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# Policy Assessment for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry

Executive Summary: Cambodia





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## What is this report about?

This Cambodia country report is part of the global joint programme, “Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry” (EeWiGI). Its purpose is to advise policymakers and practitioners on the establishment and implementation of a policy framework to integrate gender and green industrial policies. **The aim is to affect change and empower more women to take leadership roles in green industry as entrepreneurs or industry professionals.**<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) are working together to assess the need for gender-responsive<sup>2</sup> green industrial policy actions in four participating countries: Cambodia, Peru, Senegal and South Africa.

The preparatory assistance project undertaken in 2017<sup>3</sup> led to a fully-fledged project to advise the Ministry of Industry Science Technology and Innovation (MISTI) and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), private sector associations and enterprises, on the design and implementation of gender-responsive green industrial policies. This national report aims to provide policymakers and practitioners with an evidence-base that will enable them to:

1. Establish and implement a policy framework to better integrate gender equality into green industrial policies;
2. Formulate new, or reformulate existing gender-responsive green industrial policies and adopt them; and
3. Facilitate efforts to prioritise areas for work plan development.

## Why is it important?

The Cambodian Government prioritises policies and programmes that help the nation adapt to and mitigate climate change (e.g. National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) and Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP)). Green growth and the promotion of green industry are strategies that fall within this overarching priority. **Currently, there is minimal data on women’s economic empowerment in green industry – this study aims to provide the necessary data to fill this gap. To ensure gender mainstreaming in policies, strategies and action plans for green industry, a solid foundation of knowledge and a deeper understanding of the challenges facing women entrepreneurs and professionals in green industry is required.** Hence, this project conceptualises women’s economic empowerment as requiring advancement and transformation.

*Advancement* includes increased resources including income, employment, human capital (education, skills, training), financial capital (loans, savings), social capital (networks, relationships, mentors), and physical capital (land, machinery, tools, inventory). To achieve *transformation* necessitates women having the power and agency to make decisions over control and use of newly gained skills and resources. This requires transformation of underlying structural gender constructs and social norms that reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities.<sup>4,5</sup>

1 UNIDO and UN Women (2019). Global Programme: Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry Phase 1: Policy prioritization, pp 1-21.

2 UN Women (2012). Gender Equality Glossary. <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=>

3 UNIDO (2019). The Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry: A Synthesis Report. Unpublished, pp 1-82.

4 See UN Women’s Glossary of Terms: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=o&page=2>.

5 GWNEN (2019). Women for Sustainable Energy: Strategies to Foster Women’s Talent for Transformational Change, p.52.

# The impact of COVID-19 on women's economic empowerment in green industry in Cambodia

Across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, and are more likely to be employed in the informal sector.<sup>6</sup> Women are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as they tend to hold more precarious employment, especially in the informal sector, where their benefits and protection, including access to social protection, are inadequate or lacking.

COVID-19 has had a major impact on women across entire supply chains – executives in large companies; women working in the service sector, women who own or work in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); women engaged in manufacturing, including the informal sector; and women migrant workers. This is accentuated by the uneven division of care and domestic responsibilities at home due to gendered social expectations, limiting women's livelihood choices even more.<sup>7</sup>

In Cambodia, the financial impact has been particularly severe in the garment and tourism industries. The most common financial problems the businesses are facing are a dramatic drop in sales, and coping with fixed costs such as rent, staff wages and social security contributions. Reductions in orders pose the biggest challenge by far for the enterprises/firms, followed by the increased difficulty of financing the undertaking and the disrupted logistics.<sup>8</sup> Approximately 15-25 per cent of factories had no orders at the end of the second quarter of 2020 and more than 150,000 workers – representing approximately 15 per cent of the country's garment workers – were reported to have lost their jobs during the pandemic.<sup>9</sup>

COVID-19 is exposing those vulnerabilities in social, political, and economic systems that were always present. It is forcing a shift in priorities and funding across public and private sectors, endangering the progress so far made towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Action must be taken now to stop this backsliding. Women must be the architects as well as the beneficiaries of efforts to build back stronger and better in response to these highly visible fault lines.<sup>10</sup>

Despite these challenges, the COVID-19 crisis also offers unique opportunities for enabling women's empowerment, bringing the transformative changes needed to address the longstanding climate, social and environmental issues and inequalities that have contributed to the devastation of this pandemic. Prioritising women and economic recovery along more equitable lines is not only morally right, it is also an economical imperative. Women are critical agents of post-crisis recovery and investing in gender equality has the potential to stimulate the economy and reverse losses to global wealth.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, gender mainstreaming needs to be prioritised in all sectors to help women entrepreneurs start and sustain green businesses. Green industry is new, innovative, and part of a growing market pushed by a more conscious consumer. It offers many opportunities for women.

In summary, women are critical agents of post-crisis recovery and investing in gender equality has the potential to stimulate the economy and reverse losses to global wealth.<sup>12</sup>

## How were the sectors and sub-sectors selected for this report?

“Green industry” incorporates many traditional sectors which mainstream environmental and social considerations into their operations. Based on collaborative discussion with the National Coordinator, the UNIDO Country Representative and the National Focal Points who represented the MISTI and MoWA and synergies with the Cambodian Programme for Country Partnership (PCP) of UNIDO, the potential industry growth and the alignment with the government's priority sectors, the following sectors of interest were identified as particularly relevant to the Cambodian context: garment, textile and footwear; agribusiness (sub-sectors: organic agriculture and transformation of agri-foods), energy (sub-sector: solar) and tourism (sub-sectors: hospitality and restaurant).

