficient funds to maintain and operate equipment provided for the ITC laboratory. While there is demand for qualified labour, the extent to which students from PTI, NVIB and KHNS meet the current qualification requirements of the local industries is limited. This may in longer term lead to decreased demand for training in these schools. The main challenge for future graduates from the biomedical engineering program who want to work in public medical facilities is the accreditation of the program as BSc, although the ITC advertises it on its website as a Bachelor of Biomedical Engineering program³. Students may still enroll and continue in their studies expecting to find jobs in the private sector.

Crosscutting principles

² National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia

³ <https://www.rocapply.com/study-in-cambodia/cambodia-universities/institute-of-technology-of-cambodia/bachelor-of-biomedical-engineering.html>

- **Environment and climate:** Though the monitoring of the negative environmental impact of the projects was not introduced, the nature of the educational projects indicates that the potential negative (and positive as well) impact on the environment was limited and positive (environmental issues were included in the newly developed curricula, energy efficient technologies were used in the KNHS school laboratory (equipped under the ACTIVE for Youth project).
- **Good governances:** There is strong evidence of good (democratic) governance and the application of democratic principles, especially from the perspective of the involvement of the various stakeholders in the identification, implementation and finalization of the projects. Particularly for the projects focusing on the secondary level in the provinces, where both provincial and central authorities were actively involved.
- **Human rights and gender:** The projects had a strong impact on girls' education. Most of the students at KNHS, NVIB and UHS/ITC schools were girls.

Visibility

The presentation of the Czech Development Cooperation was carried out in line with CZDA visibility rules (Metodický pokyn České rozvojové agentury k vnější prezentaci zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce ČR) and Graphic standard manual (Grafický manuál ZRS ČR) by all evaluated projects

Recommendations

Level of seriousness: 1 – the most serious, 2 – serious, 3 – the least serious

#	Recommendation	Specific addressee	Degree of seriousness
Recommendations related to projects and continuation of CZ DC			
1	Preparing a roadmap for accreditation of the biomedical engineering program with specific activities, stakeholders involved, milestones and timelines. For the expertise or training of Cambodian academic staff, it is possible to involve other Czech universities specializing in the Biomedical Engineering sciences.	CTU, CzDA	1
2	Consider Phase II for the PESD and FTE 4 Youth projects to build upon what has already been achieved, to close the gaps between requirements of the private sector and qualifications of graduates and to include flexible training times	CzDA	2
Recommendations to the programme			
3	Update the Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector with focus on Czech interventions. Including specific road map for improving the relevance of education for market needs and improve access to training for the informal sector	CzDA	1
4	Including flexible training times for supported technical and vocational training projects to improve access for working men and women to upgrade their knowledge and skills and provide the opportunity for enhancing market position and income	CzDA	2
5	Collaboration with UNIDO to achieve more profound synergy. The cooperation between MFA and UNIDO in Georgia can be used as an example (<i>Increasing the Competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region through the Cluster Development Approach</i>).	MFA, CzDA	1
6	Support to adoption of curricula for food processing developed under the ACTIVE for Youth project for the KNHHS by providing support to additional technical and vocational schools with training in agro-processing at the Associate Degree level	CzDA	3
Systemic recommendations			
7	Improvement of the coherence in the design of the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme, include identified interventions as per requirement of the Methodology for Czech ODA 2021 and objectively verifiable indicators	MFA, CzDA	1
8	Establish guidelines on the extent to which the Methodology for International Development Cooperation needs to be followed during programming and project preparation	MFA	2
9	Each project document should include theory of change, with specific and verifiable targets, assumptions and risks to be used as a tool for results-based monitoring as foreseen in the Methodology for International Development Cooperation.	CzDA	1
10	It is recommended to disburse annual budgets at the beginning of a year. To avoid breaks and delays in implementation for implementers who do not have sufficient funds and/or interest in advancing funds to the project.	CzDA	2

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The evaluation covered five projects in the priority sector of the Czech Development Cooperation – Inclusive social development focusing on education, health care, and support for social inclusion⁴. These are also the priority sectors of the *Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia 2018–2023*, reflecting the country's need to develop its education system (mainly secondary technical education and vocational training) and employment opportunities, addressing social and gender inequalities and improving access to quality health care.⁵ Priorities of the Programme are consistent with the Cambodian Government policies, strategies, and plans including the *Rectangular Strategy – Phase III, National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018*, the *Education Strategic Plan*, as well as with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

The *Expert Research Study on the Current State, Situation, and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia with a Focus on Secondary and Vocational Education, 2017* (further *Expert Research Study*) provided basis for the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme 2018–2023, sector-inclusive social development/ education.

ACTIVE for Youth (Agro-processing Career development, Technical training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth), 2018 – 2020, implemented by People in Need (PIN), has been piloted at King Norodom Sihamoni General and Technical High School (KNHS) in Kampong Chhnang Province. KNHS was expected to be a model for other technical high schools in Cambodia.

Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth) (Increasing the employability of technical graduates in the Cambodian labour market), 2019 – 2021, complemented and built upon the *ACTIVE for Youth* project. The aim was to improve the quality of technical vocational education (TVET) within the Provincial training centers (PTC) in Kampong Chhnang (now Polytechnical Institute of Kampong Chhnang - PTI) to ensure responsiveness to the demands of the labor market. The project also fostered entrepreneurship and partnerships with the private sector and relevant partners.

The Trilateral *Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD) project, 2020 – 2021*, has been implemented by PIN in the Battambang province. The aim was to strengthen the quality of secondary technical education in Cambodia by working with the central and local institutions on curricula for training in fruit and vegetable processing and bakery, training of trainers and providing equipment, and facilitating Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Funding: CzDA, GIZ.

The project *Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia 2019 – 2021 and Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering, 2021* has been implemented by the Faculty of Biomedical Engineering at Czech Technical University (CTU). Technical capacities needed for service, repairs, and operation of medical technologies are missing in many Cambodian health facilities. The project addressed the lack of technical capacities needed for service, repairs and operation of medical equipment. The study program was introduced in cooperation with the University of Health Sciences (UHS) and the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC). The project combined the professional/teaching missions of teams of Czech biomedical engineers, the training of Cambodian teachers, and the supply of the necessary equipment for the biomedical engineering laboratory.

1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation was to obtain independent, objective, and consistent findings, conclusions, and recommendations which can be used in decision-making by the MFA in cooperation with the CzDA and other actors, on the future focus and method of implementation of development projects in the evaluated sector. Information from the evaluation will be used to prepare the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia, 2024 – 2030.

Emphasis was placed on the assessment of the extent to which the educational program ensured equal access of Cambodian men and women to affordable, quality, and inclusive vocational and higher education, the extent to

⁴ Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic, 2018–2030

⁵ Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia 2018–2023

which the acquired skills match the requirements of the labor market, external and internal coherence, assessment of sustainability and capacity for utilizing know-how, supplies and infrastructure, maintenance, and replacements.

Recommendations focus on possible replication of the evaluated type of projects with emphasis on additionality and complementarity, on the involvement of public institutions in the CZDC and the implementation of the CZDC in the sector of Inclusive Social Development / Education.

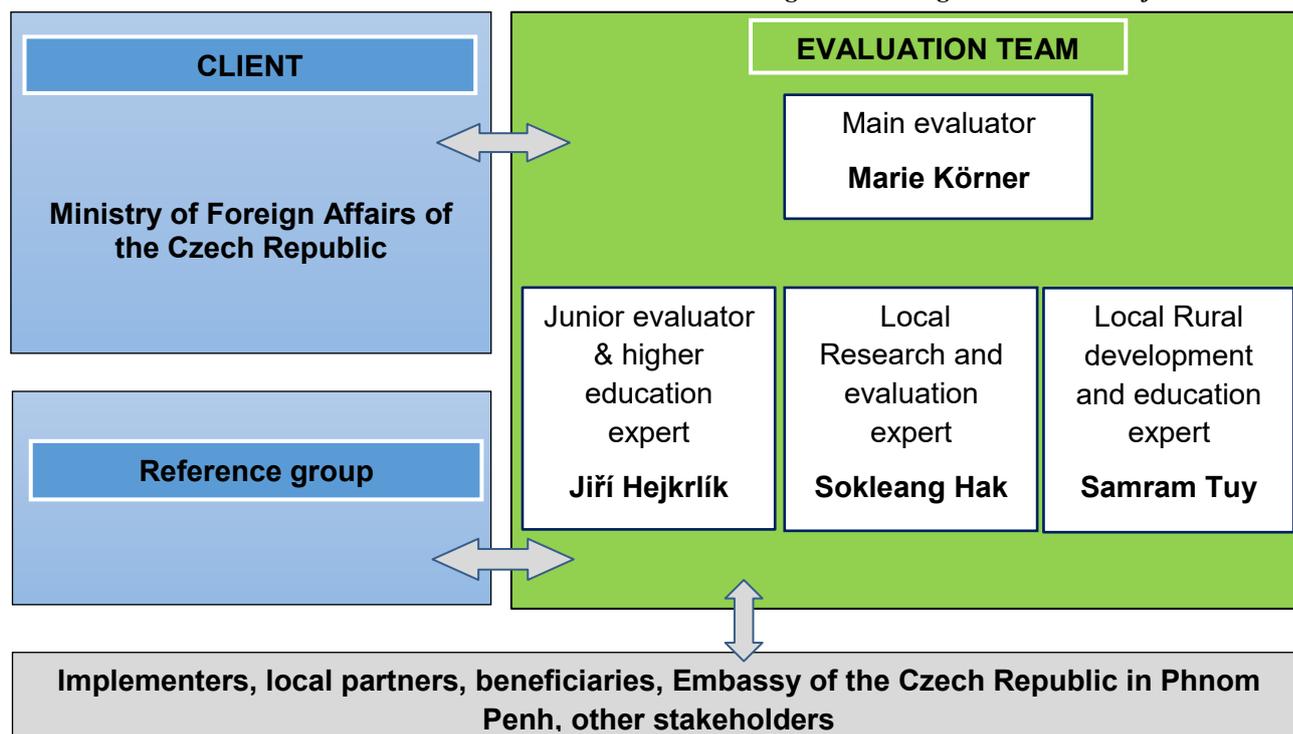
Scope of the evaluation:

1. The assessment was based on the following criteria:
 - a) Internationally recognized **evaluation criteria OECD-DAC** (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee) Relevance, coherence (including coordination and integrated approach), effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and their sustainability (the criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability have taken into account the external influences of the environment in which the projects were implemented and the objective obstacles that may affected their results).
 - b) **Projects' visibility** – external presentation of the activities and outcomes of the projects
 - c) **Application of cross-cutting themes** of the Czech Development Cooperation defined in the Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018 – 2030: Good (democratic) governance; environment (sustainable development); human rights, including gender equality.

