

## UN Women ROAP

### Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment through private sector engagement in Asia and the Pacific

#### Annexes – Volume 2

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## Introduction to the Case studies

Volume 2 of the annex has been developed to present two in-depth case studies that feed into the main synthesis report:

- Case Study 1 (Annex 14): Explores effective strategies undertaken as part of the WEA programme for motivating and engaging companies and building an enabling environment for WEE in the private sector through the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) - a set of guiding principles to achieve gender equality within companies; if and how catalytic results were achieved; and what needs to be done to ensure that the principles are fully implemented and sustained.
- Case Study 2 (Annex 15): Explores models and strategies on capacity building undertaken as part of the WEA implementation which primarily engages with the formal private sector (Part 1) and through the Markets for Change programme (M4C) in Fiji (Part 2) which primarily engages with the informal sector; and how they could be built upon, upscaled or replicated in both informal and formal sectors.

### *Operational definitions for formal and informal sector*

Formal enterprises are those that produce goods or services (at least partially) for sale or barter, are registered at relevant national institutions (including social security and tax authorities) and/or maintain a set of accounts required by law. Those enterprises that do not keep formal accounts and are not registered at national level are, by contrast, considered informal (*Source: ILO, Enterprise Formalization: An Introduction, Thematic Brief 1/2021*).

Informal sector enterprises are involved in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and earnings for the individuals involved. The informal sector is a subset of unincorporated enterprises not constituted as separate legal entities independently of their owners (*Source: ILO, 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians 1993*).

Specific components of the two largest Women’s Economic Empowerment programmes in the region– the WeEmpower Asia programme and the Markets for Change project (Fiji) are the focus of the case studies. These case studies are **not evaluations** of a specific programme or a project but look more closely at specific components – WEPs and training efforts under WEA and trainings efforts under M4C – with a view to inform the strategic direction of UN Women’s engagement with the private sector in each of these spaces going forward. Short descriptions of the WEA programme and the M4C projects are presented below and the case study findings feed into the main synthesis report.

### **WEA Overview**

WEA was aligned to one of UN Women’s core objectives under its Strategic Plan 2018-2021 ‘Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy.’ It was implemented in seven countries between 2019-2022: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. More programme details are presented in the synthesis report. The overall objective of the WeEmpower Asia programme was that *more women lead, participate and have access to enhanced business opportunities and leadership within the private sector to advance sustainable and inclusive growth*. The programme aimed to achieve this objective through three complementary outcome areas implemented in the seven selected middle-income countries in Asia as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: WEA Programme results complementarity and interlinkages (Source: UN Women WEA Project Document)



The programme was anchored to four regional priorities that contributed to all outcomes. These were referred to as ‘Big Rocks’: the WEPs Activator, the Entrepreneurship Accelerator, the Industry Disruptor, and the Movement Creator (figure 2). These were rolled out in selected countries to complement their local work for increased systemic impact.

Figure 2: Four Big rocks (Source: WEA Second Annual donor report)



In line with its Theory of Change, WEA’s overall objective was that more women will be able to participate and take up new economic opportunities as a result of a more gender-responsive playing field being created with stronger commitments from the private sector to play an active role to support women’s economic empowerment in partnership with the public sectors and networks of women’s entrepreneurs, women’s groups and associations.

Table 1 summarizes components of the WEA programme that have been analyzed in this case study.