6 United Nations (2020). Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women.

7 Ibid.

8 UNIDO (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on the Private Sector: Firms/Enterprises in Cambodia. Survey Report. UNIDO Cambodia.

9 ILO (2020). The Supply Chain Ripple Effect: How COVID-19 is Affecting Garment Workers and Factories in Asia and the Pacific. Research brief.

10 UN Women (2020). From Insights to Action, Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>.

11 CARE (2020). COVID-19 Condemns Millions of Women to Poverty When They Could be a Solution to Prosperity.

12 Ibid.

# How was the study conducted?

The research study used a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. It was conducted in four phases: (1) desk review and initial policy review; (2) feminist critical policy analysis (10 policies); (3) qualitative data collection in the form of Key Informant Individual Interviews (28 KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (3 FGDs); and (4) quantitative data collection in the form of an online survey with women working as entrepreneurs (16 respondents). All data was collected in February-March 2020.



## Limitations of the research

1. **Lack of clarity on the “green industry”:** since the green industry is a new concept, there is a lack of clarity about it and what businesses require to be considered “green”. Hence, it was difficult to segregate the sectors and sub-sectors into “green” versus “conventional”/ “non-green”;
2. **Online survey participants:** in Cambodia, the online survey started in mid-March 2020 and as the COVID-19 pandemic intensified during this time, it became increasingly difficult to encourage the entrepreneurs to fill in the survey as they were busy managing their businesses and strategizing to cope with the pandemic; and
3. **Selection of ten policies for feminist critical analysis:** policies only available in Khmer language were not selected for analysis because the research team was not fluent in Khmer.

## Strengths of the study

Some of the strengths of the study include:

1. **A novel initiative:** this research is the first of its kind to investigate women’s economic empowerment in green industries, as both entrepreneurs and industry professionals;
2. **Research across the globe:** the research has produced an impressive international dataset, with qualitative and quantitative data gathered in 4 countries on 3 different continents;
3. **Robust, gender-responsive policy analyses:** the bespoke feminist critical policy analyses used in the study is novel in international development research. While there are several policies in the country on climate change and sustainable development, the extent to which these policies have been gender mainstreamed were previously unknown. Our analyses create a way forward for all the policies to be revisited and strengthened in terms of their gender content and commitments;
4. **Involvement at the policy level:** government stakeholders and policymakers are involved from the inception phase in evaluating the research findings;
5. **Bottom-up approach:** the study used a bottom-up approach to elicit the perceptions and everyday challenges of green industry women entrepreneurs and professionals. The data they shared will be used as a baseline for required changes in policy by facilitating the design and revision of green industry policies around their needs and priorities; and
6. **Bridging the green industry knowledge gap:** the study revealed a persistent knowledge gap regarding existing green industry policies in the country among entrepreneurs, professionals and oftentimes policy makers themselves. By exposing this gap, this report offers recommendations for raising awareness and exposing people to the opportunities present in green industry.

# What are the key findings?

## Key results from phases 1 and 2: policy analyses

Ten policies were evaluated, based on feminist policy analysis criteria and research questions listed in the main report. It was comprised of 3 assessments:

- Assessment I: the first assessment<sup>13</sup> is an index for evaluating the inclusion of gender in green industry plans across seven criteria categories;
- Assessment II: the second assessment evaluates the specific targets/commitments/indicators and/or “next steps” regarding gender planning. This is to ensure accountability in terms of gender targets/plans; and
- Assessment III: the policies were assessed in terms of their level of implementation to date (as of April 2020).

**Table 1: Summary table of assessment I** <sup>14, 15</sup>

National laws, policies and strategies assessed	Engendering of the policy	Structural understanding of gender equality	Intersectionality	Women's empowerment	Incremental transformation	Gender responsive industrial policies	Regional/ international context	Total score
National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013-2030) <sup>16</sup>	0.5/5	0/1	0.5/1	0/4	0/1	0.5/3	0/1	1.5/16
Strategic Development Plan for Cambodian Agro-industries (2019-2030) <sup>17</sup>	0.5/5	0/1	0/1	0/4	0/1	0/3	0/1	0.5/16
The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries (2010-2019) <sup>18</sup>	1/5	0/1	0/1	0.5/4	0/1	0.5/3	0/1	2/16
Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) (2019-2023) <sup>19</sup>	2/5	0.5/1	0/1	0.5/4	0/1	0.5/3	0/1	3.5/16
National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET) (2017-2025) <sup>20</sup>	2/5	0/1	0.5/1	1/4	0/1	1/3	0/1	4.5/16
NDC Roadmap and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (2019-2030) <sup>21</sup>	0.5/5	0/1	0/1	0/4	0/1	0/3	0/1	0.5/16
Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP) (2014-2018) <sup>22</sup>	5/5	1/1	1/1	3/4	0.5/1	0.5/3	0/1	11/16
Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030) <sup>23</sup>	5/5	1/1	1/1	2.5/4	0.5/1	0/3	0/1	10/16
National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) (2014-2018, 2019-2023) <sup>24</sup>	4.5/5	1/1	1/1	3.5/4	0.5/1	0.5/3	0.5/1	11.5/16
The Cambodia Industrial Development Policy (IDP) (2015-2025) <sup>25</sup>	0/5	0/1	0/1	0/4	0/1	0/3	0/1	0/16

13 The criteria and research questions for the first exercise are adapted from: Drucza, K. and Rodriguez, C.M. (2018) Feminist Policy Analysis: Implications for the Agricultural Sector in Ethiopia. CIMMYT, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

14 There are many existing relevant policies, but some are only available in local language. These 10 policies were carefully consulted with national coordinator, national focal points and UNIDO Country Representative.