1.3 Evaluation team

The evaluation was conducted by the evaluation team of 4G eval s.r.o., an independent consulting company based in Prague, specializing in providing comprehensive services in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, environmental management, social development, water supply and sanitation, gender equality and good governance. 4G eval operates worldwide and has implemented projects in Africa, East Asia, Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia regions for a variety of clients including the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU, AFD, UNDP, UNICEF, international finance institutions, Czech and International NGOs and the private sector. Evaluations and surveys conducted by 4G eval are in accordance with the IDEAS Code of Ethics adopted in November 2014, the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Code of Ethics and related evaluation guidelines (2008), the Evaluator's Code of Ethics (2011) and the Formal Evaluation Standards (2013). The management structure of the evaluation is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Management structure of the evaluation



2. INFORMATION ON THE EVALUATED INTERVENTIONS

2.1 Context

The *Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia, 2017* provided initial information and framework for the *Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia, 2018–2023*. The total budget for this project was 978,640 CZK. Programme and donor: CZDA

The following five evaluated projects implemented in the priority sector Inclusive Social development / education contributed to Outcome 3 of the Programme: *Equal access of women and men to good quality, affordable and inclusive technical, vocational and higher education, including university education*. The link between the Programme and the evaluated projects is shown in the Theory of Change (TOC) (impact level, results and outputs). It is reconstructed based on the Programme and available information on the implemented Projects and presented below in this chapter. Two log frames were also reconstructed as part of the evaluation – Annex C.

The outcomes of the evaluated projects contributed directly to the output of the programme *Equal access of women and men to good quality, affordable and inclusive technical, vocational and higher education including university education*.

The objectives of all three PIN projects were operationalized with minor variations in similar ways in terms of their activities and related outputs. They contain similar components – 1. capacity building of the teachers and the management of schools, 2. development of the curricula and teaching content, 3. provision of equipment and teaching materials and 4. linkages to external partners of the targeted schools. Their main operationalization in terms of results was supposed to be competent graduates with theoretical knowledge and practical skills prepared for the needs of their future employment.

It is necessary to consider that all interventions had to adapt their activities to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. In most cases, it meant introducing online communication and teaching tools.

2.1.1 ACTIVE for Youth (Agro-processing Career development, Technical training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth), 2018 – 2020

Programme and donor: CZDA

The project was implemented by People in Need (PIN) and piloted at King Norodom Sihamoni General and Technical High School (KNHS) in Kampong Chhnang Province. The project responded to the need to upgrade the training facilities and improve technical teachers' competencies at KNHS. KNHS was expected to be a model for other technical high schools in Cambodia. Funding: Czech Development Agency (CzDA) (grant), co-funded by PIN.

The total **planned budget** of the intervention: 8,444,966 CZK. Total **used budget**: 8,919,066 CZK (annual reports)

Description of project activities:

The project aimed to strengthen the quality of secondary technical education in Cambodia, with special attention to the agro and food-processing industry. PIN, in cooperation with the Czech University of Life Science (CZU), and working closely with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), aims through this project to enable equal access to relevant technical education for youth and to foster the growth of the agro-processing industry in Cambodia.

The project implemented the activities under five outputs: Development and piloting the “Processing of agricultural products” curriculum at the King Norodom Sihamoni General and Technical High School (KNHS). Improving the learning facilities and delivering processing equipment in line with the agro-food processing curriculum. Improving teachers' competencies in the training of technical subjects of the study program “Processing of agricultural products”. Supported KNHS to generate profit from agro-processing activities conducted within the school. Forming linkages between KNHS and the private sector to enhance students' career prospects.

2.1.2 Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth) (Increasing the employability of technical graduates in the Cambodian labour market), 2019 – 2021

Programme and donor: CZDA

The project was built on the PIN experience from *the ACTIVE for Youth* project. The aim was to improve the quality of technical vocational education (TVET) within the Provincial training centers (PTC) in Kampong Chhnang (now

Polytechnical Institute of Kampong Chhnang - PTI) to ensure responsiveness to the demands of the labor market. The project also fostered entrepreneurship and stronger partnerships between PTCs, the private sector, government agencies, and other departments, and created new job opportunities. Funding: CzDA (grant), co-funded by PIN.

The total **planned budget** of the intervention: 9,845,983 CZK. Total **used budget**: 10,391,834 CZK (annual reports)

Description of project activities:

The project aimed to enhance the capacities of the PTI in Kampong Chhnang and the employability of youths by (i) improving the quality of technical vocational education of the Provincial Training Centre (ii) ensuring that the courses, equipment and infrastructure are responsive to the demand of the labor market, thus increasing youths' participation to TVET, (iii) building Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) between Provincial Training Centres, the Private Sector while strengthening coordination with other government agencies and other departments, (iv) creating decent job opportunities for youths and fostering entrepreneurship. PIN has implemented the project in close cooperation with stakeholders, including the Department of Institution Management under the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MLVT) and the private sector, including micro-finance institutes and relevant industry entities. By December 2019, 25 sets of computers were installed and set up in the ICT Lab, and 20 different cooling system devices were purchased and installed in the air-con lab with the new and second-hand cooling devices. Furthermore, in 2020-2021, to respond to the need for PTI improvement, PIN purchased additional facilities and equipment for the center, including electrical and automotive equipment. During the project, PIN has linked Chamroen MFI and the National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (NIEI) conducted C-BED (Community Based Entrepreneur Development).

2.1.3 Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD) project, 2020 – 2021

Programme and donor: CZDA

This trilateral project has been implemented by PIN in the Battambang province. The aim was to strengthen the quality of secondary technical education in Cambodia by working with the central and local institutions on curricula for training in fruit and vegetable processing and bakery, training of trainers and providing equipment, and facilitating Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Funding: CzDA, GIZ.

The **total planned budget** of the intervention: 7,983,637.75 CZK. **Total used budget**: 15,743,110.05 CZK (annual reports, including co-funding)

Description of project activities:

The project was implemented jointly by People in Need (PIN) Cambodia and GIZ. PIN also collaborated with the General Directorial Technical and Vocational Education and Training (GDTVET) of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT).

- 10 food processing training on fruit and vegetable for 4 training modules for Vocational Skill Certificate (VC) and 6 training modules for TVET Certificate C1 were developed and number of teachers passed through the skill-focused training.
- Existing building was renovated and transformed into a food processing centre. The food processing facilities and equipment have been purchased according to the developed curriculum and the school's needs. Five technical teachers participated in training on operating and maintaining food processing equipment.
- Public-private partnership (PPPs) was conducted at NVIB in Battambang province to introduce NVIB's food processing training curriculum to promote youth employability, entrepreneurship, and internship opportunities in the private sector. 3 MoUs were signed between the National Vocation Institute of Battambang with 3 different companies.
- Loan Funding Orientation for TVET Students in Battambang province.

2.1.4 Introduction of Biomedical Engineering in Cambodia 2019 – 2021 and Creation of Laboratory Tasks of Biomedical Engineering, 2021

Programme and donor: CZDA

The two complementary projects aimed to improve access to the quality of higher education. Both projects have been implemented by the Faculty of Biomedical Engineering of the Czech Technical University (CTU).

Planned budget: 1,971,209 CZK. **Total used budget:** 1,971,209 CZK (annual reports). The total planned budget of the intervention for the Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering: 2,000,000 CZK. Total used budget: 2,000,000 CZK (annual reports)

Description of project activities:

This project aimed to introduce Biomedical Engineering teaching at UHS and ITC and subsequently help with the material equipment for the learning (the material and the development of the teaching texts were supplied in the framework of the complementary project). Based on national regulations, international standards, experience gained from excursions to Cambodian hospitals and discussions with the management of UHS and ITC, the project's experts recommended changes in the teaching content of individual subjects. A team from CTU designed and prepared the content of two new courses ("Medical Equipment Maintenance" and "General Medical Equipment"). The team also provided training and excursions to Czech hospitals for teachers from Cambodia in the Czech Republic so that these pedagogues understand the meaning, benefits, responsibilities and position of biomedical engineers in the health system of the Czech Republic and see the standards of care for medical devices. The two projects established a new laboratory for teaching Biomedical Engineering at ITC.

2.2 Implementers and key stakeholders

2.2.1 Implementers

EuroPlus Consulting & Management s.r.o. (<http://www.europlus.sk/>) delivers services to government institutions, mainly in transition and developing countries in the areas of public administration reform, decentralization, local self-government, regional development, minority support programmes, SME Development, European Integration and partnership programs, grant scheme management. **EuroPlus Consulting & Management s.r.o.** implemented the *Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the education sector in Cambodia with the focus on secondary and vocational Education*.

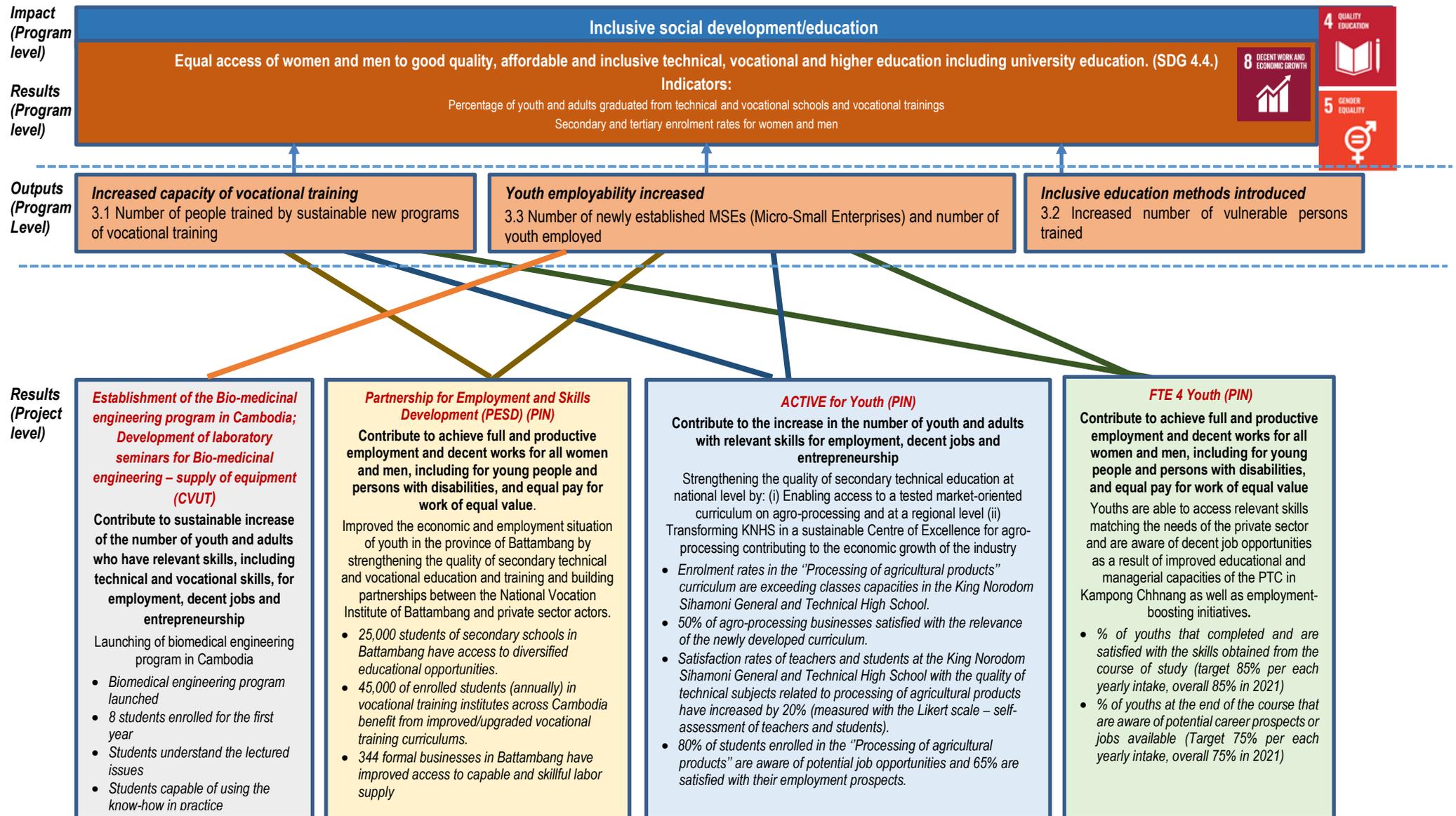
People in Need (PIN) (<https://www.peopleinneed.net/>) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1992 and registered with the Foundations Register in Prague, Czech Republic. PIN provides a wide range of services, including humanitarian aid and development in the Czech Republic and 25 countries. PIN implemented the three vocational education and training projects: *ACTIVE for Youth*, *PESD* and *FTE 4 Youth*.

The Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU) has eight faculties: Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Nuclear and Physical Engineering, Architecture, Transport, Biomedical Engineering, Information Technology) and offers scholarship and exchange programs. The **Faculty of Biomedical Engineering (FBME)** provides interdisciplinary education, enabling graduates to apply their theoretical knowledge and practical skills in medicine and research. FBME works in technological, medical, and managerial fields in biomedical engineering, medical informatics, medicine, and social security. The faculty includes ten full professors, 15 associate professors, and 66 specialist assistants⁶ and offers several study programs in English. CTU FMBE was the implementor for two evaluated projects.

The linkages between the projects and the Program are illustrated in figure 2 below.

⁶ <https://www.cvut.cz/en/faculty-of-biomedical-engineering>

Figure 2: Linkages between the Program and evaluated projects



2.2.2 Key stakeholders

Stakeholders can be grouped in to three categories: (i) Stakeholders of the evaluation, (ii) stakeholders of the projects, and (iii) other stakeholders in the education sector.

Stakeholders of the evaluation

- *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* of the Czech Republic (MFA), is responsible for conceptual management of the development cooperation, including programming of its bilateral part and assessing results (evaluations).
- *Czech Development Agency* (CzDA) – gestor of the evaluated projects
- Embassy of the Czech Republic in Phnom Penh represents the Czech Republic in Cambodia, including the development cooperation agenda.
- *Reference Group* monitors the evaluation and has the right to comment on the reports submitted by the contractor

Stakeholders of the projects

Implementors and development partners

- *People in Need* (PIN), implementer of the projects: *ACTIVE for Youth: Agro-processing Career development, Technical Training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth, Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth)* (Increasing the employability of technical graduates in the Cambodian labour market) and *Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD)*.
- *The Czech Technical University*, Faculty of Biomedical Engineering (CTU), EuroPlus Consulting & Management implementer of the projects *Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia* and *Creation of laboratory tasks of biomedical engineering*.
- *EuroPlus Consulting & Management*
- *German Agency for International Cooperation* (GIZ), partner and key donor of the project *Partnership for Employment and Skills Development in Battambang Province, Cambodia*

Project partners, intended beneficiaries

- *National Vocation Institute of Battambang* (NVIB) - partner and beneficiary of the project *Partnership for Employment and Skills Development (PESD)*
- *Provincial Polytechnic Training Institute (PTI) in Kampong Chhnang Province* – partner and beneficiary of the project *Fostering the Transition to Employment for Youth (FTE 4 Youth)*
- *King Norodom Sihamoni General and Technical High School (KNHS)* – partner and beneficiary of *the ACTIVE for Youth project* in Kampong Chhnang Province
- *University of Health Sciences (UHS)* – partner and beneficiary of the *Introduction of Biomedical Engineering in Cambodia* and *Creation of Laboratory Tasks of Biomedical Engineering* projects
- *Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC)* - partner and beneficiary of the *Introduction of Biomedical Engineering in Cambodia* and *Creation of Laboratory Tasks of Biomedical Engineering* projects

Relevant institutions

- Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MOEYS), Vocational Orientation Department (VOD) is the main contact point for vocational education-related projects and was directly involved in *ACTIVE for Youth* project.
- Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), Directorate General of TVET (DGTVET) is responsible for supporting, expanding and assuring the quality of public and private provision of TVET and was directly involved in the *PESD* and *FTE 4 Youth* projects.
- Ministry of Health (MoH). Governs and regulates the activity of medical professionals, hospitals and clinics. Maintains provincial health departments. The Ministry initiated the project *Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia*.

Representatives of the private sector (PS) involved in Public-Private-Partnerships with vocational schools

Detailed list of stakeholders and their roles is provided in [Annex Q](#).

2.3 Key assumptions and risks

Key assumptions and risks in the logframes of the 4 evaluated projects have been verified; additional risks identified by the evaluation team during field work have been included. A detailed overview is provided in Annex R,

Below are key assumptions that did not materialize and influenced the effectiveness and likelihood of impacts of the evaluated projects:

ACTIVE 4 Youth

- *Latest version of cash flow for mini-market shows profits ≥ 0 :* During the time of evaluation, income was minimal and did not cover the cost of operation and maintenance. The plans for bigger shop were reduced to only smaller shop in the school plot, which is open only sometimes.
- *The private sector has an incentive to work closely with King Sihamoni Norodom Technical High School.* There was no incentive; cooperation with the private sector has been weak.

FTE 4 Youth

- *The labour market systems in Kampong Chhnang are rapidly changing, and this requires a more flexible and responsive vocational training system to build the capacities of young men and women.* The training system did not adjust to the developing market conditions and requirements for knowledge of up-to-date technologies
- *The private sector can be encouraged to participate and provide inputs into the curriculum, hire graduates and provide internships; however, the intervention needs to trigger their interest by providing a strong business case to them.* Participation of the private sector was minimal

PESD

- *The capacities of tertiary education in Battambang match the demand:* The demand for practical training exceeds the capacities of the training laboratory.
- *The curriculum is relevant for employability:* Larger enterprises prefer graduates from university with higher technical and soft skills

Biomedical Engineering

- *Lack of qualified lecturers:* Lack of qualified lecturers is one of the factors preventing accreditation
- *Biomedical Engineering not accredited as a regular BSc study program:* Lack of accreditation posing potential employability problems for graduates

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach

The approach (evaluation design) complies with **international evaluation standards and approaches**, especially the Formal Standards for Conducting Evaluations of the Czech Evaluation Society, Quality Standards for Development Evaluations according to OECD / DAC, the Czech Evaluation Society Evaluator's Code of Ethics, and the certified Methodology for Evaluation of Crosscutting Themes in the Czech Development Cooperation⁷. As part of the processing of sources of verifiable findings, the evaluation team respected the right to protect the privacy of respondents according to the Code of Ethics of the CES and anonymize the sources of its findings.

The methodological approach was participatory, based on consultation and dialogue, to maximize stakeholder involvement and consider their views. This approach takes in to account the design of data collection methods. In the Czech Republic, there was an introductory meeting with the reference group and primary implementers – PIN and CTU. An introductory briefing also included an online consultation with the Embassy in Phnom Penh. The evaluation team presented preliminary findings and discussed preliminary conclusions and recommendations. Feedback from meetings, briefings, and discussions was considered in further data collection and formulating conclusions and recommendations. The draft final report (main findings, conclusions, and recommendations considering the comments from the reference group, the implementer, and local partners) was presented at the final meeting with the reference group and the implementers. The presentation from the briefing with the reference group

⁷ <http://www.inesan.eu/rozvojova-spoluprace/rozvojove-projekty>, accessed 28. 3. 2021

is included in the annexes of the final evaluation report, together with a table of settlement of the comments of the reference group and other involved actors.

The assignment of this evaluation emphasizes **specific and feasible recommendations** with a primary focus on possible replications of the evaluated projects, niches for specific Czech know-how and experience in the sector, based on conclusions from the evaluated projects, lessons learned, and identified risks. The degree of importance, the addressee, and the proposed implementation (time horizon) were indicated for each recommendation. Specific findings and conclusions sufficiently substantiate the recommendations. **The evaluators formulated the findings, conclusions, and recommendations to clarify to which evaluation questions they relate.** The evaluation conclusions focus mainly on their use for **further reflection and lessons learned.** The conclusions drawn from the findings for each evaluation criterion are rated on a scale of "high, rather high, rather low, low". Each of these conclusions clearly references the source of the information or data set resulting from the evaluation. The evaluator's own comments (if they contribute to improving the scope or quality of the evaluation) are clearly marked and adequately explained.

Validity and reliability of data - Evaluation questions and methodological tools were consulted with the contracting authority, the reference group and the implementer in order to guarantee the feasibility of the evaluation, as well as its usability. **Triangulation** of methods and resources improved the validity of information. **Reliability of data collection instruments** was verified by testing within the evaluation team and during the first interviews, leading to some modifications.

Evaluation questions and sub-questions, sources of information and methods of information collection are presented in the form of an **evaluation matrix** in Annex C. Questions are mainly descriptive; to evaluate the impacts of the projects, also cause and effect questions have been included in determining what difference was likely caused by the implementation of the project. The **approach to data collection** is semi-structured (systematic and, where possible, based on common procedures). Semi-structured interviews are based on pre-prepared lists of questions generated by the **evaluation matrix**.

The **languages** used during the evaluation were Czech, English, and Khmer.

3.2 Methods for the collection and analysis of information

Mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) were used for data collection and verification: **Review of secondary data, interviews with key partners, group discussions, meetings with key stakeholders, observations, and quantitative survey.** The methods, data collection instruments, their limitations, and how they were addressed, are described below:

- **Review of secondary data (Review):** Secondary data provided basic information about the current state or the state before and after the project implementation. The list of secondary sources is attached in [Annex D](#).
- **Key informant interviews (KII) and/or Group discussions (GD)** based on semi-structure questionnaires ([Annex E](#)) were conducted with selected stakeholders in person and online. In cases of unavailability of the informant the questionnaire was emailed with possible follow up over the phone. The overview of KII and GD is attached in [Annex E](#).
- **Key stakeholder meetings (KSM)** included introductory and concluding meetings at the Embassy and with the CzDA. The final briefing with the Reference Group took the form of a moderated discussion of the findings, preliminary conclusions and proposed recommendations.
- **Visits and observations (V&O)** to inspect the infrastructure, materials, or equipment where these have been supported under the projects.
- **Expert opinion (EO)** was used to obtain information on the use and limitations of CWs.
- **Evaluation of Cross-cutting themes** - In compliance with Certified Methodology for the Evaluation of Cross-cutting Themes in Development Cooperation (by INESAN), the structure Cross-cutting Theme Indicator Matrix was developed involving only the dimensions and subdimensions the evaluation team considers relevant for the evaluated project.
- **Quantitative survey (QS):** Quantitative data collection was used to determine representative respondents' working status, thoughts, beliefs, or perceptions about the study quality at their respective schools. A quantitative questionnaire was designed in MS Forms and administered over the phone with the assistance of the Cambodian team members to individual graduates from all three secondary schools. The questionnaire contained five questions related to graduates' personal characteristics and study specialization and five questions related to their experience from the school and finding the job. The initial list of the whole population of graduates with their phone

contacts was received from the management of each school. All quantitative answers were recorded in the online form, and additional qualitative notes were taken during the interview. Replies from alumni were disaggregated by gender and the school before the results were processed. The details of the disaggregation are provided in Annex G. Information from the QS was triangulated with information from other methods before making the final interpretation.

