

Policy Guidelines on Increasing Business Registration and Access to One-Roof-Service for Women-led MSMEs

Supporting women-owned and managed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Cambodia





The shaded areas of the map indicate ESCAP members and associate members.*

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Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship programme
<https://www.unescap.org/projects/cwe>



FOREWORD

The Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation (MISTI), under the Kingdom of Cambodia, has made tremendous effort to promote the private sector by participating in the establishment of the Industrial Development Policy (IDP) 2015-2025, which further contributes to maintaining high and sustainable economic growth by diversifying the economy, strengthening competitiveness and enhancing the productivity of small and medium enterprises.

In addition, MISTI, in cooperation with its developing partners, has been developing the National SMEs Information Web Portal namely “KhmerSME”, which is was launched in 2021. “KhmerSME” aims to assist Cambodian SMEs to gain access to domestic and foreign markets and internationalize, by focusing on the acquisition of information, services, and communication networks, and coordinating the context of policies and regulations in the regional business environment. MISTI is also preparing to launch the “SME Development Policy” to support small and medium enterprises in Cambodia and to promote local products. In December 2019, the National Policy on Science Technology and Innovation (STI) 2020-2030 was adopted and approved by the Prime Minister. This National Policy has been reviewed and special provisions targeting women-led MSMEs have been included in collaboration with ESCAP. The National Policy aims to strengthen the foundation of SME development and improve the environment for STI so as to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development.

The Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation has been reviewing the challenges of small and medium enterprises, especially in collaboration with the private sector and development partners, to study the opportunities for small and medium enterprise clusters. MISTI also provides financing, market penetration, technology transfer and innovation, especially with assisting and promoting women entrepreneurs to improve and register their

business online. With the support of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), MISTI launched the project “Catalyzing Women’s Entrepreneurship - Creating a Gender Responsive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem”, which has been implemented since early January 2021. Under this project, a set of guidelines have been developed for the One-Roof System (ORS), together with an Online Business Registration (OBR) System that will be implemented in the near future by the line ministries, public sector entities, private sector, NGOs, and other developing partners. These valuable guidelines will facilitate the development of the ORS as a comprehensive guide for relevant ministries and agencies to support women entrepreneurs, increase their access to the ORS, and increase business registration of women-owned enterprises using the online business registration portal.

In this regard, I would like to express my appreciation and congratulations to the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for their magnificent contributions. I strongly believe that these remarkable guidelines on increasing business registrations and access to the One-Roof-Service will be a significant instrument in providing helpful insight and guiding relevant ministries, policymakers and all stakeholders to effectively and efficiently implement these policies, together with other MSME policies and regulatory frameworks, and achieve their greatest potential.



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Senior Minister

Minister of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation

PREFACE

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) comprise a major share of private sector entities around the world and are widely regarded as a key force in achieving sustainable development. Their contribution towards employment generation, poverty reduction, innovation, as well as social and economic growth, is well recognized globally and, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. While small businesses have been hardest hit in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is wide acceptance, amongst governments and policymakers, that the MSME sector will play a critical role in the recovery from the economic fallout caused by the pandemic.

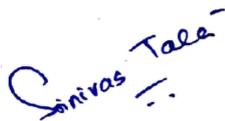
In the context of Cambodia, nearly 90 per cent of all registered enterprises are SMEs, providing almost 70 per cent of employment opportunities, nationwide, and contributing to over half of Cambodia's Gross Domestic Product. And yet, many enterprises in Cambodia are not registered, and therefore lie outside the purview of the formal economy. Recognizing the potential of its MSME sector, the Kingdom of Cambodia has set an ambitious target to register 80 to 95 per cent of all SMEs by 2025. To realize this goal, it is imperative to account for women entrepreneurs and address the unique challenges confronting them.

Women form a significant part of the MSME landscape in Cambodia, owning the majority (61 per cent) of businesses. However, most of the women-led businesses are informal and micro-sized. In fact, only about a quarter of all formally registered SMEs are women-owned. The number of women-owned SMEs is likely higher, however, the sociocultural context disincentivizes women from registering a business in their names. Operating in the informal economy has far-reaching consequences for women-led SMEs, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Evidence suggests that lack of access to finance, markets, and the necessary skills needed for business stability and growth are the top concerns of

Cambodian women entrepreneurs. Notably, business registration and formalization are at the centre of all these issues. The challenge of formalization has further come into the limelight during the pandemic, as only registered enterprises can avail the benefits of the support measures and schemes made available by the Government.

Through the Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship programme, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is pleased to collaborate with the Kingdom of Cambodia's Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MISTI) to develop guidelines for supporting women-owned and managed MSMEs to increase their access to Cambodia's newly launched One-Roof-Service (ORS) platform and online business registration. This policy guidelines document provides a roadmap for policymakers to create an enabling environment to increase business formalization, as well as to improve access to information, financial services and skill-building opportunities for Cambodia's women entrepreneurs.

I appreciate the cooperation between MISTI and ESCAP in drafting this document and sincerely hope that the guidelines will constitute an important contribution in supporting the Kingdom of Cambodia in their efforts to promote gender-responsive MSME development.



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