15 Table Keys: 1=The policy meets the criteria; 0.5= The policy meets the criteria to a certain extent; 0= The policy poorly meets the criteria. For more information on the criteria and associated research questions, see Table 3.1 in the full report.

16 National Council of Green Growth (2013). National Strategic Plan on Green Growth 2013-2030. Royal Government of Cambodia.

17 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (2020). Strategic Development Plan for Cambodian Agro-industries 2019-2030.

18 Fisheries Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MoAFF), Kingdom of Cambodia (2011). The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries 2010-2019 Cambodia.

19 Ministry of Commerce (2019). Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) 2019-2023.

20 Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (2017). National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy 2017-2025.

21 National Council for Sustainable Development (2019). NDC Roadmap and Stakeholder Engagement Plan 2019-2030.

22 Gender and Climate Change Committee (GCCC) and Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) (2014). Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP) 2014-2018.

23 Royal Government of Cambodia (2018). Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030).

24 Royal Government of Cambodia (2019). National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023.

25 Royal Government of Cambodia (2015). Cambodia Industrial Development Policy 2015 – 2025.

## Assessment I (table 1)<sup>26</sup>

ENGENDERING OF THE POLICY	STRUCTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER EQUALITY
<p>The Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP), Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework, National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET) are gender mainstreamed throughout. The other policies have either limited or no mention of “gender” or “women.” Beyond this, all the policies have room to improve on addressing gender equality, gender stereotypes and include sex-disaggregated data.</p>	<p>Few of the policies do not consider structural reasons, beyond the individual level, that impact upon gender equality, except the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP), Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework, National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). None of the policies which were reviewed make reference to the historical, legal, economic, and/or socio-cultural factors that influence gender equality.</p>
INTERSECTIONALITY	
<p>Limited consideration is given to the intersection of gender with other factors such as disability, race, youth and/or rurality, with the exceptions of the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP), CSGDs Framework, and National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) which all address women and other groups such as children, elderly, ethnic and religious minorities.</p>	
WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT	
<p>There is limited reference made to women’s empowerment in the policies except for the National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET), the Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries, the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP), Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework, National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). The Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) does include reference to women’s empowerment. It mentions the importance of women in trade and calls for increased mainstreaming of women empowerment in trade and business development policies.</p> <p>None of the policies mention consulting women or women’s civil society groups and associations during their development. Stakeholders were consulted, but it is not possible to infer from the policy which stakeholders and whether these were women’s groups or advocates.</p>	
INCREMENTAL TRANSFORMATION	
<p>The policies generally do not build on previous national gender equality achievements/policies. This is a missed opportunity given the robust national framework in place to ensure gender equality (the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP), Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework, National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET)). For example, Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS), National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET), NDC Roadmap and Stakeholder Engagement Plan build on industrial national policies but not policies on gender equality.</p>	
GENDER-RESPONSIVENESS	
<p>National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET) does consider ways to overcome gender and social norms and stereotypes that impair women’s involvement in the green industry such as encouraging women to become trainers, developing gender-responsive human resource policies to attract and retain qualified trainers, promoting gender equality through better terms and conditions of work while addressing the gendered experiences of workers, offering scholarships for women to participate in TVET programmes, developing marketing and extension strategies to attract women, and ensuring that all curricula is gender-sensitive. The other policies that touch upon gender responsiveness are National Strategic Plan on Green Growth, The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries, Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP), Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) and National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). The remaining policies can consider ways to overcome gender norms and social traditions that impair women’s involvement in the green industry. Moreover, the policies do not address steps necessary to increase women’s leadership roles in green industries.</p>	

<sup>26</sup> See Glossary in the Country Report for definitions.

## REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

None of the policies analysed mentioned international normative frameworks such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This is a missed opportunity to build on existing legislation, and something that can be easily remedied in the policy revision process.

### Assessment II (table 2)

Eight of the policies do not mention “gender” in the conclusion.<sup>27</sup> The two exceptions are the Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) and Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP). For example, GCCAP mentions that, “GCCAP is designed to address knowledge and capacity gaps by organising trainings, promoting communication and knowledge dissemination at various levels ranging from decision makers, technical officers, communities and to the women, and demonstration of gender-based climate change adaptation and mitigation projects”.

### Assessment III (table 2)

The policies have solid implementation plans but there is limited documentation on the status of implementation and outcomes. As a result, it is unclear the extent to which the policies have been implemented. There are four policies that just came into effect in 2019, so it is too early to include them in the analysis.

**Table 2:** Summary table of assessment II and III

Name	Assessment II score <sup>28</sup>	Assessment III score <sup>29</sup>
National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013-2030)	0	n/a
Strategic Development Plan for Cambodian Agro-industries (2019-2030)	0	n/a
The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries (2010-2019)	0	n/a
Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) (2019-2023)	3	n/a
National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET) (2017-2025)	0	n/a
NDC Roadmap and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (2019-2030)	0	n/a
Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP) (2014-2018)	4	n/a
Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030)	0	0.5
National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) (2014-2018, 2019-2023)	0	0.5
The Cambodia Industrial Development Policy (IDP) (2015-2025)	0	0.5

Regarding the existing green industry policies that were reviewed in-depth, specific recommendations are given for each in terms of improving their inclusion of gender equality considerations and gender-responsive implementation.