Table 1: Components of WEA Programme analysed in the case study

Annex	Name of initiative	Description
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Annex 14	WEPs	<p>The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. The WEA programme established a comprehensive approach to WEPs – supporting an enabling policy environment, capacity building/knowledge exchange, and incentives through the WEPs Awards process.</p> <p>WEPs Activator: This is a 10-month journey bringing together small groups of companies to advance gender equality through interactive training sessions, peer learning, and individual mentoring. The programme, strongly anchored around the WEPs, and enables private sector companies to assess their current progress and set clear targets and action plans to build a more gender-inclusive business and supply chains. The content of the training included Gender Equality &amp; Business Assessment, Planning &amp; Reporting, Gender Bias Training, Equitable Workplaces, Women &amp; Leadership Sexual Harassment, Training &amp; Professional Development, and Women’s Empowerment in Supply Chains (from sourcing to marketing). The programme was implemented in Malaysia as well as with European companies. Training on WEPs utilizing aligned approaches was also conducted in other countries such as China and Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand.</p>
Annex 15 Part I	Industry Disruptor (ID)	<p>The ID is an incubation and mentorship initiative to provide women owned SMEs in India with the opportunity to learn from top industry players in the fashion supply chain. In partnership with the <i>DO School</i>, WEA created a platform for women entrepreneurs in India to be a part of supply chains of major brands in the textile sector namely H&amp;M, Bon-Prix and Tchibo. The ID intervention identified entrepreneurs in India and Europe, trained two cohorts of 20 women owned SMEs on gender responsive business development strategies, access to finance, markets, as well as technical skills. Networking between the cohorts was set up. The women entrepreneurs were also linked to a global peer community.</p>
	Care Accelerator (CA)	<p>The CA programme was piloted in collaboration with EU-based impact investors ‘Seedstars’ and ‘Bopinc’ to address the unequal share of care work, one of the most persistent barriers to WEE and one of the biggest factors hindering women from accessing paid employment. The programme built the capacity of a small cohort (13) of women-owned care enterprises, to help advance their businesses and identify ways of catalyzing private and public investments. This was accompanied by a policy review of unpaid care work policies in the Asia-Pacific as well as documented good practices from the EU, a landscaping of the overall ecosystem of care business models, and a training and pitching session with investors. A range of gender sensitive business models addressing the issue of limited quality, accessible and affordable care were identified. These were aimed at strengthening the investment case and contributing to a wider evidence base of the viability and potential benefits that care entrepreneurship can generate.</p>
	WeRise	<p>This was launched by UN Women in partnership with Bopinc an independent foundation designing and delivering socially and commercially viable business models together with people at the base-of-the-pyramid, the low-income population. Entrepreneurs, accelerators and investors worked closely together through virtual workshops to design and build the programme. Two gender smart toolkits were designed and published with seven practical tools for ensuring gender-inclusive accelerators and entrepreneurs. The toolkits, co-created by women entrepreneurs for women entrepreneurs cover topics such as access to finance, handling gender bias, ensuring a gender-smart network and steps to becoming a gender equality ambassador. Training using the tool kits was conducted in Indonesia and Philippines with accelerators and women entrepreneurs.</p>

	Regional Framework	The above initiatives together with the WEPs awards contributed to the building up of a regional framework for engaging with the private sector using an ecosystems approach. They served to pilot gender sensitive business models for greater impact to be replicated in as many countries as possible, complemented with country specific initiatives. These initiatives were reinforced with the generation of many knowledge products and tools, to provide evidence and advocacy instruments for all WEA countries and the broader ASEAN/Asia Pacific region, for example, the ILO-UN Women ASEAN WEPs Policy Review and the Landscaping on GRP with ADB in Asia-Pacific).
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## Markets for Change overview

The Markets for Change (M4C) project, which began in 2014, spans the Pacific islands of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (now expanded to Samoa). It is funded by the Government of Australia through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Government of Canada, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and the Government of New Zealand, through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade with a total budget of approximately US \$22.3 million (Phase 1).<sup>1</sup> M4C works in marketplaces to make a positive difference for women market vendors, and by extension their families and communities. M4C addresses the intersectional barriers that women face in advancing and empowering themselves economically. The project works towards the following four outcomes:

1. Accessible, inclusive and representative marketplaces governance within marketplaces in place to enable markets to grow, and strengthen the role and influence of women market vendors
2. Improved social and economic security that enables market vendors to achieve economic, social and financial advancement, specifically with improved gender equality and the advancement of women;
3. Improved governance within market management and local governments that enables decision-making processes to be more gender-responsive, transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of vendors;
4. Improved infrastructure and on-site services that have been developed in a gender responsive manner and significantly improve social and economic security for women market vendors.

UN Women implements outcome areas 1, 3 and 4 and UNDP is the responsible party for Outcome 2.