The total number of available contacts from each school was the following:

School and graduation year	Total number of targeted graduates	Graduates without mobile number	Non-existent number	Unreachable graduates	Wrong numbers (different user)	Completed interviews
NVIB 2021, 22	85	0	9	28	3	45
KNHS 2022	51	0	10	9	5	27
PTI 2022	43	11	0	2	0	30
TOTAL	179	11	19	41	8	102

For NVIB, the total number of graduates from 2021 and 2022 was 225. Therefore, the number of graduates had to be reduced due to the large size of the original population. The sample was selected from the available list of names using the formula below:

Abbreviations used in the formula

z	Confidence for chosen interval	90%
e	Margin of error	10%
p	Response distribution	50%
N	Population size	245
n	Calculated sample size	44

$$Sample\ Size = \frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2} \div \left(1 + \frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N} \right)$$

The final list of the NVIB graduates to be contacted by enumerators was selected randomly (using a generator of random numbers) from the MS Excel list of all graduates. For KHNS and PTI, all graduates were contacted.

3.3 Limitations of the evaluation

- Delays with some appointments in Cambodia
- Lack of response from the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport on twinning options to support the extension of technical and vocation training in priority sectors to new provinces
- Due to delays in implementation of the Biomedical Engineering project, there were no graduates and their employability could not be assessed
- Confusion on the part of KNHS and UHS between the completed and the currently ongoing projects
- The absence of statistics on MSEs, unemployment rates, numbers of TVET graduates in general and disaggregated by provinces in particular complicated the assessment of likelihood of impacts.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance

4.1.1 To what extent does the PESD project reflect partners' needs and priorities?

As described by students and project partners, **the advantages of the project** include a high level of relevance to fruit and vegetable processing because it is widely available in the province and improves prospects for income generation. It can be applied in work, family-based businesses and at home. Dropouts from grade 9 and lower secondary education can improve their marketability by completing the Vocational Certificate course. The students confirmed that the teachers are skilled and the classes practical. However, the statements from the private sector indicate **disadvantages**: the training does not match the requirements of larger businesses where graduates from universities with a better understanding of modern technology and higher working discipline are preferred. This has been recognized by NVIB management, which suggested upgrading/mechanising the production line and expanding the currently limited capacities for practical training. The students also reported insufficient space in the premises identified for the practical training. NVIB school management also reported a lack of focus on higher levels of teaching – supporting not only C1 level but also C2 and higher. Involved government stakeholders at provincial levels confirmed the relevancy of the project. They **would consider it for replication**, but currently, they have no

specific plans for it. The private sector knows the school and the competencies of the graduate. Its employment potential with private sector companies is, however, limited. While approximately 80% graduates from NVIB reported to have found a job, and of those 80% in food processing, including in own business, it is assumed that the majority works in the informal sector. Evidence indicates that small, typically family businesses employ family members rather than external staff. Larger companies are looking for staff with knowledge of mechanized production. Graduates from NVIB do not meet requirements of the technology and sometimes commitments, priority is given to graduates from the University of Battambang.

4.1.2 To what extent do ACTIVE 4 Youth and FTE 4 Youth projects correspond to beneficiaries' and partners' needs and priorities?

ACTIVE 4 Youth and FTE 4 Youth interventions are viewed as relevant not only from the operationalization of the individual project activities but also from the point of view of the focus on particular study specializations. All managers and other stakeholders confirmed that the **main advantage is** that the provided study specializations fit well into the local provincial context, as well as available raw resources (agricultural products for food processing) and market needs (air-conditioning, cars, electricians...). The equipment for the practical skills development of students makes all schools unique compared to other similar schools in Cambodia. However, **some disadvantages were also reported** concerning the used equipment. It was reported especially by PTI school as having a lower relevance due to the incompatibility with more advanced technologies used these days – especially in air-conditioning and car repair study specializations. The required air-conditioning equipment for cool storages was not supplied in needed quality. Also, the equipment used to establish the food processing laboratory in KNHS is regarded by the beneficiaries as incomplete for the needed food quality analysis required by the procedures used during the teaching process. The major challenge for the schools is the inadequate emphasis on facilitating linkages with the private sector. The cooperation with the private sector is still minimal. While PTI cooperates with several micro-level companies in the town, the KHNS school could not provide any examples of companies the students can currently use for their practical training. The students also confirmed that there is no practical internship during the studies and that they are not linked to any local private sector. There is also a lack of teaching materials in the local Khmer language.

Involved government stakeholders at provincial levels confirmed the project's relevancy and **recommended it for replication in other province schools**. However, the curricula developed within the ACTIVE4Youth project could not be disseminated to more than two other schools since other schools lack the equipment and capacity to implement them. Collaboration with Czech university experts during the curriculum design was appreciated.

4.1.3 To what extent is the Expert Research Study relevant for planning in the education sector in Cambodia?

The *Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia* by EuroPlus Consulting & Management, s.r.o **contributed significantly to the relevance** of the design of the whole program and its project components since it provided the contextual framework for all the following interventions. The only limitation is that the study has become out-of-day for future planning and needs to be updated. It also lacks practical recommendations for schools and project implementers for efficient linkages with the private sector and income generation for the schools. Only part of the study related to the aquaculture sector was already updated from the direct funding of the Embassy. It could also emphasize the possibility of linkages between technical schools and the private sector.

4.1.4 To what extent is the introduction of Biomedical Engineering and the creation of a laboratory relevant to improving hospital services?

The **main advantage** is the high relevance for the beneficiaries and government stakeholders. There is an urgent need for trained staff in the health sector with engineering training for the maintenance and repair of medical equipment. Various donors provide a lot of medical equipment in the hospitals, but the lack of specialists means that even minor technical problems soon put it out of use. Capacity building of the teachers was also recognized as relevant, though not all the teachers passed any training. For the UHS/ITC universities, the **disadvantage** and the lower relevance of the Laboratory for biomedical engineering equipment is the lack of teaching texts in the local Khmer language, which could provide better learning support to students using the laboratory equipment. The problem in most of the schools, including UHS/ITC universities, is also the lack of space in the practical laboratories, which further limits the benefit of gaining practical skills for all the involved students. Most of the courses are also based on only theoretical lectures where the teachers lack the materials and teaching equipment for more practically

oriented education. Several teachers reported that they did not participate in any capacity building, and they were not familiar with the overall aims of the program. They also reported that they lack proper communication about the program from the side of the UHS university management, did not receive any instructions about the teaching content, and don't know the objectives of the whole program. They also reported that they did not receive any training or materials within the project from the Czech implementing organization.

The design of the study program only as an Associate degree (while providing the education to students for four years) limits the possibility of employment of the students and willingness for new students to join the program (though ITC offers the program on their webpages as a full Bachelor's degree⁸).

4.1.5 How have the projects and program been monitored?

Within the framework of the relevance evaluation, we also assessed how the individual components of the program were evaluated concerning the **intervention design and indicators** of the program and project levels. Monitoring has been done mainly on the level of individual projects but not on the level of the whole program. One of the problems with program monitoring was the lack of available data for the selected indicators (*Outcome 3 – Number of newly established MSEs and number of youth employed*, for instance). The Cambodian Government lacks such data.

An internal specialized MEAL unit conducted the monitoring of the PIN projects. Data needed for the regular update of the process was collected by the KOBO offline app. PIN also conducted the baseline “*ASSESSMENT STUDY REPORT. Employment and Skills Gaps – Market Rapid Assessment*” produced by CamEd Business School in Battambang province, Kampong Chhnang province, Phnom Penh city and Siem Reap provinces, and also end-line internal students' survey of school within FTE project. New projects targeting the same KNHS school in Kampong Chhnang province also contain gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) mainstreaming checklist analysis. However, the analysis was not conducted for older projects within the evaluated program.

For the project implemented by CTU, no standardized and regular monitoring system was implemented. No coherent project design was available, and monitoring was based mainly on activities. The project design also lacks a clear definition of indicators enabling such monitoring. The Theory of change was not included in the project proposal. Therefore, results or objective statements of CTU projects are challenging to measure, affecting the monitoring and evaluability of the intervention.

The standard **Identification Form** (Annex 2 to the Methodology of International Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic (Metodika zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce České republiky) was available only for the project Introduction of Biomedical Engineering in Cambodia 2019 – 2021. No other identifications were available to the evaluation team. However, all beneficiaries and main stakeholders indicated that they were engaged in identifying, designing and implementing all interventions.

The projects have also been monitored externally by the Embassy and CzDA. Examples of dates of the CzDA and Embassy project monitoring and identification field visits: 29.5.2019; 25.4.2022 – 07.5.2022. Monitoring of the previous projects during the identification of the evaluated projects: 9.2.-10.2.2018; 22/2/2017-3/3/2017. The Embassy and MFA also conducted an internal evaluation of the program. However, no results were available to our evaluation team.

4.2 Coherence (including coordination and integrated approach)

4.2.1 What was the extent of internal coherence?

The evaluation findings confirm the **high coherence of the evaluated projects** with the priorities and goals of the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia, 2018–2023. Especially the projects directly focusing on technical and vocational training can be directly linked to the indicators of the program – Outcome 3 of the Inclusive Social Development. However, there is a lack of internal coherence in the program formulation where the provision of education at the university level, though mentioned in the program's text, is not explicitly defined in the Result Matrix. Also, no indicators are defined for this level of education in the Theory of Change. The reconstruction of the intervention logic of the Program is needed. Nevertheless, the introduction of the Biomedical Engineering program by CTU, with its practical components and focus, fulfils the priorities of the

⁸ <https://www.rocapply.com/study-in-cambodia/cambodia-universities/institute-of-technology-of-cambodia/>

Cambodian Government to focus on technical education and youth employment at all levels, including the university level.

There is also a complementarity and additionality between the evaluated projects and other interventions supported under the Czech Development cooperation before the evaluated period or recently. There are ongoing projects like the project *Towards Inclusive Employment for Persons with Disabilities (PWD)* or *Streamlining Aquaculture in Cambodia's Vocational Education* implemented by PIN. The Embassy in Phnom Penh also implements several complementary small projects.

The focus on providing quality education and employability of youth is also coherent with the Program of the Capacity Development of the Public Universities in Developing Countries under MFA (for example, the current project *Promoting Collaboration in Research, Education and Practical Teaching at the Royal University of Agriculture*). There is also a high coherence between education focusing primarily on agricultural and food processing and other projects implemented by Czech organizations in the agricultural sector, like the Improving Agriculture Value Chain in Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia, implemented through a consortium led by Diaconia ECCB.