<sup>27</sup> The second assessment in the feminist critical policy analysis assesses the quality of the policy’s conclusions in terms of specific targets/commitments/indicators and/or “next steps” regarding gender planning. This is to ensure accountability in terms of gender targets/plans.

<sup>28</sup> Assessment II Keys: 0= no mention of gender in the conclusion; 1= irrelevant/tokenistic conclusion; 2= has some sex but not gender conclusions; 3= has some gender conclusions but basic or unhelpful; 4= highly relevant gender aware conclusion.

<sup>29</sup> Assessment III Keys: 1=The policy is fully implemented; 0.5= The policy is partially implemented 0= The policy is not implemented.



**Table 3: Recommendations for improvement of existing green industry policies reviewed**

Existing national laws, policies and strategies assessed	Recommendations for improvement		
	In content	Conclusions	In implementation
National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013-2030)	This policy should be gender mainstreamed. Gender should be included not just in five strategies but in all the strategies. It should also consider how the policy aims to create enabling environments for gender equality and women’s empowerment in green industry (both as workers and entrepreneurs).	The conclusion does not include any gender strategies. <b>As the policy is at a midway point, a mid-term evaluation will help to understand the progress of the policy implementation and results.</b>	The policy has a good implementation plan, but no documents are available online regarding its proposed internal reviews. Therefore, it is difficult to tell the extent to which the policy has been implemented.
Strategic Development Plan for Cambodian Agro-industries (2019-2030)	The definition of the agro-industry is very broad and cuts across functions, responsibilities (but does not mention “gender”) and jurisdictions of many ministries and public agencies in Cambodia. This policy does not include reference to women’s empowerment, economic or otherwise.	The policy has a long way to go towards being gender-responsive. It can create a gender specific M&E framework and collect a baseline sex-disaggregated data and plan for an end line evaluation. <b>A gender specific actionable plan will ensure that the policy is gender sensitive.</b>	Has a good implementation and divide in 3 phases and each phase has 4 years so this plan could be evaluated by phase.
The Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries (2010-2019)	The framework mentions “gender” but does not address gender equality, gender stereotypes nor include sex-disaggregated data.	Policy should demonstrate how it would aim for job opportunities for more vulnerable groups, such as women, disabled, youth, and other vulnerable groups. <b>This policy could have been framed taking into consideration women’s need and interest in fisheries and how they could be empowered economically.</b>	It has a good implementation plan, but no documents are available online regarding its proposed internal reviews. Therefore, it is difficult to tell the extent to which the policy has been implemented.
Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy (CTIS) (2019-2023)	This policy should include women’s empowerment and women’s economic empowerment, ways to overcome gender norms and social traditions that impair women’s involvement in the green industry, to increase women’s leadership roles in green industries and address the specific needs and interests of women entrepreneurs/ women working in green industries in a better way.	It can create a gender specific M&E framework and collect sex-disaggregated data. <b>A gender specific actionable plan will ensure that the policy is gender sensitive.</b>	It runs 2019-2023 is difficult to tell yet if it has been implemented.
National Technical Vocational Education and Training Policy (TVET) (2017-2025)	The policy should address gender and gender equality in a concrete way by considering gender differences in access to and outcomes of education. A framework to address the needs and interests of women entrepreneurs/ women working in green industries and overcome gender norms and social traditions that impair women’s involvement in the green industry will be helpful.	<b>A mid-term evaluation will help track the progress and make improvements based on lessons learned.</b>	The National Training Board of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training acts as secretariat, tasked with coordinating implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the policy. However, at present there is no evidence of this.
NDC Roadmap and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (2019-2030)	There is limited consideration of gender and there is further room to gender mainstream the policy.	This policy needs to include women in its strategy by using data to understand their situation and what needs to change to provide an equal opportunity for women’s leadership and participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as decrease the differentiated impacts faced by women due to this climate crisis.	Since the policy timeline is 2019-2030, this is the <b>opportune time for revising the policy and making it gender responsive.</b>