## Annex 14: Case study 1 - Sustaining and catalyzing uptake of WEPs in the private sector

Engaging companies and building an enabling environment for women’s economic empowerment in the private sector through the adoption of WEPs has been at the forefront of WeEmpowerAsia (WEA) efforts. This case study has been developed with the objective of exploring effective strategies of private sector (companies) engagement through WEPs; if and how catalytic results were achieved; and what needs to be done to ensure that the WEPs is fully implemented and sustained.

### I. Introduction to the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

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<sup>1</sup> Phase two has been approved and will commence in 2022.

Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women in 2010, 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.

Adopting the WEPs is a continuous journey of six main stages. The Journey guides WEPs signatories through:

- (1) gathering internal support for signing the WEPs (Consider),
- (2) collecting information required for a signature (Sign),
- (3) showing the company commitment to gender equality on the company profile page and activating internal stakeholders with the help of industry-specific practices and recommendations (Activate),
- (4) engaging external stakeholders through the value chain (Engage),
- (5) gathering data against the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework (Sustain), and
- (6) reporting on eight key performance indicators on their WEPs company profile pages (Report)

In the Asia and the Pacific region, the WEA programme which was initiated in 2019 was the first time UN Women was able to provide strategic management support to the WEPs. The WEA programme was implemented across seven countries, yet other non-WEA participating countries also led WEPs through their own efforts (including prior to WEA). The WEA project document outlines the following outcomes, indicators and targets related to WEPs (Table 1).

Figure 1: The 7 WEPs principles

- Principle 1  Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Principle 2  Treat all women and men fairly at work– respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
- Principle 3  Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Principle 4  Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Principle 5  Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Principle 6  Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Principle 7  Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

Table 1: WEA outcomes, indicators and targets related to WEPs

Results	Indicators	Baseline	Targets
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> To support the take-up in the implementation of WEPs by private sector companies</p> <p>(UN Women Outcome 3: More private sector companies implement the WEPs, including the gender-sensitive business culture and practices in EU and Asia)</p>	OC2: Number of processes related to non-state level partnership/ agreements which have been influenced	0	8 (7 national and 1 regional processes)
<p><b>Output 3.1</b> Networks of private sector companies and WEPs signatories are strengthened and expanded in EU and Asia to enhance implementation of WEPs and gender-sensitive business practices</p>	<p>OP1: Number of participants in an event</p> <p>OP2: Percentage of participants who report having benefited from an event</p> <p>OP-customised- non-matched: Number of companies signing up to the WEPs in Asia</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>588 (December 2018)</p>	<p>1000</p> <p>70%</p> <p>1000</p>

<p><b>Output 3.2</b> Tools, guidelines, and best practices are generated/ disseminated to assist businesses and companies in developing and implementing corporate policy and practices to engage women at the workplace, market place and community (e.g. equal pay for equal work, gender-responsive procurement, and work of equal value, and workplace policies and programmes on health, safety and wellbeing)</p>	<p>OP6: Number of knowledge products</p> <p>OP-customised- non-matched:</p> <p>Number of companies that have signed the WEPs and/or participated in WEPs related trainings</p> <p>OP3: Number of EU companies that participated in an event</p>	<p>0</p> <p>172 (Signatories in 7 WEA countries in October 2019)</p> <p>0</p>	<p>20</p> <p>550</p> <p>110</p>
<p><b>Output 3.3</b> Awareness and visibility of the WEPs have increased among business leaders in Asia</p>	<p>OP7: Number of communication products developed</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>30</p>

