**Concept Note**

**National Workshop on**

**Enhancing Participation of Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Digital Economy to Accelerate Sustainable Development in Cambodia**

8-9 July

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

# **Background**

Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) play a major role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. In his message to the United Nations MSME Day on 27 June 2024, the Secretary-General urged countries to commit and support MSMEs in “*making the Sustainable Development Goals a reality*”. In Cambodia, MSMEs can be considered as the backbone of the economy as they account for 99.8 percent of its businesses. [MSMEs provide 58 percent of GDP](https://www.nbc.org.kh/download_files/macro_conference/english/Roles_of_SMEs_in_Cambodian_Economic_Development_and_Their_Challenges.pdf) and 70 percent of total employment of the country[[1]](#footnote-1). Sixty-one [percent of these MSMEs are owned by women](http://www.cweacambodia.org/kh/news-update/230/policy-brief-challenges-of-women-owned-smes-in-getting-bank-loans)[[2]](#footnote-2). Many MSMEs, especially those owned and run by women and youth, fall under the informal economy category which made them particularly vulnerable to economic shocks and market uncertainties as they lack capacities for recovery from such crises. Despite their noted contributions to SDGs in Cambodia, MSMEs, especially women and youth-owned enterprises, have been hit the hardest by the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflations and interrupted supply chains.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Cambodia’s economy faced a loss in economic growth of minus 3.1% in 2020, predominantly impacting its garment, tourism and construction sectors, where MSMEs concentrate[[3]](#footnote-3). These shocks led to spillover impacts in the context of rising inflation and interrupted supply chains. The confluence of changes has drastically changed business landscape for many MSMEs relying solely on physical markets. With quarantine imposed, customer traffic shifted to digital online platforms where market opportunities emerged, frequently, with high values. Likewise, inflationary pressures, combined with supply chain interruptions, have necessitated the need for digital transformation among MSMEs to enhance resilience, improve market access, and boost operational efficiency. In this context, over the past years, MSME digitization in Cambodia has gained increased attention as one of the solutions that mitigate challenges by improving efficiency, reducing costs, and enhancing supply chain transparency. Digital tools, such as e-commerce, digital marketing and online lending and digital finance, can help businesses identify and access new market opportunities, at the same time aid with tracking inventory and optimizing efficiency. The Government of Cambodia has recognized the importance of MSME digitization and has implemented several initiatives in this regard such as the "Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021–2035" which outlines strategies to enhance digital infrastructure, promote e-commerce, and foster digital literacy among businesses, including MSMEs. Additionally, partnerships with financial institutions have been supported to facilitate access to digital payment systems and financial services, enabling MSMEs to expand access to market in both online and offline settings.

The workshop aims to improve technical capacities of policymakers and MSME supporting officers from both national and sub-national levels in general. Additionally, it aims to elevate capacities of MSME entrepreneurs by helping them become better competitors in both online and offline markets. In this project, providing support to women and youth owned enterprises, as well as MSMEs from rural communities is a top priority. The workshop will focus on capitalizing the skills trainees gained from the previous workshop on “[Enhancing business digitization and e-commerce skills among women and youth-owned MSMEs in Cambodia](https://sdgs.un.org/events/capacity-building-workshop-enhancing-business-digitization-and-e-commerce-skills-among-women#background)” which was jointly organized by the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation (MISTI) and the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSDG/DESA), in November 2022. Moreover, the workshop, as a part of DSDG/DESA’s capacity building efforts in Cambodia, will be synergized with peer MSME supporting projects led by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Cambodia.

# **Overall objectives**

The national capacity building workshop aims to address the following overall objectives:

1. Build capacities of national and sub-national policymakers and MSME supporting officers tasked with elevating MSME digitization and resilience
2. Build and strengthen entrepreneurship skills among MSME entrepreneurs, especially women and youth entrepreneurs, in areas of applying digital technologies to access high-value market opportunities and improve operational efficiencies with digital tools

# **Workshop purposes**

The workshop is expected to reach the following purposes by strengthening capacities of workshop participants, including both policymakers and MSME entrepreneurs:

* Equipped with the latest know-how and skills to support women and youth MSME entrepreneurs to grow their businesses with digitization skills to expand access to financing and marketing resources
* Have strengthened entrepreneurship capacities necessary to expand MSMEs’ access to affordable finance
* To impart know-how on leveraging digitization skills that will expand MSME access to financial and marketing resources; at the end of the workshop, participants will be able to utilize online platforms to navigate financing and marketing opportunities
* To cultivate an entrepreneurial culture that will facilitate the development of sustainable business models and self-employment