The system of the Czech Government scholarship program can also provide essential synergies, especially for the capacity building of Master students studying the Biomedical Engineering field. They will be later able to join the body of young teachers and researchers involved in teaching at UHS.

4.2.2 What was the extent of external coherence?

Findings indicate a high degree of coherence with Cambodian policies and strategies. First of all, the evaluated technical and vocational training **projects are complementary and build upon interventions of the Cambodian Government**. The representatives of the Cambodia government (particularly MOYES/VOD, MOP, MLVT and provincial subordinated departments) find the Czech program and the interventions focusing on the combination of human capacity development, curricula design, teaching equipment and the involvement of the private sector well aligned, especially with:

- Former Rectangular strategy (Phase 4 - 2018 – 2023). The rectangular strategy was recently replaced by the Pentagonal Strategy 2023 – 2028 (now Phase I - 2023 – 2028). Nevertheless, the program remains well aligned with the new strategy as well.
- National Strategy Development Plan 2018-2023 aligns well with young people's emphasis on vocational training and increasing employment.
- The education strategy plan 2019 – 2023 emphasizes the priority orientation in technical education on all educational levels.
- TVET education and training Policy 2020 – 2025, TVET Policy. Especially priority for human development and education. The Government is preparing a new TVET law (Draft Law on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) from March 2022 was available to the evaluation team). Several more prominent donors and stakeholders were invited into the policy dialogue and design of the law.

Current policies emphasise the need for a combination of general and technical education. However, this is very demanding for the schools of all levels. They must build new capacities, develop new management approaches, enlarge teachers' experience, provide new equipment, and build relations with the private sector. The Czech interventions can support this effort.

In line with the previously mentioned priorities of the educational sector, the representatives of MOH also confirmed the high coherence of the CTU projects in Biomedical Engineering with the priorities related to the quality of the health sector. MOH (representative of the Department of Hospital Services) was directly involved in the process of the identification of this topic. The project is also aligned with the Recommendation of the Ministry for second-hand medical equipment.

The evaluated projects are also **complementary and build upon other donors' interventions** in the sector. The primary coordinator of all international development donors and interventions is the Cambodian Development Council. The organization maintains the database of all development interventions on <http://www.oda.cdc.gov.kh>. The database lists under SDG 4 - Quality Education 253 completed or ongoing projects. The evaluated projects are evidenced in this section.

The **EU (through the European External Action Services) is the largest donor active** in the education sector. The Czech Republic, with a focus on technical and vocational sector development, complements and contributes to

the activities of the EU within the Joint European Strategy for Development Cooperation with Cambodia 2021-2027. Within the current program, the EU covers primarily the agricultural value chains, education and skills, and governance + trade facilitation priorities. Within the education sector, it provides support, which is split into: Direct budgetary support and Complementing measures. The EU collaborates with the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), UNICEF, USAID, and GPE (Global Partnership for Education) within the Complementing measures. It focuses on curriculum development, revising existing curricula, promoting a dual education system and improving the practical technical skills of students who remain in the educational system. The EU does not focus on the C1 level primarily but supports higher levels, including university education. It also supports STEM subjects and provides scholarships to interested girls in STEM subjects in higher education through the Government. The New EU program is being fine-tuned.

There is a good coordination of the CZ and EU interventions in the education sector. However, there is room for improvement in the more structured discussion with the Government for the Czech cooperation. The Czech Republic could also join more in the policy discussions, ensuring more profound complementarity. There is also a possibility to develop cooperation through the “twinning program” with Czech civil servants.

SDC is the most active among national donors in the sector of education. It coordinates the stakeholders and organizes meetings of involved donors and government bodies. TWG TVET is co-chaired by SDC and the Minister of Labour and Vocational Training. The Czech embassy is part of such meetings. SDC is also involved in drafting the new TVET law. The completion is expected in mid-2024. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the SDC also supported TVET E-learning platform. SDC currently supports 5 projects in TVET and Inclusive economic development, works in 10 provinces, including Battambang, and cooperates with UNICEF, UNEC, and UNIDO. **GIZ was involved** in building the agro-processing cluster around Battambang and supported the University of Battambang – Faculty of Agriculture and Food Processing to develop it into a centre of excellence. The support of the PIN project in Battambang was executed within this program. The German Embassy also provided training and equipment to NVIB staff (training of trainers). Oil presses were also provided to the Battambang University. GIZ organizes and funds internships for NVIB trainees. The other programs of GIZ also supported the project *Improving Social Protection and Health: Improving Health Profession Training Doctors and laboratory staff*. GIZ works with the Health Science Institute of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. **UNIDO currently works** in 3 thematic areas of work: Share prosperity (SMR, private sector – everything in support of skills and income); SMTU – standard metrology testing quality – food and product quality and safety requirement of food and other products; Environment and energy management – States and private sector – multilateral agreements, - mitigation of climate change; and Renewable energy for productive activities, for business activities. It receives funding from member states: EU, GEF Korea, Japan, and TCF. In Cambodia, it implements the Joint Country program designed with the government to focus on: Value chain development linking to tourism, Industrialization – special economic zones, and Cross-cutting principles. It also focuses on Decent employment for youth with funds from SDC, ILO, UNICEF, UNECO and UNIDO (own sources). Within the program, UNIDO focuses on skills development for youth to create jobs: manufacturing, and agro-industries. In the past, **JICA also provided medicinal equipment** and supported the training in medical equipment maintenance - The Project for Improvement of Medical Equipment in National, Municipal and Provincial Referral Hospitals – 2012-2013; and The Project on Strengthening of Medical Equipment Management in Referral Hospitals 2009-2014). Since then, there have been no further activities in this sector supported by the Czech Development Cooperation.

4.2.3 What cooperation options do the outcomes of the projects offer?

Social development/education interventions, particularly vocational training and education have been implemented in good cooperation with relevant national and local governmental organizations. Exchange visits with other vocational training institutions, linkages with partners from related fields, capacity-building activities, and sharing information on social and mass media made the approaches used to improve education and employment widely known among Government and private partners in Cambodia. Some Czech organizations, like PIN, manage to combine Czech funding with funding from other donors. There is also a successful collaboration among Czech NGOs, universities and private companies in implementing the projects.

These synergies provide opportunities for their replication in future. Examples of efficient cooperation in technical education and related fields developed during the evaluated period are provided below:

Bilateral cooperation

- *Streamlining Aquaculture in Cambodia's Vocational Education (2023-2025)*, Implemented in cooperation with MOYES/VOD at General and Technical High Schools in Kampong Chhnang and Kampong Thom, adding fishery components to agro/food processing curricula.
- *Towards Inclusive Employment for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2023* to ensure the provision of accessibility to service and opportunities for PWDs for TVET and the job market

Trilateral cooperation

- The *PESD* trilateral cooperation project, implemented by PIN, was co-funded by GIZ.
- *iAGRO* Improving the agricultural value chain in Kampong Speu Province (2021-2023) implemented by Diaconia CZ, supported by the Czech private company Holistic Solution in cooperation with Mendel University in Brno and the Czech-Cambodian start-up Kokopon.
- *SWITCH to Solar, 2020-2024*, in cooperation with EU, implemented by PIN Cambodia with partners Sevea and Energy Lab

B2B

- *Supporting small Kampot pepper farmers by opening EU markets*, setting fair-trade prices and controls, logistics, exports to finding end customers in EU countries implemented between 2019 – 2021

UNDP Challenge Fund

- *Initiation of Production of Czech Innovative Solar Dryers in Cambodia* to support the Export of Cambodian Agricultural Products to the EU (2021)

Government and other donors are interested in continued/extended cooperation initiated within the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia, 2018–2023. They also value the presence and know-how of Czech experts from the university and potentially private or public sector with EU experience (for TVET development or Twinning with Czech civil servants). The Czechs have a good historical reputation from decades of development cooperation (especially in the health sector).

From the geographical perspective, CR is a leading donor in the Kampong Chhnang province and is highly appreciated by the provincial administration. There are very good conditions for extending the cooperation in this province. Agricultural education and agriculture, in general, is the sector most often recognized by the stakeholders as the sector with good experience of Czech organizations.

4.3 Efficiency

4.3.1 Were the outputs of the projects generated as per their schedule?

Have outputs been generated as planned? The *Expert Research Study* was completed in 2017 as planned. Outputs planned for the projects *ACTIVE for Youth* and *PESD* were completed by December 2020 and December 2021 as planned. Modification of time schedule for Activities 2.4, 4.2 and 4.4. from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic did not influence the completion of outputs for the project *FTE 4 Youth*; all outputs were completed by the end of the project in 2021. The time schedule has been extended for the project *Introduction of biomedical engineering in Cambodia* due to travel restrictions of the CTU team COVID-19 pandemic. The project started in May 2019 with planned completion in December 2020. Addendum 1 to the Contract provided for a no-cost extension for specific activities until 30. 11. 2021. A second Addendum has been signed on 24.11.2021, providing for a no-cost extension due to COVID Pandemic until 30.06. 2022. The (undated) available intervention logic defines outputs as completed activities, without corresponding verifiable indicators and lacks internal coherence. Based on the reconstructed intervention logic included in Annex C, quality of generated output could be further improved. For example, the laboratory teacher is an external staff with limited availability, some students experience difficulties with English only manuals. Trained permanent and external lecturers deliver classes independently” has not been fully achieved. The need for permanent presence of the implementer has not been recognized during project formulation. According to available information, there are **no clear plans for accreditation of the biomedical engineering program**.

4.3.2 What main factors were contributing to (in) efficiency of selected solutions in terms of processes and content?

Cooperation, communication, coordination between the Czech and local partners has been described by most partners as good to excellent, with participatory planning and decision making. Only minor problems with delays and communication occurred. The Czech Embassy in Phnom Penh was very helpful, particularly with

monitoring and oversight of the *Biomedical Engineering* project during absence of the CVUT team. The UHS mentioned difficulties with complex procedures and with budgeting co-funding due to their limited flexibility as public university that however did not impact on their very good relations with the implementor, the Embassy of the CzDA. **Factors that helped to achieve objectives and results** include local presence (of PIN), close cooperation with central and provincial partners and respected expertise (CVUT). **Major factors hindering achievements** of the *Introduction of biomedical engineering* include the absence of permanent representative of the CVUT (connection is only through the vice-rector of UHS), no teachers (no Master level graduates from biomedical engineering) for the accreditation of BSc, and COVID-19 causing the interruption of the biomedical engineering program for two years. Graduates from the program will obtain non-accredited Associate Degree in Medical Engineering. The absence of accreditation affects their employability. (CVUT informed that the Degree is accredited; evidence is not available.)

4.3.3 What was the projects' efficiency in terms of cost-effectiveness and use of resources?

The funds for all evaluated projects were utilized in accordance with the approved budgets.