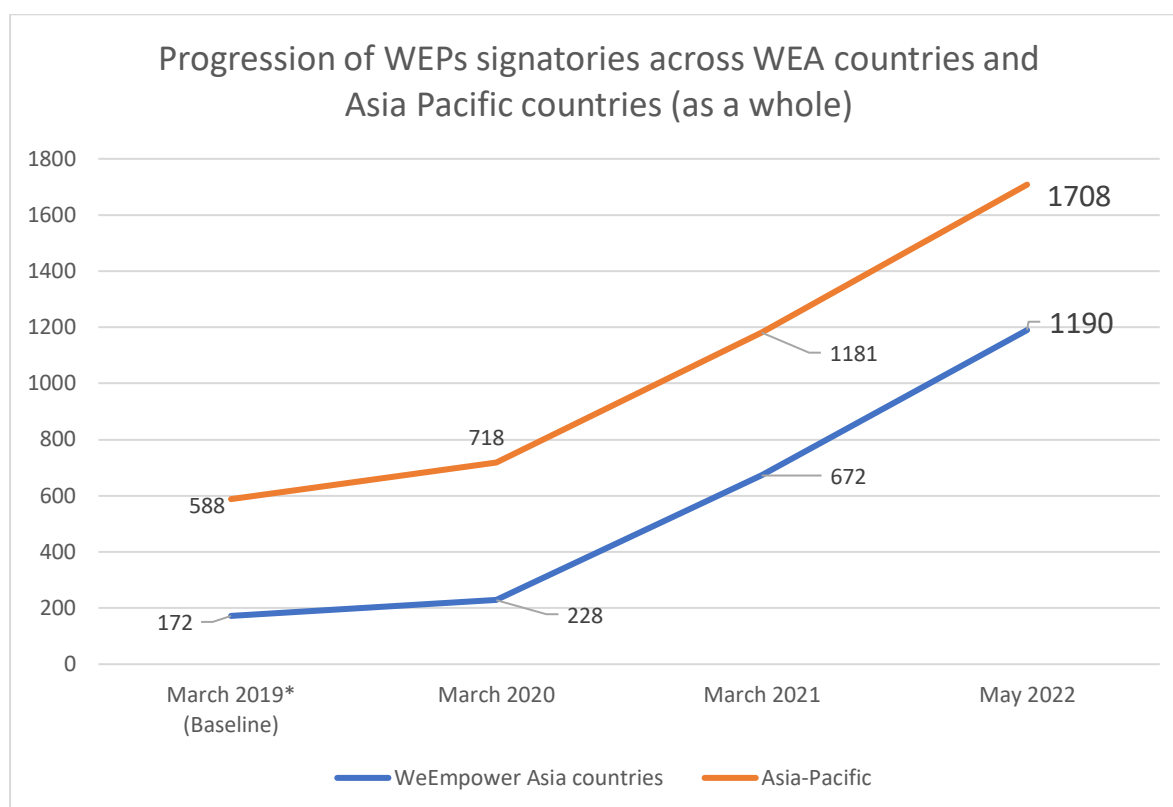
## II. UN Women’s engagement with the private sector through WEPs

WEPs components (awards and other events, knowledge products, capacity building, and social media engagement) has resulted in strong mobilization of companies across the region and furthered the awareness and implementation of women’s economic empowerment measures and tools at both the workplace and the marketplace in many instances.

### 2.1 Significant increase in WEPs Signatories (WEA countries)

This first phase allowed for reach and created considerable momentum with a significant increase in the number of companies in Asia and the Pacific becoming WEPs signatories. The number of WEPs signatories in the seven WEA countries increased from 156 in 2019 to 1231 by June 2022. A WEPs progression graph has been provided in figure 2. There were 416 WEPs signatories from non-WEA countries in March, 2019 before the WEA programme was implemented. In March 2022, this increased to 518. This is an increase of 24% in more than 3 years for non-WEA countries. Compared to this, there was a 591% increase of WEPs signatories in the WEA countries for the same time period.

Figure 2: WEPs progression graph (Source: Based on information shared by the Regional WEA team)



75% of the respondents (N= 114/152) to the “Trends and Future Opportunities to advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia-Pacific” survey conducted by the Regional WEA team answered “yes” when asked if the WEA programme contributed to their decision to join the WEPs community.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Increased commitments to WEPs through the WEPs awards