Existing national laws, policies and strategies assessed	Recommendations for improvement		
	In content	Conclusions	In implementation
Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP) (2014-2018)	The policy is gender mainstreamed throughout. However, a framework to address the needs, experiences and interests of women entrepreneurs/ women working in green industries and overcome gender and norms and stereotypes that impair women's full and equal participation in the green industry will be helpful.	<b>Policy should elaborate how it would aim for job opportunities for more vulnerable groups, such as women, disabled, youths.</b>	The policy includes action plan, monitoring and evaluation framework, management, and financing mechanism. However, the extent of implementation of GCCAP is not documented.
Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030)	In content: The policy is gender mainstreamed throughout. However, a framework to address the needs and interests of women entrepreneurs/ women working in green industries and overcome gender and social norms and stereotypes that impair women's full and equal participation in the industry will be helpful.	Reasonable attempt at gender inclusivity, but <b>needs to go more in depth to tackle gender norms etc.</b>	The process underpinning Cambodia's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) began in late 2018, led by the Ministry of Planning. The VNR also reviews progress, and to date this has been promising, with a majority of CSDG targets rated as "ahead" or "on track". This is especially true of the six prioritized goals (Education, Decent Work and Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Climate Action, Peace and Institutions, and SDG Partnerships). Moreover, each of these six goals figure within the RGC's strategic planning priorities, as set out in the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV (RS IV) and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023. However, RGC recognizes that it is early in the implementation process, that sustained efforts are needed, and has set out concrete delivery proposals on management oversight, monitoring and evaluation, and data and resourcing.
National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) (2014-2018, 2019-2023)	The policy is gender mainstreamed throughout. However, a framework to address the needs, experiences, and interests of women entrepreneurs/ women working in green industries and overcome gender and social norms and stereotypes that impair women's full and equal participation in the green industry will be helpful.	Current gender inclusivity in the policy should be deepened by providing specific provisions for how harmful gender norms and stereotypes will be addressed.	In the mandate of the National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018, Cambodia has experienced significant developments not only in political and security but also in economic and social aspects. It is too early to evaluate the level of implementation of 2019-2023.
The Cambodia Industrial Development Policy (IDP) (2015-2025)	There is no consideration of gender at all.	<b>Inclusion of the promotion of gender equality and women's participation in its strategy after the collection of sex-disaggregated data to understand of women in the sector to do an evidence-based needs assessment and ensure women's equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from Industrial Development will be helpful.</b> A mid-term evaluation will help track the progress and make improvements based on lessons learned.	Since the policy timeline is 2015-2025, this is the opportune time for revising the policy and making it gender responsive



**Key takeaway: Amongst the policies reviewed, there is currently a lack of focus on women's empowerment in green industry.**

## Key results phases 3 and 4: qualitative and quantitative data

### *Women entrepreneurs in green industry*

The women entrepreneurs interviewed reported that the main barriers to starting a green business are:

- The high costs associated with business start-up;
- Unavailability or lack of access to technology;
- Lack of information and resources on how to start a business;
- There is no clear-cut definition of “green industry” (what makes a business green and what does not) in Cambodia, as in most countries;
- Due to lower production costs, products manufactured by “conventional industries” are often less expensive than those produced by green industries, putting green industry products at a disadvantage; and
- Lack of incentives for businesses operating in green industries.

Green entrepreneurs<sup>30</sup> narratives on why they started their businesses captured several important themes. Green entrepreneurs were following their passions, maximising their skill sets outside of traditional corporate environments, and creating opportunities that are aligned with their diverse roles as caregivers/ to accommodate for their unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities.

## Gendered division of labour in green industry among professionals

The gendered division of labour was described in FGDs with professionals working in green industry as follows:

1. Men are less likely to be involved in time consuming, labour-intensive tasks, often low-paid precarious work that women tend to perform. For example, packaging of products;
2. Men are more likely to work in finance and marketing, jobs that tend to be regular and higher paid;
3. Even though there are larger numbers of women in green business, men are more likely to be in decision-making and leadership roles (e.g. in the garment factories, most often women are the workers and men are the owners); and
4. Women in managerial positions find it difficult to talk to male colleagues because of gendered social norms. The incompatibility between behaviours considered more feminine, such as empathy and kindness, and behaviours associated with leaders, such as self-confidence and assertiveness, can lead to a distortion of expectations of a female leader. The mindset is that women should remain feminine and at the same time present behaviours attributed to traditional leadership, a perspective that may be the cause of prejudice in the workplace.

## Barriers faced by women entrepreneurs/professionals in green industry

*“What are the key country specific needs, specific drivers and constraints to women accessing and benefiting equally from the advancement of green industry as industry professionals and as entrepreneurs?”*

The primary data collected revealed pervasive barriers to women's economic empowerment as entrepreneurs and professionals in green industry, including the following:

- **Access to markets, information, technology, and knowledge:** women's use of business networks, although expanding, is relatively underexplored; a lack of access to markets, information and to opportunities for developing business skills in green industry is a particular problem for women. The extension workers are generally men, and this holds women back from attending the extension programmes due to social norms. Many women lack the information on tax, regulations, existing green policies, and programmes for women to start businesses in green industry required to set up their business;
- **Lack of access to finance:** women generally do not have access to productive resources such as land that can be used as collateral.

<sup>30</sup> Women entrepreneurs in green industry (industry that promotes industrial production without expense to the environment or adverse impact on human health). Green industry promotes sustainable patterns of production and consumption i.e. patterns that are resource and energy-efficient, low-carbon and low waste, non-polluting and safe. Green industry is also related to sustainable industrialisation, an objective of Agenda 2030 as embodied in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9.

This makes it difficult for them to obtain money, loans, or lines of credit to start their “green” business from formal institutions;

- **Lack of role model and mentors:** women expect to learn and follow those women entrepreneurs in the green industry who are successful. They would like to learn from their mistakes and know their struggle to be successful. They would also like to have mentors from whom they can get guidance on starting and surviving in green industry. At present the entrepreneurs think this is missing;
- **Business formalisation:** the process to formalise business (registration) is too long and complicated. This problem is both for men and women though with women’s tendency to be less educated is an added barrier for women;
- **Workplace discrimination:** women lack decision-making authority and are rarely in managerial positions due to persistent workplace discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion practices, unequal pay for equal work, etc;
- **Unpaid care and domestic work:** women tend to disproportionately shoulder the responsibility of unpaid care and domestic work which often limits women’s full and equal participation in the labour market and livelihoods activities. With a lack of childcare support and services and this triple burden, the economic outcomes for women are unequal. Furthermore, women reported finding it difficult to attend day long meetings due to their lion’s share of the unpaid care and domestic work and as such have suffered in the workplace;
- **Social norms and stereotypes:** women find it difficult to start businesses due to the pressure of social and gender constructs built on stereotypes. Restrictive gendered roles and responsibilities leave women with a higher share of unpaid care and domestic limiting their leisure time compared to men. As a result, women have less time at their disposal to network and engage in activities outside the home or late into the evening. Along the same lines, women have a disproportionately higher responsibility for unpaid care responsibilities, resulting in less time available for paid work than men.

