



# Navigating the Road from Legislation to Implementation in Cambodia



## The Problem

Road traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death in Cambodia, especially over the last decade. The WHO estimates that in 2013 there were more than 2,500 fatalities on Cambodian roads, or seven deaths per day. In addition to fatalities, in 2011 more than 16,500 crashes resulted in 5,800 severe injuries. Speeding, drink driving and dangerous overtaking are the main causes of traffic crashes, and further to the devastating loss of life, the country continues to lose 2.1% of its gross domestic product each year as a result of road crashes.

In late 2014, after several years of discussion between advocates and the government, the Cambodian government passed comprehensive road traffic legislation. But major problems still remained even after passage of this new omnibus Road Traffic Law, including lack of understanding of – and respect for – the new law, helmet wearing, over speeding, and drink driving.

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The awareness campaign on the Road Traffic Law at Chongkal Odar Meanchey province



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A community forum held to highlight the strengthened Road Traffic Law

**The Road Traffic Law 2015 contains 12 chapters with 92 articles that address many issues, including drink driving, speeding and lack of helmet use, truck and bus driver regulations and laws relating to licencing, vehicle registration and condition.**

Even though civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Cambodian Red Cross were pleased about the legislation, they knew lives would continue to be lost if the legislation was now implemented on the roads. In this context, a coalition of NGOs who had worked together previously to support the passage of the legislation, including GRSP grantees Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), and Women's Media Centre, continued to collaborate as a NGO working group on road safety to advocate for implementation of the Road Traffic Law.

### The Policy Challenge

The Road Traffic Law 2015 contains 12 chapters with 92 articles that address many issues, including drink driving, speeding and lack of helmet use, truck and bus driver regulations and laws relating to licencing, vehicle registration and condition. The law also defines the police's powers to enforce the traffic laws and increases in fines.

Looking forward to implementation, the NGO working group had several concerns. While the legislation was comprehensive in many ways, there were still weaknesses that needed to be addressed. The new legislation still was not clear regarding fines and penalties for certain traffic violations. In addition, the group noted that another piece of legislation that aimed to reduce drink driving – The Alcohol Management Law – was not being prioritized by the government.

Second, the working group was concerned that the government lacked the political will, funding, and capacity to adequately enforce the legislation at both national and provincial levels. Other issues like HIV/AIDs and landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) were currently higher political priorities.

Third, they believed that NGOs and the public needed to better understand the legislation in order to follow the law and maintain advocacy for implementation. At this stage the NGO working group did not have an advocacy strategy or much ability to influence government policy. Other civil society organizations and



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development partners also had not made road safety a priority in their programmes and policy interventions. Knowledge was also low among the general public.

### The Tactic

In 2015, GRSP grantees within the NGO working group began to address these challenges by focusing on implementation of the new law. They began by developing an advocacy strategy that prioritized education about the new legislation, advocacy for funding and to increase political will.

The grantees had to work with limited resources and in a wide range of provinces, and as such they identified their specific organisational strengths as part of a coalition, to ensure that their work was targeted in areas where they would have significant impact. The governance system in Cambodia is hierarchical; political directives are required to commence at the national level and then shift to the provincial and then to the districts.



A live show held by the Women's Media Centre to push the sub degree implementations.

In this context, the grantees identified that they needed to develop good practice examples of implementation at the provincial and district levels and work in close collaboration to ensure consistency in their campaign. For example, given their significant experience at the district level, API focused their attention on working with the District Authorities, whilst CRC worked directly with the provincial governments. The coordination between the organisations was critical as district plans have to be approved by the provincial governments, which reinforced the need for close collaboration within the grantees working across the different levels of government.

To address policy gaps in the legislation, the groups worked with the government to provide input on implementing regulations (or sub-decrees) that address key concerns, including speeding, penalties, and the formation of the National Road Safety Committee. These regulations were eventually adopted with input from the GRSP partners.