In 2020, WEA initiated UN Women’s first-ever ‘Asia-Pacific WEPs Awards’ to share best practices, increase recognition, and advance awareness and uptake of the WEPs among the private sector in the region. The roll-out of the WEPs awards initiative at the national and regional levels resulted in advocacy and visibility for WEPs, UN Women and its funding partner, the EU. The WEA programme also rapidly adjusted to the new digital reality and organized WEPs learning events, exchanges and the awards online. WEPs award winning companies were positioned as visible champions on the different criteria (leadership, community engagement, etc.). The WEPs awards enabled the showcasing of good business practices and multistakeholder engagements, as well as promoting more companies to become WEPs signatories. Advocates and champions identified and activated during the WEPs Awards either as awardees, judges or partners continue to take part in key activities, such as International Women’s Day 2021. In India, for example, WEA India was able to create buy-in from the government. The CEO of the Niti Aayog (the policy think tank of the government of India) was one of the jury members of the WEPs awards in India. Further, the India WEPs Awards created a unique category called the “Generation Equality Champions” to recognize the efforts of women led MSMEs in order to have a level playing field with large companies who have the requisite documentation for the awards. The various categories for WEPs awards were relevant and aspirational. To ensure greater inclusivity, in 2021, the regional award categories were expanded to include the category of SME champions. While MSMEs can be awarded in any

<sup>2</sup> The response rate for this survey was low (10.8% or N = 152/1405), therefore the results of this are indicative survey should be used with caution.



category, the SME Champions Awards dedicates three additional Awards to MSMEs who apply in the main categories but do not meet the threshold of internal policies and practices to compete with larger corporates. There is scope to consider adopting additional categories for WEPs awards to ensure that they are inclusive of different types of representatives from marginalized groups.

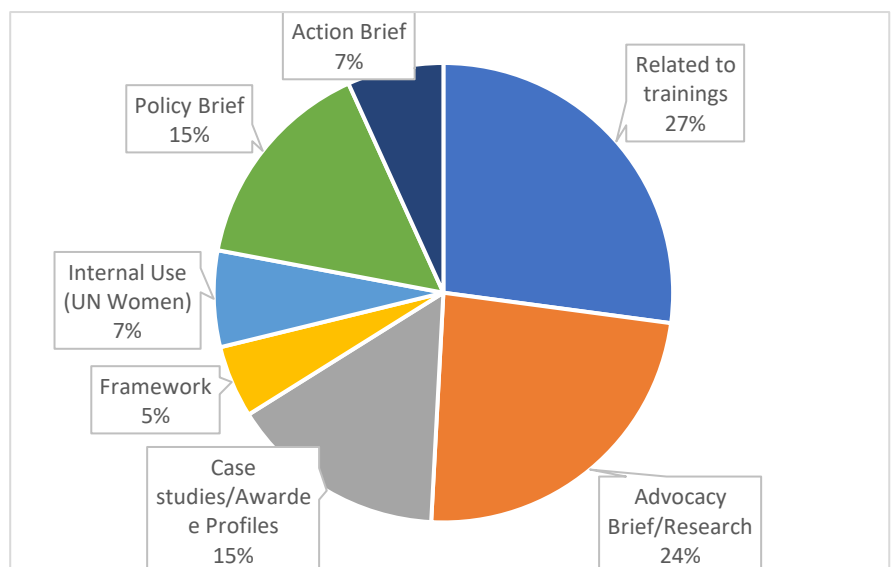
62% of respondents to the UN Women 2020 Asia-Pacific WEPs Awards Regional Awards Ceremony - Post-Event Survey conducted by the regional WEA team answered that the WEPs awards have been "very beneficial" to them and 58% said it has increased their understanding about GEWE greatly.<sup>3</sup> Company interviewees consulted by the evaluation team gave a strong endorsement for the continuation of the WEPs awards under the aegis of UN Women. Awardee companies interviewed expressed appreciation for the awards application process in assisting them to analyse and assess progress on women's economic empowerment and allowing them to showcase their progress on gender equality through the WEPs awards competition. These companies welcomed the usefulness of WEPs to hone their policies further, as well as the opportunity to gain visibility and credit for their efforts through participation in the WEPs awards. Companies consulted expressed the wish for UN Women to facilitate more networking opportunities among WEPs awardees and WEPs signatories for exchange on challenges and lessons learned and furthering understanding of the business case for gender equality and women's economic empowerment and how these can be practically integrated into their business models.