4.4 Effectiveness

4.4.1 To what extent has the project ACTIVE for Youth achieve its objectives?

The market-oriented curriculum on agro processing has been adopted by only 2 schools. According to the VOD, more schools are interested but lack the teaching equipment, teachers and materials to deliver it well. Some NGOs also expressed interest in adopting it in the schools they support. The curriculum is considered helpful for the majority of students who want to continue their studies at the university, possibly also work at the same time. They believe the combination of advanced theoretical knowledge and practical skills will help them with admission. According to PIN⁹, the number of applications in the "Processing of agricultural products" curriculum for the school years 2020-2021, reached 70, while KNHS could only offer 50 places. Capacity building, curricula development and equipment were considered by the school as the most important achievements. Students and teachers, however, expressed some reservations about the quality of education: They missed internships with private companies, lacked the equipment for more experiments and needed better textbooks. Sometimes, they have to print what they get from teachers, which is expensive. Some students dropped out for financial reasons. None of the interviewed employed graduates expressed satisfaction with their employment, and most of them do not work in a field corresponding to their education.

Transformation of the KNHS into a profitable Centre of Excellence for learning agro-processing, contributing to the growth of the industry, has not been successful. The initial plans were reduced to smaller shop in the school plot, which is open only sometimes. Occasional orders received from Phnom Penh did not cover the operation and maintenance of the shop. There is no regular economic activity. The identified causes include: The absence of sound business concept and plan including updated cashflow. Lack of time students and teachers can allocate for the preparation of products. Lack of equipment and materials for marketable packaging.

4.4.2 To what extent has the project FTE 4 Youth achieved its objectives?

The project provided youth with **access to relevant skills matching the needs of the private sector** only partially, mainly due to the lack of cooperation with the private sector. (Main employer in the province is the textile industry.) While the educational and managerial capacities of the PTI have been improved, employment boosting initiatives were limited. Only the garage in the school plot and small family businesses repairing air-condition are in informal contact with the school; there is no cooperation with MFIs, and training in soft skills is lacking. Most of the students are enrolled in a 2-year Associate Degree program for car repair, electricians, air conditioning, and IT. Particularly IT skills can help to find jobs in different sectors or to get admitted to a university.

The majority of both male and female students stated that they believe in finding a job in the private sector after completion of the studies. Findings from the quantitative survey indicate that **81% of the graduates found decent job**, with some 60% in the field of their education. Only 43%, however, stated that they found a job because of the training. Thanks to training of staff and equipment (especially ITC) provided by the project, the school was upgraded

⁹ Agro-processing Career development, Technical training and Improved Vocational Education for Youth (ACTIVE for Youth) Závěrečná zpráva / Final Report (2018-2020), January 2021

to polytechnic institute (the only TVET oriented in the province) in 2023 and can provide training up to the Bachelor degree.

4.4.3 To what extent has the PESD project achieve its objectives?

The PESD project contributed to improving **access to education and training in marketable skills** partially. The quality of training at the NVIB has improved, particularly by providing the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classes in practice. The project supported the Department of Standards and Curriculum and NVIB in developing 10 food processing training modules on fruit and vegetable for Vocational Skill Certificate (VC) and TVET Certificate C1. The curriculum has not been replicated as initially planned. The project trained teachers as assessors and provided facilities (food processing lab, equipment) for practical trainings. Training at the Vocational Certificate level is sometimes attended by University students who want to improve their practical skills. NVIB also organizes workshops in food processing for business owners, where they can meet with the students. Statements from graduates indicate that some 53% from C1 training found employment, of whom 35% started own business and 65% has jobs in the private sector.

Partnership building between NVIB and the private sector did not progress as planned. Initially, the project team sought to liaise with Economic Zone Areas that include agricultural processing and with the manufacturing clusters in Battambang. Eventually, NVIB signed MOUs with three private enterprises. The partnership with private sector did not quite work, mainly due to the lack of adjustment to the needs of the private sector. Small family businesses typically employ people from their families, although there can be exception. Larger enterprises require competence in higher-level technologies and soft skills that graduates from C1 do not possess. One employer mentioned that they prefer graduates from the Battambang University who are better equipped for handling modern technology, are more apt to learn and have higher working ethics.

4.4.4 To what extent have the projects Biomedical engineering and Creation of laboratory achieve their objectives?

After initial delays due to COVID 19, **the program has been launched** and is included in the list of study programs of the UHS. The curriculum has not yet been accredited. No entry examination is required. 11 students enrolled in the 1st year of the program in 2021 three dropped out. Currently, 8 students continue with the training in second year. In the 2nd year, in 2022, 25 students enrolled, 2 have dropped out. According to the UHS management, 50 students is an optimum. The duration of the program is 4 years; graduates will get an Associate Degree for which in Cambodia normally 2 years of studies are required, 3 years for Biomedical Technicians at the UHS. This has caused some confusion and students hope that it will be eventually recognized as Bachelor which will make it easy for them to find jobs. They would also like the possibility to continue with studies for the more prestigious Masters' degree. The University plans accreditation for Bachelor in 4-5 years when the program has enough qualified teachers – at least Masters. The accreditation for full Bachelor, however, needs the curricula to be accepted at the national level. Whether the process of accreditation started, who is involved, what are the requirements or how the duration of 4-5 years has been arrived at is not clear. Students of biomedical engineering appreciated possibility of long internship – in public hospital or a private equipment maintenance and import company. They, however, did not appreciate the implementation of the course and complained about duration of studies – which they were told is 4 years. The program and schedule were described as chaotic and not well communicated. Teaching content of some teachers is not relevant, they have bad teaching skills. They sometimes have only 1 subject per week. Other comments included lack of communication by the school, no fixed time of semester and exams.

Twenty practical laboratory tasks have been prepared. The projects collaborated with both, the UHS and the ITC. The laboratory was initially installed at the University of Health. The CzDA approved a new project and the laboratory has been established at the ITC. Equipment of the laboratory was completed in January 2022, selected representatives of UHS and ITC trained in April 2022 at CVUT FBMI where laboratory tasks were prepared and demonstrated. Laboratory teaching consisting of a series of laboratory tasks belongs to the basic teaching methods, where students practically get to know the taught issues, the application of theoretical principles in practice and work with real medical devices used in hospitals. Students of the second year, however, did not have chance to work in the laboratory – it has not been finalized when they started their studies. Students like the equipment and the possibility to practice outside of regular classes. The number of regular classes is however limited and the students don't have much free time for self-practice; The laboratory is too small to have all students in during the practical training. The laboratory is staffed by one temporary teacher, reportedly paid by the project. This could not be verified. Budgets and financial reports were not available. Other teachers do not use the laboratory.

4.4.5 To what extent did the projects results contribute to the outputs of the Programme?

All three technical education projects aimed at increasing youth employability, thus contributing to the **Program outputs “Increased capacity of vocational training” and “Youth employability increased”**.

The study program Biomedical engineering is in its second year, there are no graduates. At the National Vocational Training Institute of Battambang, 136 students graduated during the academic years 2021 – 2023 from the vegetable and food processing C1 level course (regular and special classes) supported under the PESD project during 2020 – 2021. Of these, 105 were women. At the Provincial Polytechnic Training Institute (PTI) in Kampong Chhnang, 43 students graduated in 2022. From the King Norodom Sihamoni General and Technical High School, 51 graduated in 2022.

During a survey in October 2023, 58% of graduates reported to have a job or own business. Of those, almost half are women. The highest employment rates reported graduates from the Polytechnic Training Institute in Kampong Chhnang. Details are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 1: Employment status of graduates

Found a job, is already employed	TOT		NVIB		KHNS		PTI	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
YES	59 (28 women, 31 men)	58% (27% women, 30% men)	24	53%	11	41%	24	80%
NO	43 (34 women, 9 men)	42% (33% women, 9% men)	21	47%	16	59%	6	20%
TOTAL	102	100%	45	100%	27	100%	30	100%

Of those employed, 18% reported to have own business, predominantly graduates from NVIB. Over half of the graduates reported to work in the field corresponding to their specialization (only 1 from KNHS). 53% of those employed (including in own business) is satisfied with their jobs, but only 41% believe that the schooling helped them to find one. Details are provided in [Annex G](#).

4.5 Likelihood of impacts

4.5.1 To what extent have the projects contributed to increased capacity of vocational training?

The extent to which the program contributed to the increase of graduates from TVET could not be established due to unavailability

of statistics. According to the VOD, the contribution has been significant, although there are not many new graduates yet.

Contribution of the biomedical engineering program to improved operation and maintenance of medical equipment has yet to be seen. The reality was more complex than what the first project envisaged. The MOU concerning the implementation of the project, signed between the CzDA, ITC and UHS, ITC in December 2020 focuses on maintenance of the supplied equipment and recruitment of students. Accreditation of the program has been reflected only in the third project starting in 2023, by allocating 3 years of the project duration to linking with the relevant institutions and preparing documentation. Unspecified support to lecturers over 3 years should enable them to independently conduct the courses. Graduates with Associate Degree are unlikely to find employment in public health care facilities.

4.5.2 To what extent are the participants of the educational activities able to make use of them for their future career?

The **extent to which the projects contributed to establishment of new MSE** could not be established. The provincial Departments of MLVT or the MOEYS do not have such information. Data is reportedly collected by the Provincial Departments of Industries who do not share them. 11 of the 102 respondents to the quantitative survey from NVIB and PTI reported to have established own businesses. The TVET projects identified access to capital as one of the possible impediments and aimed at extending cooperation with MFIs. Representatives from Chamroeun Microfinance Plc. informed that MSEs in food processing do not request loans. **The extent to which the unemployment rate of youth in the project provinces decreased due to the TVET projects** and graduates have decent jobs and income could not be established. Statistics are publicly available only at national level, as are

data on working poverty¹⁰. The Department of Education, Youth and Sport in Kampong Chhnang province advised that salaries in agriculture are very low. With the low unemployment rate (0.36% in 2022¹¹), and 40% of QS respondents stating they currently do not have a job (which can also mean that they continue with higher education or are working in the informal sector), such contribution is considered likely. 53% of employed respondents reported that they are **using the skills gained during education in the TVET institution in their professional career**. **Chances to find employment in the field of biomedical engineering** have been estimated by the UHS as high. Some students reportedly already work in family business. Employment in the private sector where they can get jobs without Bachelor's degree and higher salaries is considered more likely. Hospitals don't know the program well and might require national exams for graduates.

4.5.3 To what extent did the evaluated projects contribute to the objectives of the Programme?

The TVET projects contributed to the results of the Programme: **Equal access of women and men to good quality, affordable and inclusive technical, vocational and higher education including university education. (SDG 4.4.)** Percentage of youth and adults graduated from technical and vocational schools and vocational trainings has increased due to the projects, as did secondary and tertiary enrolment rates for women and men.

4.6 Sustainability and replicability

4.6.1 To what extent were key aspects of sustainability of outcomes reflected in the projects?

The projects *Active for Youth* and *FTE 4 Youth* both included a well-defined **exit strategy (sustainability)** in the project documents, considering economic and political, technical/technological and institutional aspects relevant for sustainability of the positive project outcomes. Key elements included material support, stakeholders' capacity building and private sector engagement. In the project documents for the *PESD* and *Introduction of biomedical engineering*, exit strategy has not been considered. The MOU between the UHS, ITC and CTU however refers to maintenance of equipment delivered under the project, provision of consumables and the provision of necessary administration and personnel capacity for smooth running of the course.