**Table 4:** Summary table of reported barriers to women’s economic empowerment in green industry

Barriers to advancement	Barriers to transformation
Lack of awareness about policies and programmes designed to benefit women and/or encourage participation in green industry: 83% unaware of any policies or programmes encouraging women to start businesses in green industry.	Harmful social norms that discourage women from starting their own business: 54% of respondents considered they would be judged negatively by their family and 71% reported to be negatively judged by their community when starting their businesses.
Lack of access to technology necessary to start green businesses or upscale existing businesses: 42% reported lack of access to technology as a barrier to greening their businesses.	Unpaid care and domestic works: 62% of entrepreneurs surveyed worry often or always about work-life balance and everyone reported worrying about child-care arrangements.
Women entrepreneurs reported having difficulty in finding and hiring skilled workers: 60% reported it would be difficult or very difficult to find women workers with relevant skills.	Intersectional inequalities: Rurality, age and gender intersect to create different and multi-faceted vulnerabilities.
Women’s lack of access to mentoring which impacts networks for investment funding and job opportunities: Customised assistance (mentorship) is an obstacle.	Sense of low self-efficacy: Women reported that when lacking confidence, it can be a barrier.
Women lack access to necessary capital, collateral and credit resources: Women struggled to provide collateral for loans, due to not owning land or property.	Barriers for businesses from becoming greener: Lack of awareness on how to make changes (58%), lack of land or property rights (50%), technology not available (42%), affordability (25%) as main barriers to businesses becoming greener.
Women lack access to markets to sell their products: 85% of entrepreneurs reported lack of access to markets to sell their products as being a key barrier.	Lack of clarity on “green industry” definition: Lack of statistics and lack of clarity about what green industry entails.
Women face other value chain challenges and “hidden costs” of doing business: Obtaining a license to run business (62%), dealing with law enforcement officials (62%), obtaining necessary technical training (62%), accessing basic supplies for business to operate (54%), sexual harassment (31%) and paying kickbacks (23%) were also listed by green entrepreneurs.	Right to information: Lack of information on laws and tax regulations, and how to formalise the business.

**Key takeaway (barriers):** It is clear from the research that access to financial resources is a big challenge for green entrepreneurs. Women are stretched between the motivation to start a business and earn money to be economically independent and the lack of access to finance.



## Opportunities for women entrepreneurs and professionals in green industry

*“What are the key country specific opportunities, specific drivers to women accessing and benefitting equally from the advancement of green industry as industry professionals and as entrepreneurs?”*

Despite the constraints, the key informants voiced that things are changing, and the situation is comparatively better today than what it was previously (10 years ago). For example, 62% of entrepreneurs reported being “really or somewhat excited” that their business will grow. Indicators that there is high potential for gender equal social transformation in green industry (from the online survey) are:

1. 77% of green businesses provide equal pay for equal work for women and men;
2. 70% of green entrepreneurs reported “supportive/very supportive” partners in pursuing entrepreneurial business;
3. 54% of green entrepreneurs reported receiving “a lot of support” from their families to start businesses;
4. 54% of green entrepreneurs reported that they don’t think men have more opportunities to obtain credit for their business; and
5. 58% of entrepreneurs reported that they are aware of policies/programmes encouraging women to start businesses (SHE Investments was mentioned by all).

In the online survey green entrepreneurs were asked, “How should your country increase women’s leadership and participation as entrepreneurs in the green industry? Please rank each of the below government initiatives from 1 to 5, where 1 is the most important and 5 is the least important.” The respondents ranked change inequitable laws,<sup>31</sup> as their top strategy followed by invest in women’s development schemes, increase access to finance for women, affirmative action/positive discrimination and increasing access to education.

### Opportunities for women entrepreneurs reported are:

- There are organisations like SHE investments, Impact Hub, EnergyLab, Pact Cambodia, Grow Asia, Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA), Cambodia Women Business Federation (CWBF), Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (YEAC), UN agencies and others working for women entrepreneurs and providing them information, training, seed money for start-ups, online learning platform, mentorship;<sup>32</sup>
- Different organisations are taking initiatives to train women entrepreneurs and share the information, teach women how to use smart phones for online banking and access information via Facebook etc. Due to technological advancement, women can attend webinars (E-learning) at home which is an emerging tool for capacity development. Neary Ngeay (easy easy) is Cambodia’s first Business Information and eLearning Platform by SHE Investments; providing all of the information and access to reliable services anyone in Cambodia needs to register a business (available in both English and Khmer language); and
- Growing opportunities for younger generations of women as they are better educated and have access to technology and information.