**Specific Outputs**

At the end of the workshop, it is anticipated that the participants will:

1. Have strengthened capacities, knowledge and skills necessary to elevate MSME digitization
2. Equipped with the latest know-how and skills to support women and youth MSME entrepreneurs to strengthen their competitiveness in both online and offline settings
3. The trainees will be able to apply e-commerce and utilize digital platforms to navigate opportunities expanding MSME access to marketing and financing opportunities
4. Cultivate an entrepreneurial culture that will facilitate the development of sustainable business models and self-employment
5. At least 70 per cent of participants would have indicated that they will apply and share knowledge gathered in their communities to elevate MSME digitization in the long-term

# **Methodology**

This national capacity-building workshop is designed to provide MSMEs and policy-level stakeholders with hands-on digital skills, financial literacy, and modern marketing techniques that can be directly applied to business operations. Delivered by the combined expertise from YEAC digital expert pool, the program takes a highly practical, localized, and inclusive approach.

Digital transformation can be daunting, especially for MSMEs in rural provinces, youth entrepreneurs, and women-led enterprises. Many know they need to adapt—but don’t know how or where to begin. This workshop aims to bridge that gap. With relatable examples, Khmer-language training, and small-group coaching, participants will gain the skills and confidence to take their first steps—or next steps—into the digital economy.

The workshop will take place over two days in Phnom Penh, with interactive sessions designed to reflect real business challenges. All content will be informed by a pre-workshop demand assessment and tailored accordingly. Emphasis will be placed on practicality, peer learning, and local relevance, using stories, tools, and trends from within Cambodia.

# **Workshop content and expected delivery:**

Workshop will include the following modules:

* Digital Marketing Fundamentals (models, good practices, local risks)
* Email & Social Media Marketing (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube)
* Affiliate Marketing and Influencer Partnerships
* Online Finance and Fraud Awareness
* SEO & Product Visibility on Google

Group exercises will include email campaign drafting, product promotion planning, and keyword strategy sessions. Participants will present final learning summaries and action plans at the close.

**Workshop Modules:**

**Day 1 Modules:**

* Digital Marketing Overview
* Email Marketing Campaigns
* Social Media for MSMEs
* Group Practices and Presentations

**Day 2 Modules:**

* Influencer & Affiliate Marketing
* Online Financial Tools and Risk Navigation
* SEO for Business Growth
* Group Planning & Certificate Presentation

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# **Detailed workshop programme**

The following are the detailed of two-day workshop programmes and schedules:

| **Time** | **Topics** | **Methodology** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day One: Building the Foundations of Digital Visibility on July 8, 2025** | | |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | **Welcome and Opening Remarks**   * Welcome Remark by **Mr. Amson Sibanda**, Chief National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (NSCBB, DSDG/DESA) * Welcome Remarks by **Mr. Joseph Scheuer**, UN Resident Coordinator in Cambodia (TBC) * Opening Remark by **H.E. Dr. HENG Sokkung**, Secretary of State of Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation | The opening session will officially kick off workshop, featuring welcoming addresses from key leaders and partners. It will set the stage for the workshop and encourage full participation from all trainees.  Format:   * Physical Address on Stage |
| 9:30-9:45 | **Group photo**/Coffee break | Coffee Break and Networking. It also for space if the VIP returns back to their office |
| 9:45 -11:00 | **Digital Marketing Overview**  **Key Content:**   * What is digital marketing? Why is it important now? * The shift from physical promotion to online visibility * Core components: Content, platforms, tools, and strategy * Examples of successful local MSME digital marketing efforts | **Objective:** Introduce MSMEs to the concept of digital marketing in a way that’s simple, relatable, and relevant to Cambodian businesses.  Format:   * Storytelling, * Real-world videos, * Interactive discussion |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | **Email Marketing Campaigns**  **Key Content:**   * How to collect emails ethically and effectively * Tools: Mailchimp, Google Forms * Structure of a good email: Subject line, visual, CTA * Use cases: Promotions, customer retention, announcements | **Objective:** Help participants understand how to build an email list and send effective messages that lead to customer action.  Format:   * Presentation and * **Practice:** Participants will write and mock-send a campaign email |
| 12:00-13:00 | **Lunch Break** | **Suggested lunch break at 12PM** |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | ****Group Practice & Presentations**** **Key Content:**   * Draft a basic digital campaign using email and social media * Present their ideas to the room for peer feedback * Receive coaching on visual content and messaging | **Purpose:** Apply knowledge in a supportive, collaborative way  Format:   * Group Work * Presentation on their group work * Feedbacking session |
| 14:00-15:00 | ****Digital Marketing on Social Media for MSMEs**** **Key Content:**   * Platform overview: What’s best for what business? * Visual content: Photography tips using a smartphone * Writing captions that sell: Khmer-first storytelling * Boosting basics: Setting a small ad budget | **Objective:** Equip MSMEs with practical know-how to use Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube effectively.  **Format:**   * Presentation and * **Practice:** Participants create a post (image + caption) for their product |
| 15:00 – 15:15 | **Tea Break** | Coffee Break and Networking. |
| 15:15 – 17:00 | ****Group Practice & Presentations****  * Draft a basic digital campaign using email and social media * Present their ideas to the room for peer feedback * Receive coaching on visual content and messaging | **Purpose:** Apply knowledge in a supportive, collaborative way  **Format:**   * Small Teamwork * Presentation on their group work * Feedbacking session |
| **End of Day One** | | |
| **Day Two: Driving Growth Through Tools and Optimization on July 9, 2025** | | |
| 8:30 – 9:00 | ****Recap of learnings from day one**** | **Objective:** Revisiting and reviewing key concepts, skills, and reflections from Day One to enhance participants' understanding and stay relevance.  **Format:**   * Reflection and i-breaking activities |
| 9:00 – 10:30 | **Influencer & Affiliate Marketing**  **Key Content:**   * Types of influencers (nano, micro, mid-tier) * How to approach an influencer (Khmer etiquette) * Affiliate marketing platforms in Cambodia * Case study: Small café reaching 10,000 views through local review | **Objective:** Show how local MSMEs can work with small-scale influencers or partners to extend their reach.  **Format:**   * Presentation * Show Case * Short Exercise: Draft a message to invite an influencer |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | **Coffee Break** | Coffee Break and Networking. |
|  | **Online Financial Tools & Risk Navigation**  **Key Content:**   * Types of influencers (nano, micro, mid-tier) * How to approach an influencer (Khmer etiquette) * Affiliate marketing platforms in Cambodia * Case study: Small café reaching 10,000 views through local review | **Objective:** Show how local MSMEs can work with small-scale influencers or partners to extend their reach.  **Format:**   * Presentation * Show Case * **Practice:** Guided role-play on selecting a digital payment tool |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | **Lunch Break** |  |
| 13:00 – 14:200 | **SEO for Business Growth**  **Key Content:**   * What is SEO? How does Google rank your business? * Keywords: How to pick the right ones in Khmer and English * Google Business Profile (GBP) walkthrough * Website tips for visibility—even without a developer | **Objective:** Demystify search engine optimization (SEO) and teach participants how to make their business findable online.  **Format:**   * Short Presentation * Show Case * Exercise **:** Each participant creates a basic SEO keyword plan by leveraging with AI tools |
| 14:20 – 15:10 | **Group practices: leveraging search engine optimization for online product promotion**  **Key content:**   * Identify 5–7 keywords in Khmer and English that customers might use to search for your product. * Write a product title and short description using at least 2 target keywords. * Suggest an SEO-friendly image filename and caption (e.g., *iced-coffee-phnompenh.jpg*). * Draft how the product would appear on a Google Business Profile.   Present how your product can be found on Google in a 2-minute group pitch. | **Objective:** Apply knowledge and learning from **SEO for Business Growth.**  **Format:**   * Group * Share to the big group for feedback |
| 15:10 – 15:25 | **Coffee Break** | Coffee Break and Networking. |
| 15:25 – 17:00 | **Final Group Planning & Certificate Presentation**  Teams summarize:   * What they’ve learned * One action they will take in the next 7 days   Participants receive:   * A digital workbook * Workshop certificate * Invitation to join a private online group for continued learning | **Objective:** Apply knowledge and learning from what participants learnt both day**.**  **Format:**   * Feedback & testimonial * Recap of the event and * Celebration * Next 7-day plan |
| **POST-WORKSHOP: Mentorship and Post-Workshop Support**  Participants will receive mentoring from trainers during the workshop and have access to online follow-up support. A post-workshop peer group will be created to encourage ongoing learning and networking. | | |

1. *Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation., (2018). Policy Brief: Challenges of Women-owned SMEs in Getting Bank Loans. Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation: Cambodia.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *International Finance Corporation., (2019). Exploring the Opportunities for Women-owned SMEs in Cambodia. International Finance Corporation, Washington, DC.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *United Nations Development Programme., (2021). Projected Impacts of COVID-19 on the 2020 Human Development Index in Cambodia and its Neighbors. United Nations Development Programme: Cambodia.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)