The regional WEPs awards have also been open to participation from non-WEA countries, which is a positive step to create a momentum for WEPs in the region overall. In 2021, while more than 700 applications were received from 20 countries (a sign that the WEPs Awards generated interest beyond the seven WEA implementation countries); of the 117 organizations who had won an award, 113 were from WEA countries while only 4 were from non-WEA countries. There is scope to mobilize uptake on the WEPs in non-WEA countries through greater representation of companies in the awards. Headway has been made in leveraging the WEPs Awards to engage women's business networks, Stock Exchanges, Chambers of Commerce and industry associations (as judges, panelists, guest speakers in the awards ceremonies, learning events etc.). However, other collaborations on the WEPs have been initiated beyond the awards themselves. For example, Stock exchanges in Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore have specific mandates for publicly listed companies pertaining to WEP 1 (Corporate leadership) in Policy Landscaping to Advance a Transparent Implementation of the WEPs in ASEAN. WEA could further strengthen engagement with these and other national business organizations and their local national company members as an opportunity to incentivize commitment and adherence to the WEPs.

### 2.3 Knowledge generated and enabling environment provided by UN Women to support WEPs

Knowledge generated and technical support of UN Women on WEPs has been undertaken with the aim to raise awareness and action on WEE amongst companies. 59 knowledge products were developed under the WEA programme.<sup>4</sup> These have been categorized in figure 3 according to type.

Figure 3: Types of WEA knowledge products



Some of the key knowledge products on the WEPs include:

- WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework
- WEPs Brochure
- WEPs Trainings Series [10 modules + Manual]
- GAT Tool [Translated into 4 languages]
- WEPs COVID-Rapid Assessment Tool

<sup>3</sup> The results of this survey should be used with caution as no response rate was noted for the survey.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the list shared by the regional WEA team on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2022.

Respondents to the *Trends and Future Opportunities to advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector - Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia-Pacific* survey (conducted by the regional WEA team) were asked what inspired them to join the WEPs community. Knowledge exchange and access to new knowledge products and update on latest trends were choices that received the highest number of votes (63 % or N= 95/152 and 57% or N=86/152), apart from visibility and credibility (59% or N= 90/152) (see figure 4). The EU FPI evaluation, which also conducted the *WEPs companies survey* found that access to information and material is easy for 80% (N=89/111) of the respondents; 70% (N=78/111) declare using the WEPs training materials, toolkits, and platform without further support.<sup>5</sup>