**Key takeaway (opportunities): SHE investments, Impact Hub, EnergyLab, Pact Cambodia, Grow Asia, Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA), Cambodia Women Business Federation (CWBF), Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (YEAC), UN agencies and others could act as a catalyst. The project can collaborate with these organisations and build capacities of women entrepreneurs and channel seed grants for start-ups to women in green industry.**

<sup>31</sup> Unequal or unfair.

<sup>32</sup> Organizations should consider adopted the seven Women’s Empowerment Principles, including education and training for career advancement. For more information, see <https://www.weeps.org/about>.

## Recommendations for closing gender and green industry gaps

### “How should countries formulate new, or reformulate existing, gender responsive green industrial policies?”

Many interviewees stated that existing policy was supposed to be tackling these issues, but that there was a lack of implementation. To improve the inclusion of gender and implementation of policies, these more covert forms of discrimination must be addressed.

*Table 5: Key gaps and suggested solutions to close the gaps*

Key gaps between policy and implementation on the ground	Closing gaps between policy and implementation on the ground
<p>Lack of clarity on green industry business and gender: green industry has not been defined; no specific programme support to promote environmentally friendly business; lack of understanding about how green concept fit in existing industry policy (e.g. SME policy); lack of public awareness about green industry; no evidence to show how green growth will impact women entrepreneurs; green industry, gender mainstreaming, women’s economic empowerment are new concepts to most people.</p> <p>A lack of policy with regards to women’s empowerment in the green industry.</p>	<p>Better understanding of the green industry business is needed e.g. incentives available for women to enter green business; talking about “green”, the focus should be primarily on behaviour change like using less plastics, waste management etc.</p> <p>Public awareness raising about green industry is needed through training/campaign/TVET/information sharing. Integrate concepts of green industry in public school curriculum – start at primary level.</p> <p>Projects should primarily focus on small scale entrepreneurs led by women considering as a practical entry point to introduce the concept of “green industry”.</p>
<p>Gap in implementation: policies are there on paper, but the implementation is limited.</p>	<p>As articulated by the policy makers rather than having new policies, existing policies should be implemented well and linking or building on existing ministries’ relevant programmes that could leverage integration of gender and green industry.</p> <p>Capacity building of the local government institutions who are responsible to execute the “green” laws.</p> <p>Promote successful women entrepreneurs in green industry to be the ambassadors to share their experience to create snowball effects.</p> <p>There is a need to identify barriers and challenges that women entrepreneurs face at all levels. The women with small scale business may have different barriers than the women having large scale business. Even if the problems remain the same, the level of severity may vary e.g. the former may have challenges to access finance for expanding business while the latter may have decision making challenges because of expanded business. Similarly, the professionals working in the green industry may have some specific challenges that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Ease the process of business registration (irrespective of big/small scale business OR man/woman).</p> <p>Involvement of men in gender mainstreaming.</p>
<p>Lack of monitoring system: the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) and all other associated ministries do not have any monitoring mechanism to see whether the policies are really benefitting the entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>There is a need of nationally representative data and research to show how green growth will impact women entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure gender representativeness not just in design and methodology, but also how structural changes are impacted.</p>
<p>Budget constraints: government has budget constraints in full implementation of the policies. Moreover, there is lack of commitments and support from male senior leaders regarding the same.</p>	<p>Policies can be divided into short-term and long-term goals and execution can be done step-by-step depending on the availability of the funding.</p>



Table 6: General recommendations for proposing new gender-responsive green industry policies

General recommendations for proposing new gender-responsive green industry policies	
<b>Contents/topics to be covered in policy</b>	
- Include specific gender targets and indicators and collect sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics for monitoring and evaluation.	
- Eliminate gendered language (e.g. Chairman to Chair).	
- Generate S.M.A.R.T. indicators (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely) using robust sex-disaggregated data.	
<b>Process</b>	
- Integrate women’s agency and meaningful and equal participation and decision-making at all levels at home, in the economy and in government.	
- Address the needs of women using an intersectional perspective that takes into consideration the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, rurality, race, migration status, and poverty albeit others.	
- Support education and awareness (e.g. knowledge and skills transfer, mentorship programmes, partnerships and networking platforms).	
- Create and ensure access to financial products, services and information including through gender-responsive budgeting and gender-responsive procurement from women in green industry.	
- Ensure the engagement of women at every stage of the planning and policy process including consultation, monitoring and evaluation.	
- Conduct gender impact assessments and ensure consultation and dialogue with local women’s groups and organised civil society.	
- Diversifying women’s access to and source of start-up capital.	
- Promote women’s equal access to education and vocational studies to provide the technical knowledge in green industry.	
- Identify strategies to root out institutionalised sexism/discrimination, especially in the private sector.	