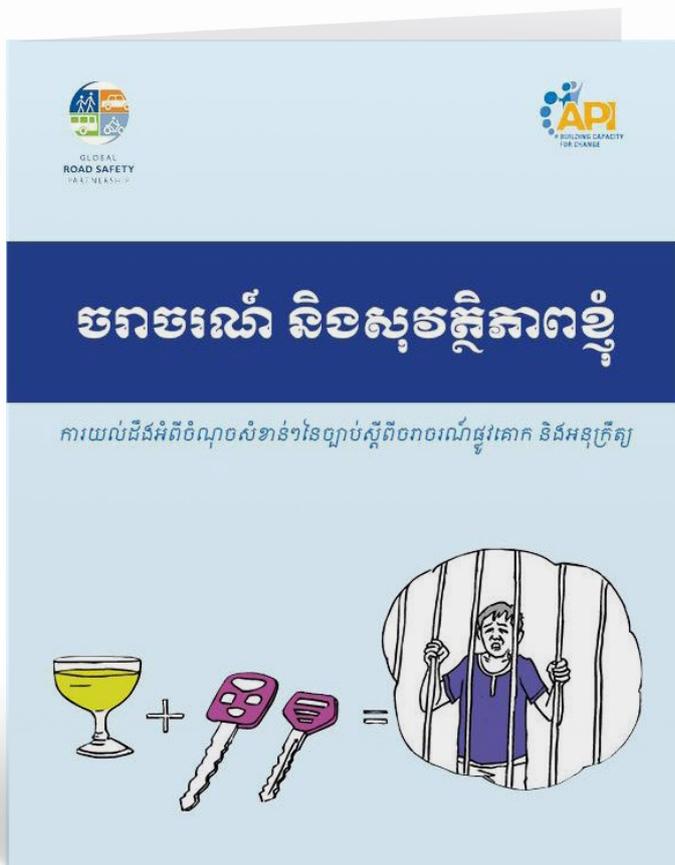
### CHECKLIST: Moving from Legislation to Implementation

1. Clearly define the implementation advocacy strategy and objectives. This strategy will be linked to the strategy for passage of legislation but will likely prioritize new objectives, target audiences, and activities.
2. Create a strong network. Prioritizing partnership and coordination among road safety actors will become increasingly important with the growing number of groups and individuals involved in implementation of legislation.
3. Continue to work with the government and political parties. Understanding and supporting a clear government plan, as well as the ongoing priorities of key policy makers, may help gain funding and political support for implementation.
4. Focus on sub-national integration. Now that the legislation is passed, focus on how it is implemented into sub-national (district, provincial, etc) policies and activities.

Want to learn more? You can find other resources for advocates at [www.grsproadsafety.org](http://www.grsproadsafety.org)



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The Traffic and My Safety booklet

They also focus on how to gain political support and funding for national implementation at provincial levels. The NGO partners advocate to the government and donors to commit funds for implementation. They organise meetings and workshops to provide evidence about the toll of road crashes and remaining policy gaps. Going forward, they will also partner with local officials to determine how best to integrate the legislation into the country's five-year district and provincial development plans.

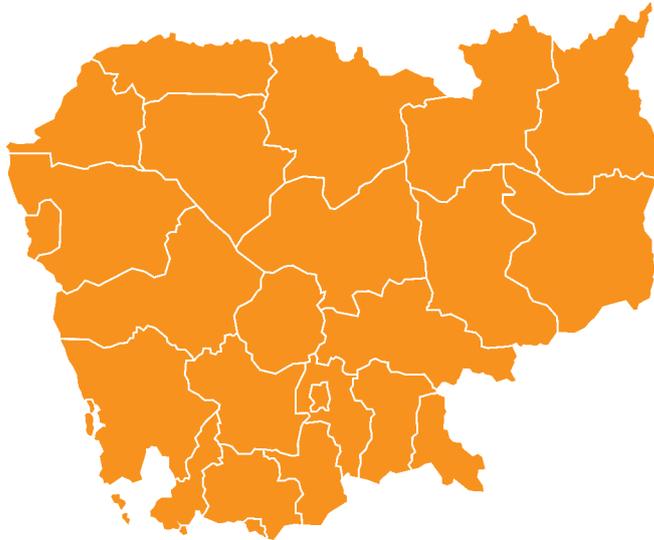
To help governmental institutions build knowledge and skills, the NGOs conduct trainings and workshops on road safety and the new road legislation for law enforcement officers and local authorities. They have also developed materials and educational tools, including training curriculums on advocacy for drink driving and on the provisions of the road traffic law.

Educating the public and other civil society partners on the new legislation is also been a priority. To that end, they implement an education awareness campaign that has included public forums, IEC materials on road safety and a road traffic law enforcement campaign booklet called Traffic and My Safety. The campaign has mobilized youth groups to raise awareness of the new law and encourage public compliance.

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### The Wrap-Up

The transition from passage of legislation to implementation is a critical step that can save many lives from road traffic crashes. This phase of an advocacy campaign requires its own strategic approach focused on policy makers, implementers, law enforcement agencies and the public. Because Cambodian advocates were not content with policy passage, but moved immediately to implementation efforts, enforcement and compliance will be more effective. The country is now poised for the successful implementation of the Law in January, as a result of their efforts.

### Global Road Safety Partnership secretariat

c/o International Federation  
of Red Cross and  
Red Crescent Societies  
P.O. Box 372  
17, chemin des Crêts  
CH-1211 Geneva 19  
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 730 42 49  
Fax: +41 (0) 22 733 03 95

E-mail: [grsp@ifrc.org](mailto:grsp@ifrc.org)  
Website: [www.grsproadsafety.org](http://www.grsproadsafety.org)