Assessment of **financial sustainability of the supported institutions** indicates continued dependency on external funding. **NVIB** where training is free of charge receives budget allocation from the MLVT and reported to also receive funding from the SDF fund under the Ministry of Economy and finance, from the SAAMBAT, IFAD, EIB as well as from AIF. **KNHSM** has no income from the shop but advised that the trainings in food processing are financially sustainable. Likewise, the **PTI** reported that only the car repair workshop in the school compound is jointly operated with private entrepreneur – graduate of the school. Funds are sufficient for maintaining equipment supplied under the project (students and teachers can do some repairs), but not for replacement or upgrading. They have also difficulties with replacing consumables – electric wires, fuel, oil. The **UHS** advised that the programme is fully funded by the University and is sustainable. Fees from students amount to 1,000 USD/semester (10% receive scholarships). This contradicts information from the MOH who informed that the program is not yet sustainable, probably referring to the lack of funds in hospitals to finance the maintenance of equipment, referring to the JICA funded *Strengthening of Medical Equipment Management in Referral Hospitals* project implemented by the Biomedical Engineering Unit of National Maternal and Child Health Center (NMCHC) and the MOH Hospital Services Department.¹²

The extent to which students from PTI, NVIB and KNHS meet the current qualification requirements of the local industries is limited. According to results from the QS, only 32% of graduates were looking for and found jobs corresponding with the specialization of their education (details are provided in [Annex G](#)). This is partly because they prefer to continue with higher education, partly because their qualifications are not compatible with requirements of the job market. The main challenge for future graduates from the biomedical engineering program is the accreditation of the program as BSc (although the ITC advertises it on its website as a Bachelor of Biomedical

¹⁰ 14.2% of employed in Cambodia lived in 2022 on income below USD 1.90 PPP: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/#>

¹¹ National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia

¹² https://www2.jica.go.jp/en/evaluation/pdf/2017_0800190_4_f.pdf

Engineering program¹³). The main obstacle is a lack of qualified teachers with relevant academic degree for the accreditation. However, there is a possibility to build local expertise through the graduates of the current program, or capacity building of future teachers in CR, through the Government scholarships for studies at CTU/FBMI in Prague. The program is also taught in English in Thailand universities and the Pasteur Institute of Cambodia hosts around 100 students in the areas of biomedical sciences and engineering. Evidence supported by statements from the three TVET schools suggests that the **quality of education and facilities continues attracting students**. The PTI informed that they are now better accepted in the community. All teachers trained under the project are civil servants and none of them left their position. The KNHS has an open announcement for 2 new ones. MOEYS promised funding, and after 1-year obligatory training the new teachers can reach the permanent employment status.

4.6.2 To what extent has the educational activity become part of the international strategy of the stakeholders (manager, implementer, beneficiary)?

Czech Republic is recognized as a donor country in the education/ technical and vocational education and training sector. Evidence suggest that the **scope for involving Czech public institutions in the cooperation in the education sector** could be further increased, in the form of twinning whereby a Czech expert would be sent for a 1-year mission to Cambodia to support the extension of technical and vocation training in priority sectors to new provinces. The evaluator investigated this option but no interested organization has been so far identified.

4.7 Cross cutting principles

The only way the evaluated projects could directly influence **Environmental sustainability** was during the selection of technologies used in the processing of agricultural products, the selection of the equipment for the Biomedical Engineering laboratory and machinery for PTI schools. Based on the interviews with representatives of the management of all schools, the environmental aspects were discussed with the project implementors and applied as much as possible (especially KNHS took care of energy efficiency during the selection of driers for the food processing laboratory). However, due to the nature of the projects, the potential negative (and positive as well) is very limited. The other was how the environmental impact principles were incorporated into the projects' implementation in the individual subjects and courses. Where appropriate, the syllabi of the courses include concerns about the environment and what teachers communicate to the students. Nevertheless, direct evidence of any monitoring of negative environmental effects by the projects doesn't exist.

There is strong evidence of **good (democratic) governance and the application of democratic principles**, especially from the perspective of the involvement of the various stakeholders in the identification, implementation and finalization of the projects implemented by PIN in the secondary schools. The provincial and central levels of MOYES were both involved during the implementation. Primarily VOD was actively involved since the beginning through its director (he communicates in English freely and can be in direct contact with the project managers and Czech partners). The project also contained the component of the capacity building of the management of the involved schools and linkages of schools with other governmental and private partners. However, similar evidence of the involvement of relevant ministries in the implementation and monitoring of the project in the case of CTU projects is missing.

For example, of 136 graduates of fruit and vegetable processing, 84 (62%) are women. The course is free of charge. Youths from poor households can apply. Also, for other schools, including the UHS/ITC universities, the female students dominate. Only in PTI in Kampong Chhnang, there are more boys than girls. However, this is mainly determined by the nature of the study specializations and the possibility of employment. There are also no identifiable minorities in the targeted provinces. The biggest challenge, from the perspective of inclusion, are dropouts, veterans and kids who cannot afford to study in regular school. Nevertheless, there is **no evidence of any gender or any other discrimination**, and the projects fulfil the criteria for inclusiveness in access to education. The schools at both secondary and university level can also provide limited number of governmental scholarships either for identified students from poor families and for exceptional study achievements during (or from previous level) studies.

¹³ <https://www.rocapply.com/study-in-cambodia/cambodia-universities/institute-of-technology-of-cambodia/bachelor-of-biomedical-engineering.html>

The evaluated projects did **not include any formal monitoring of disaggregated data based on gender or any minorities and disadvantages**. However, at the end of the projects, PIN has introduced a Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) mainstreaming tool and developed the ToR for the gender analysis by external partners. New projects also include the Internal Community Feedback Response Mechanism ICFRM – with equal access for all.

A detailed evaluation of the cross-cutting principles by the Certified Methodology for the Evaluation of Cross-cutting Themes in Development Cooperation (by INESAN) is provided in Annex I.

4.8 Visibility

The **presentation of the Czech Development Cooperation** was carried out in line with CZDA visibility rules (Metodický pokyn České rozvojové agentury k vnější prezentaci zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce ČR) and Graphic standard manual (Grafický manuál ZRS ČR) by all evaluated projects. Equipment and facilities are labeled, information has been disseminated via mass media (articles and press releases), websites, social media as well as printed materials including T-shirts, posters, banners. The projects are also known to interviewed donors. From the geographical perspective, CR is a leading donor in the Kampong Chhnang province and is highly appreciated by the provincial administration. Agricultural education and agriculture, in general, is the sector most often recognized by the stakeholders as the sector with good experience of Czech organizations

5. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Relevance

Based on our findings, we can conclude that the program was relevant to the Cambodian context and addressed the primary **beneficiaries' needs and priorities** in all the project interventions. It also addressed the priorities of involved governmental central and provincial institutions. The program and most of the achieved **objectives also remain relevant till now**. The program and most of its individual interventions were adequately defined, realistic and feasible to address the relevant priorities and needs of the beneficiaries. Most of the objectives and design of the interventions were sensitive to the economic, environmental, equity, social, and capacity conditions of the context in which it took place. They were designed in ways that reflect **good practices of development interventions**. The target **stakeholders view the intervention as useful and valuable**. They feel now in a better position to meet the needs of the students and the demand from the private or other employers' sector. Nevertheless, what **limits the relevance's full potential** is that the secondary school training does not fully match the requirements of larger businesses. Some of the teaching equipment provided was reported as outdated, the teaching is still theoretical with a lack of more practical orientation, and there is a lack of space in the practical training facilities (including the projects focusing on the university level). The availability of teaching materials or their availability only in English also limits the relevance for most beneficiaries. Launching the Biomedical Engineering program only at the level of the Associated degree limits the relevancy of the graduates' possibility of employment and their willingness to join and study at the program. Two of the interventions **also lacked the necessary project design quality** to enable effective monitoring, and their Logical frameworks were reconstructed. The project of CTU lacked sound monitoring throughout the project. **Based on the above, relevance is assessed as rather high.**

5.2 Coherence

The internal and external coherence within the evaluated sector of the program is high. Besides the inconsistencies in the program's design, particularly its Result Matrix, the evaluated projects reached high complementarity and additionality with other interventions supported under the Czech Development cooperation in education and social development and in the agricultural and rural development sector. There is also a high coherence and coordination between Czech Development cooperation and other donors active in education in Cambodia – like EU, SDC, GIZ or UNIDO. Nevertheless, there is room for improvements in the direct collaboration of Czech experts in the project of other donors or other donors participating in the funds provided by the Czech Government in the form of the education-industrial clusters or involvement in broader sectoral programs. The Czech Government has a good position and recognition in the education sector and, though recognized and a small donor with local impact, is appreciated by the relevant government stakeholders. The Czech interventions are notably recognized and welcomed in the provinces of the former implementation of the program – Kampong Chhnang and Battambang. **Based on the above, coherence is assessed as high.**

5.3 Efficiency

Implementation of the projects *Expert Research study*, *ACTIVE for Youth*, *PESD* and *FTE 4 Youth* was smooth, experiencing only minor delays. Communication and coordination with project partners and central and local authorities has been described as very good for all five projects. The project *Introduction of Biomedical Engineering* experienced some challenges during implementation, attributed to insufficient baseline research, lack of common understanding of the curricula, the underestimation of assumptions at the planning phase as well as the COVID-19 pandemic causing an interruption of the project. The reality was more complex than what the first project envisaged. While the need for qualified teaching staff has been recognized, Output 1 “Trained permanent and external lecturers deliver classes independently” has not been fully achieved. By the time of preparing this report, there has not been a roadmap for the accreditation of the program. **Based on the above, efficiency is assessed as rather high.**

5.4 Effectiveness

The three TVET oriented projects met their objectives only partially. Improvement of the programs in terms of their quality (development of new curricula, introducing the possibilities of practical training, training of teachers) has been established to larger or lesser extent at all three schools. Relevance of the training for the intended labour market is weaker. This is partly due to lack of linkages with the private sector (in Kampong Chhnang), partly due to the priorities of the students who look at the training mainly as a stepping stone to university education (KNHS) as well as the partial discrepancy between the qualifications of graduates and the requirements of the potential employers. (NVIB, PTI). The curricula prepared for agro processing (Active for Youth) and food processing training modules on fruit and vegetable for Vocational Skill Certificate (VC) and TVET Certificate C1 (PESD) have not been disseminated to other schools in the country. Transformation of the KNHS into a profitable Centre of Excellence for learning agro-processing, contributing to the growth of the industry has not been successful. All three projects contributed to the Program outputs “Increased capacity of vocational training” and “Youth employability increased”, to the second one less than planned. The Biomedical engineering project has been launched and the implementer completed all activities and deliverables as per contract. Key assumptions linking the outputs and the objective have however not been met and the objective not achieved. **Based on the above, effectiveness has been assessed as rather high.**