## Specific recommendations for government, civil society, universities and private sector

**Recommendations for policy makers:** on how to formulate new, or reformulate existing **gender-responsive green industrial policies** and adopt them:

- Policies should be aligned with Article 11 of **CEDAW**, particularly as it relates to quality of opportunity between women and men in the workplace;<sup>33</sup>
- Policy makers should focus on the implementation of existing “green” legislation taking into account the historically unequal power relationships between men and women and the unequal opportunities for women’s participation in and benefits from green industry;
- **A new image of Cambodian women** can be conceived and promoted, based on non-stereotypical and positive role models;
- **The banking sector** should be addressed as well with reforms to lower interest rates, adjusted packages of loans (tailored to the seasonality and riskiness of the economic activity), special insurances to cover unexpected losses (when the price of raw materials goes up for instance) but also to cover illness of (women) entrepreneurs in green industry;
- **Investment in the green industry** to make it more competitive compared with conventional industry. The green industry should be made more attractive as it is currently not very profitable with promotions through adjusted tax policy, exonerations of taxes, subventions, incubation centres for women, accompany and facilitate the procedures to obtain certain certificates etc.;
- **Gender-responsive budgeting** to raise awareness and understanding of gender issues in budgets and policies and to foster the accountability of governments for their gender equality commitments should be prioritised;
- **Gender-responsive procurement from both the public and private sector** to achieve gender equality and empower women. For example, UN Women’s definition of a women-owned business is *a legal entity in any field that is more than 51-per-cent owned, managed and controlled by one or more women*. Classification of women-owned vendors allows for collection of data, but also to target assistance and preferential treatment to women-owned businesses, enabling them to compete for contracts and enter the procure-

33 Full CEDAW document available from the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>.

ment market;<sup>34</sup> and

- Start building new generations of **conscious consumers and a gender sensitive population** as well as future green industry professionals by increasing awareness about green industries in education institutions.

### *Recommendations for civil society:*

- **Women need to be targeted** in a more specific way by programmes related to green industry from the government or NGO's;
- Create **role models** of successful women entrepreneurs who can attract or persuade women/girls wanting to engage as entrepreneurs in the green industry;
- These role models would play a vital role in attracting more women business leaders by **coaching** them at individual level and sharing their experiences at collective level. Hence this would lead to a critical mass of women entrepreneurs active in the green industry, which will have an impact on their effectiveness to formulate their demands towards the government;
- **Exchange and network** more among each other – form a solid physical and/or digital platform of women entrepreneurs in green industry who can formulate its recommendations and exigencies towards the government; and
- Need to **engage more men** to be the “gatekeepers” to gender equality by helping their female family members to access resources that are essential to their economic empowerment or the start-up and growth of their businesses or be the agents of change in challenging established gender norms.

### *Recommendations for private sector stakeholders*

- For **private sector actors** to foster business practices that empower women, the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)<sup>35</sup> can be used as a set of guiding principles to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community;
- The WEP principles include **equal pay for work of equal value**, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance against sexual harassment in the workplace;
- The **private actors with financial possibilities** should show the way and assume their responsibility for trying out new ways of greening their business in ways that are gender-responsive and environmentally sustainable (e.g. the value chain of producing clean energy such as using solar panels or production of food in partnership with the land whereby the farmers seek to minimise negative impacts such as chemical contamination of land and water etc.);
- Private sector stakeholders must work to **create enabling environments** for gender equality and women's economic advancement. This requires shifting structures and systematic discrimination against women. Mentoring and networking programmes for women in green industry are important tools to support women's career advancement and high-level corporate leadership;
- Invest in **exchange visits** with other companies in Cambodia but also abroad to learn from experiences and innovations in the green industry;
- **Ensure equal terms and conditions of work** for men and women in terms of contract, salary and benefits, while addressing the particular needs of breastfeeding and pregnant women; and
- **Invest in training and capacity building** of women workers to ensure equal access to promotions, management, and leadership roles. Dismantling hierarchical ladders is equally suggested where women and men can more easily switch jobs between several (also male-dominated) disciplines and levels. In this way, women are exposed to a broader range of professional experiences which strengthens their ability and competencies to handle jobs that are traditionally viewed as masculine (and the other way around: men doing more feminine jobs).

<sup>34</sup> UN Women (n.d.). Gender-responsive Procurement. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/procurement/gender-responsive-procurement>.

<sup>35</sup> Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment. For more information, see <https://www.weeps.org/about>.

# Conclusion

This study has highlighted the many opportunities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the emerging green industries of Cambodia. However, **there is no clear-cut definition of "green industry" (what makes a business green and what does not) in Cambodia. The sectors/sub sectors identified for the study are sectors/industries with great potential for becoming green. There is not only a poor understanding of the context of women working in these sectors but also the information available regarding green businesses in these sectors is scattered.**

While the survey with women entrepreneurs highlighted that there is high potential for social transformation towards gender equality in green industry, **there is a need for evidence of the impact of green industry on women's entrepreneurship including on women's economic empowerment. At present the synergy between green industry and women entrepreneurship is missing.**

Cambodia has incorporated gender equality in laws, and green industry plans to some extent. **However, the key constraints in the Cambodian context are in implementation.** There needs to be more collaboration between the private and public sectors; so that businesses truly get on board with government targets. **There is a need for a monitoring mechanism to understand the extent to which green industry benefits women entrepreneurs.** Public awareness raising campaigns through training/campaign/TVET/information sharing should be emphasised. While talking about green industry, the focus should **be primarily on behaviour change** like lesser use of plastics and waste management, etc. One of the entry points for the Cambodian Government could be to encourage small-scale women entrepreneurs to go "green", ease the business registration process, and develop business cases and role models to create the ripple effects.

Given the current COVID-19 crisis, gender mainstreaming has to be prioritised in all sectors not only to help women entrepreneurs start green businesses but also to sustain their business and ensure speedy recovery of the economy as a whole.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For detailed recommendation on post COVID recovery, please refer to UNIDO (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on the Private Sector: Firms/Enterprises in Cambodia. Survey Report. UNIDO Cambodia.





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