



TPC THE FIRST MICROFINANCE INSTITUTION IN CAMBODIA CERTIFIED FOR COMMITMENT TO CLIENT PROTECTION

10th June 2015, Siem Reap Cambodia: Thaneakea Phum (Cambodia), Ltd (TPC) has been publicly recognized as “Client Protection Certified” by the Smart Campaign for meeting strong standards of client care. TPC is the first microfinance institution in Cambodia to be awarded this prestigious certification.

An official award ceremony took place at the Royal Angkor Resort today. His Excellency KIM Vada, Director General of National Bank of Cambodia, awarded the certificate to TPC’s CEO, congratulating him on TPC’s commitment to protecting the consumer.

The Smart Campaign is a global initiative which exists to ensure strong client-protection practices in the microfinance industry. The Smart Campaign’s Client Protection Certification program publicly recognizes institutions providing financial services to low-income households, whose standards of care uphold the Smart Campaign’s seven Client Protection Principles covering important areas such as pricing, transparency, fair and respectful treatment and prevention of over-indebtedness. The certification program contains a rigorous set of standards against which institutions are evaluated by independent, third-party raters that are licensed by the Smart Campaign.

In order to meet the strict guidelines outlined by the Smart Campaign for certification, TPC worked closely with Australian NGO Good Return over the past year. Working in partnership with TPC, Good Return provided technical assistance in the areas of: financial consumer protection, poverty measurement and reporting and financial capability development of clients.

For example, TPC and Good Return collaborated on a Financial Capability Client Protection Campaign in 2015. The campaign reached all TPC clients (more than 190,000), aiming to improve their awareness of consumer rights and feedback mechanisms and to ensure that the social mission and values of TPC were understood by staff. As part of the campaign, TPC strengthened product transparency and consumer empowerment by providing clients with a sticker and information pack that offered key information such as a hotline number, product pricing and conditions.

Mr SOK Voeun, CEO of TPC, said: "At TPC we are thrilled to be first Cambodian microfinance institution to secure certification from the Smart Campaign. TPC is committed to poverty alleviation in Cambodia. With the needs of our clients as our number one priority, as an organization we have made a significant investment in building our consumer protection practices. We have reached our goal of certification by working in partnership with Good Return and value their technical assistance. TPC is proud to be a role model for other institutions in Cambodia who are also committed to positive outcomes for their clients."



James Le Compte, Regional Program Manager from Good Return said: “Good Return congratulates TPC on being the first in Cambodia to gain certification from the Smart Campaign. Good Return is a proud partner of TPC, providing technical assistance. We are confident that TPC's leadership in consumer protection will motivate other Cambodian microfinance institutions to work towards certification.”

“We extend our heartfelt congratulations to TPC,” said Isabelle Barrès, Director of the Smart Campaign. “Their willingness to do the work it takes to prepare for and undergo the intensive process of evaluation is indicative of their deep commitment to their clients. They have shown that this bar is achievable in the area of client protection. Their example will catalyze a movement towards certification within the broader industry.” TPC's certification continues a trend of leadership in the Cambodian microfinance sector. In 2012 TPC was the first microfinance institution in Cambodia to use the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI) – a globally accepted poverty measurement tool.

Good Return is Cambodia's leading technical assistance provider for financial consumer protection, poverty measurement and reporting, consumer awareness and financial behavior. Good Return's regional office in Phnom Penh includes a team of nine local and international experts. Good Return's work seeks to support a safer and stronger microfinance sector in Cambodia, working in conjunction with support from The French Development Agency (AFD).

TPC is a member of the Cambodia Microfinance Association.

A Snapshot of TPC's Clients

- 84.58% are women (2014).
- 70% of TPC's clients work in agriculture (2014).
- In 2014 TPC became fifth largest MFI in Cambodia.
- TPC has 170,000 clients with total assets of \$110 million.

Examples TPC Activity to Achieve Certification

- Improved individual cash flow analysis and credit history checks in conjunction with the National Credit Bureau to help prevent clients from over-indebtedness.
- Implementation of complaint handling policy and system to resolve client's grievances.
- Improved Client Data Privacy Policy to increase the security of client information.
- The Code of Conduct was made more robust to ensure the ongoing fair treatment of clients.
- A formalised policy was implemented to allow clients to restructure their loans if they are difficulty making repayments.
- Client loan contracts were simplified in order to make them more easy for clients to understand.

ABOUT TPC

Thaneakea Phum (Cambodia), Ltd. (TPC) is a rapidly growing, regulated microfinance institution. The fifth largest microfinance institution in Cambodia, TPC has a network of 60 offices, serving more than 190,000 clients across a portfolio exceeding 130 million USD. TPC's focus is on serving entrepreneurs and families at the base of the socio-economic pyramid, providing economic opportunities to transform the quality of their lives. Due to its commitment to responsibly serving clients, focus on customer service, innovative products, and fair and transparent pricing, TPC is a trusted provider of financial services for Cambodians. For more information about TPC, visit: www.tpc.com.kh



ABOUT GOOD RETURN

Established in 2003, Good Return is a non-profit organisation that works across the Asia Pacific to deliver economic and social development programs for the financially and socially excluded. Sharing with others the vision of a world without poverty, Good Return is proud to be one of the leading supporters of financial inclusion across the Asia Pacific region. Good Return partners with Financial Service Providers, Microfinance Associations and Financial Sector Regulators to research, design and implement game changing initiatives for the poor. Good Return's head office is in Sydney Australia. For more information about Good Return, visit: programs.goodreturn.org

ABOUT THE SMART CAMPAIGN

The Smart Campaign aims to improve client protection in microfinance through better understanding and use of client protection principles by microfinance institutions (MFIs). Certification of MFIs is one of the primary activities of the Campaign. The Client Protection Certification Program is possible because of partnerships with the MasterCard Foundation, Ford Foundation, the International Finance Corporation, the Multilateral Investment Fund a (member of the IDB group) and microfinance pioneer Accion. It has been shaped through cooperation with dozens of supporting organizations, notably the Smart Campaign's co-founder, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP). For further information, visit: www.smartcampaign.org