5.5 Likelihood of impacts

Establishing the likely impact has been complicated by the lack of available data at the provincial levels. The TVET projects contributed to increased capacity of vocational training in the three supported schools. They created the potential for adoption of curricula developed and updated during their implementation; Curriculum developed for food processing training at the KNHS has been adopted by two other schools. 11 new MSEs have been established and 53% of employed graduates are using their skills in the sectors they studied. Contribution to improved operation and maintenance of medical equipment is at this stage considered unlikely. The program has not been accredited, the process of accreditation has not yet started. Associate Degree graduates cannot find permanent employment in public hospitals. The TVET projects contributed to the Program objectives: Equal access of women and men to good quality, affordable and inclusive technical, vocational and higher education including university education. (SDG 4.4.) **Based on the above, the likelihood of impacts has been assessed as rather high.**

5.6 Sustainability and replicability

Only the projects ACTIVE for Youth and FTE 4 Youth included a well-defined exit strategy (sustainability) in the project documents. These have however not been fully reflected in the assumptions and risks of the logframes, and not systematically monitored. Assessment of financial sustainability of the vocational education and training programs indicates lack of resources for the maintenance and upgrading of equipment provided under the projects, and for procurement of consumables. There is a continued dependency on external funding. Only the UHS advised that they have sufficient funds to maintain and operate equipment provided for the ITC laboratory. While there is demand for qualified labour, the extent to which students from PTI, NVIB and KHNS meet the current qualification requirements of the local industries is limited. This may in longer term lead to decreased demand for training in these schools. The main challenge for future graduates from the biomedical engineering program who want to work in public medical facilities is the accreditation of the program as BSc, although the ITC advertises it on its website as a Bachelor of Biomedical Engineering program. Students may still enroll and continue in their studies expecting

to find jobs in the private sector. **Based on the above, sustainability and replicability has been assessed as rather low.**

5.7 Cross-cutting principles

Though the monitoring of the negative environmental impact of the projects was not introduced, the nature of the educational projects indicates that the potential direct impact on the environment is very limited. However, the use of the simple and energy efficient technologies combined with the incorporation of environmental aspects into the teaching makes such impact likely to be positive. On the other hand, there is strong evidence of good (democratic) governance and the application of democratic principles, especially from the perspective of the involvement of the various stakeholders in the identification, implementation and finalization of the projects. Particularly for the projects focusing on the secondary level in the provinces, where both provincial and central authorities were actively involved. Due to the nature of the study specialization, the projects had a strong impact on girls' education. Most of the students at KNHS, NVIB and UHS/ITC schools were girls. **Based on the above, the cross-cutting principles are assessed: Good governance – Rather High; Environment and climate – Rather High; Human rights and gender– Rather High**

5.8 Visibility

The **presentation of the Czech Development Cooperation** was carried out in line with CZDA visibility rules (Metodický pokyn České rozvojové agentury k vnější prezentaci zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce ČR) and Graphic standard manual (Grafický manuál ZRS ČR) by all evaluated projects. Equipment and facilities are labeled, information has been disseminated via mass media (articles and press releases), websites, social media as well as printed materials including T-shirts, posters, banners. The projects are also known to interviewed donors. From the geographical perspective, CR is a leading donor in the Kampong Chhnang province and is highly appreciated by the provincial administration.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Level of seriousness: 1 – the most serious, 2 – serious, 3 – the least serious

6.1 Recommendations related to projects and continuation of CZ DC

1. Preparing a roadmap for accreditation of the biomedical engineering program

(Level of seriousness: 1)

Primary addressee: CVUT, CzDA

It is recommended to identify, jointly with the UHS and ITC, relevant institutions and procedures required to obtain accreditation of the Biomedical Engineering program and to prepare a roadmap with specific activities, milestones and timelines. The absence of accreditation (though presented as a bachelor's degree on the ITC website) makes it impossible for graduates to apply for permanent jobs in their new profession in hospitals or any other government institution. The project has been justified by the dire need of hospitals for this type of expertise. Hospitals and other medical institutions are, therefore, considered appropriate workplaces. If they could not employ graduates, the project would not meet its stated objective. For the expertise or training of Cambodian academic staff, it is possible to involve other Czech universities specializing in the Biomedical Engineering sciences, like TU Liberec, VUT Brno, CTU Prague or TU Ostrava. The option is to study in Thailand where biomedical engineering courses to Bachelor's degree are offered in English.

2. Consider Phase II for the PESD and FTE 4 Youth projects

(Level of Seriousness: 2)

Primary addressee: CzDA

It is recommended to consider Phase II for the PESD and FTE 4 Youth projects, including the inclusion of flexible training times. Both projects have achieved considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and the introduction of practical skills training. Both schools have been upgraded as a result. Both schools also expressed interest in further cooperation with specific recommendations to cover the gaps between the requirements of the labor market and the qualifications of graduates. Formulation of the extension should take into consideration recommendations from the updated Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector, requests by the respective schools, as well as findings and conclusions from this evaluation.

6.2 Recommendations to the Programme

3. Updating the Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia

(Level of Seriousness: 1)

Primary addressee: CzDA

It is recommended to update sections of the Expert Research Study on the Current State Situation and Needs in the Education Sector in Cambodia related to Secondary and Vocational Education with a focus on intervention of the Czech development cooperation in the sector. The update should include specific recommendations/road map for (i) Improving the relevance of technical and vocational education for the changing employment and market needs, including hard- and soft skills and STEM knowledge. (ii) Decent work and income from income-generating opportunities in the informal sector. Recommendation should include i.a. Roadmap for establishing and maintaining working linkages between the schools and potential employers/ their professional organizations (including paid internships). Involving the private sector in the modification of curricula. Requirements for the school's capacity in terms of facilities for practical training (with the option of outsourcing the facilities to a private contractor) as well as for teaching technical subjects and soft skills such as languages, communication skills, financial literacy, critical thinking, analytical skills, medium and long-term planning, constructive feedback and negotiation skills, teamwork, problem-solving.

4. Including flexible training times for supported technical and vocational training projects

(Level of Seriousness: 2)

Primary addressee: CzDA

It is recommended to support the inclusion of flexible working times in technical and vocational training projects funded under the Programme. A significant portion of Cambodia's labor force, approximately 6.2 million out of 7.9 million employed individuals¹⁴, is engaged in the informal sector. This has been widely recognized, and the Royal Government of Cambodia launched on 10 October 2023 the National Strategy for Informal Economic Development 2023-2028 to promote the protection and capacity building, productivity and resilience of the informal economy. Enhancing skills and competence is one of the pivotal priorities of this Strategy¹⁵. Currently, people working in the informal sector, but also employees in the formal sector or small business owners, have limited options to participate in the training courses to upgrade their knowledge and skills because their working hours and the training schedules overlap. The introduction of additional classes, at least at the Vocational Certificate level, would improve access for working men and women to upgrade their knowledge and skills and provide the opportunity for enhancing market position and income.

5. Collaboration with other donors active in the sector of technical and vocational education

(Level of Seriousness: 1)

Primary addressee: MFA, CzDA

Since technical and vocational education is the priority of several other donors and more prominent international organization, it is **recommended to explore possibilities of working in more profound synergy** within their programs and projects. One of the potential directions is collaboration with UNIDO, which is active in Cambodia through the Joint Country Program designed together with the Government of Cambodia and expressed interest in cooperation with specific options. It involves the development of educational and industrial clusters and capacity building of local institutions such as the Provincial Department of Labor and Vocational Training. The future Czech funding should also consider directly implementing the project through UNIDO with partially tight aid for the Czech experts in technical and vocational training and/or procurement of supplies. The agricultural sector would be well aligned with UNIDO priorities and experience in the sector in the country as well. The cooperation between MFA and UNIDO in Georgia can be used as an example (Increasing the Competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region through the Cluster Development Approach). Recommendation to align to big initiatives and partner more with other donors has also been mentioned by PIN in

¹⁴ <https://thebettercambodia.com/cambodias-visionary-2023-2028-strategy-empowering-the-informal-economy-for-prosperity-and-inclusivity/> (accessed on 07 November 2023)

¹⁵ <https://thebettercambodia.com/cambodias-visionary-2023-2028-strategy-empowering-the-informal-economy-for-prosperity-and-inclusivity/> (accessed o 07 November 2023)

the Final report for the FTE 4 Youth project, with the justification that joining forces to support bigger initiatives/projects would help to achieve stronger results.

6. Support to adoption of curricula for food processing developed under the ACTIVE for Youth project for the KNHHS

(Level of seriousness: 3)

Primary addressee: CzDA

Two schools have reportedly adopted the market-oriented curriculum on Agro-processing. According to the VOD, more schools are interested but lack the teaching equipment, teachers, and materials to deliver it properly. **It is recommended to consider support to additional school(s) with training in agro-processing at the Associate Degree level to facilitate wider dissemination of the curricula.**

6.3 Systemic recommendations

7. Improvement of the coherence in the design of the Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme

(Level of seriousness: 1)

Primary addressee: MFA, CzDA

There is a lack of internal coherence in the current Bilateral Development Cooperation Programme of the Czech Republic, Cambodia, 2018–2023 formulation where the provision of education at the university level, though mentioned in the program's text, is not explicitly defined in the Result Matrix. Also, no indicators are defined for this level of education in the Theory of Change. The used indicators for the Result Matrix are not objectively verifiable. The reconstruction of the intervention logic and improvement of the internal consistency of the Program is therefore needed. According to the Methodology for Czech ODA 2021, it should be also based on already identified interventions.

8. Guidelines on the Methodology for International Development Cooperation

(Level of seriousness: 2)

Primary addressee: MFA

It is recommended to establish clear guidelines on the extent to which the Methodology for International Development Cooperation needs to be followed during programming and project preparation. The Identification Form (Annex 2 to the Methodology of International Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic (Metodika zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce České republiky) is available only for the project *Introduction of Biomedical Engineering in Cambodia 2019 – 2021*.

9. Theory of change as a tool for results-based monitoring and planning

(Level of seriousness: 1)

Primary addressee: CzDA

It is recommended to prepare the theory of change (in the form of a logical framework matrix or another relevant form), establish specific and measurable goals and related indicators during project formulation and use it as a tool for results-based monitoring as foreseen in the Methodology for International Development Cooperation. The logical framework matrix is a tool for planning, monitoring, managing and evaluating projects and programs. The project *Introduction of Biomedical Engineering Program* started in 2019. The logical framework matrix, prepared in 2020, lacks coherence and objectively verifiable indicators. (The same applies to Theories of Change prepared for the second phase of the project). Monitoring and reporting of all TVET projects follows a standard format, focusing on monitoring activities and financial monitoring. However, the assumptions and risks are not monitored. Description of progress towards results is, however, included in the verbal reports. Monitoring and reporting for the *Introduction of Biomedical Engineering* remained at the activity level. The matrices were not revised to match the actual condition and purpose. Revision of the logical framework matrix at the beginning of the project, including objectives and verifiable indicators (input data - baseline), assumptions and risks, would help the overall planning and managing the progress of the project as well as its monitoring and evaluability.

10. Timely disbursements of budgets

(Level of seriousness: 2)

Primary addressee: CzDA, MFA

It is recommended to disburse annual budgets at the beginning of a year. The CzDA disburses budgets for the current with delays (PIN reported by May). This results in breaks and delays in implementation for implementers who do not have sufficient funds and/or interest in advancing funds to the project and decreases time efficiency. It may also reduce cost efficiency for mobilized experts “waiting” for the project activities to resume fully.