**WEA Programme: Outputs on Knowledge products:**

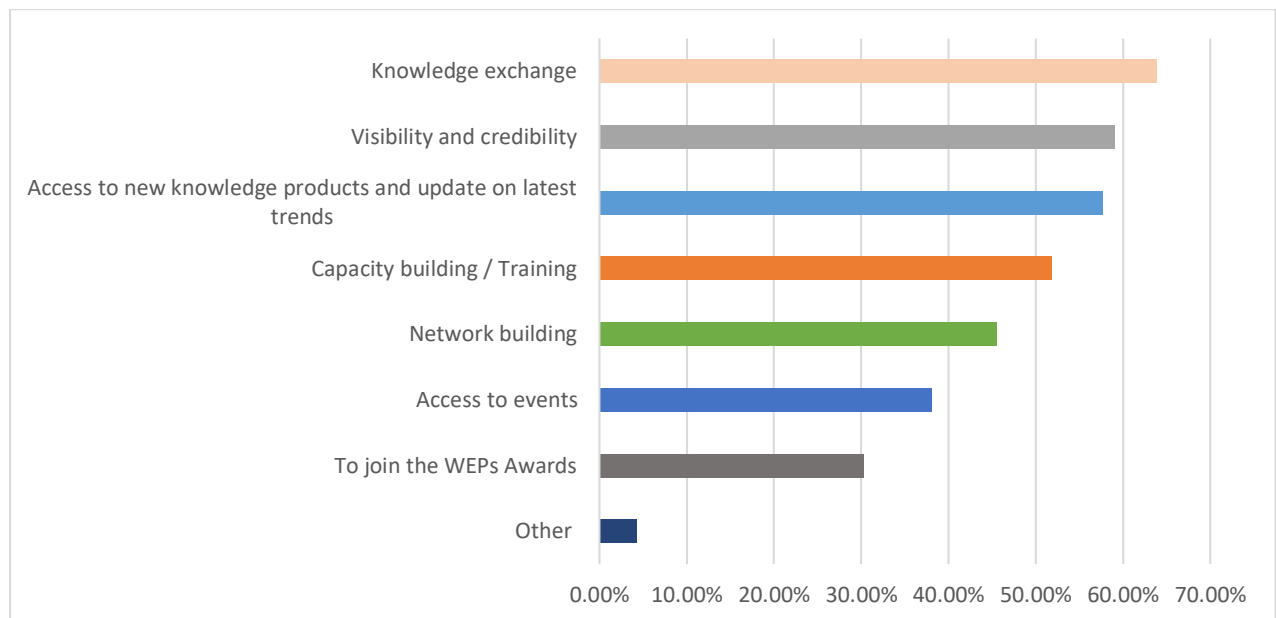
**Output 1.1**

New knowledge and evidence are generated and made available for women’s network, public institutions and the private companies in the region

**Output 3.2**

Tools, guidelines, and best practices are generated/ disseminated to assist businesses and companies

Figure 4: “What inspired you to join the WEPs?” Trends and opportunities survey (Conducted by WEA team)



Feedback from companies consulted revealed the high appreciation for the WEPs framework and the Gap Analysis Tool as a means to review and improve their gender equality measures at the workplace. A number of companies consulted are starting to take steps to strengthen their workplace policies and measures on GE/WEE including the adoption of gender action plans, collection of internal data (e.g. on gender pay parity) and disaggregating employee data by gender, reviewing recruitment and promotion procedures, linking Diversity and Inclusion with sustainability, assigning employees to be responsible for gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and reflecting on how to appoint more women into senior management and on boards. EU companies also reported appreciation for the training offered and the usefulness of the WEPs framework and the Gap Analysis Tool. Even though they are required to abide by strong anti-discrimination EU legislation, company cultures that reflect gender responsive behaviour in the workplace and their supply chains is lacking. This indicates that there is still much to be done concerning gender bias, stereotyping, and attitudinal change, not only in AP but also in the EU. There is limited evidence on the extent to which increased WEPs implementation

<sup>5</sup> The response rate for this survey was low (15.7 % or N = 111/708), therefore the results of this survey are only indicative and should be used with caution.

of EU companies is translating into actions for their supply chain in Asia Pacific, no doubt also influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In support of the enabling environment, through the [Ecosystem Landscaping to advance the Accountability to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#), linkages between public policies and regulations, gender equality actions taken in the private sector, and the elements of the WEPs framework that can be used as essential indicators for ASEAN policymakers to mandate have been made clearer. The WEA programme produced additional research and activities to respond to the urgent emerging needs of women-led businesses and women workers in the COVID-19 context. The top 5 publications in terms of highest number of downloads are primarily the [guidance notes](#) on post COVID-19 response for economic recovery. Policy related knowledge products include the [Review and Analysis of Women's Economic Empowerment Policies and Programmes in India](#) and the [Guidance Document on Business and Human Rights](#) in Philippines. Further, the [Review the implementation of SMEs support legislation and capacity building needs and training services for women-owned SMEs and women](#)

[entrepreneurs in Viet Nam](#) aimed to influence SME related legislation in Viet Nam. UN Women Viet Nam/WEA reported<sup>6</sup> that Decree No. 80/2021/NĐ-CP on supporting policies for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) was developed with more gender responsiveness based on UN Women's technical inputs in partnership with the Agency for Enterprises Development of the Ministry of Planning and Investment. However, there remains a challenge to engage further with public sector policy makers to support WEPs in the longer term and for policy changes supporting private sector engagement on WEE. Efforts such as the ROAP-led initiative to co-design an ASEAN Policy Brief (complemented with a series of 4 aligned country-briefs in Thailand, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Philippines) and the development of a joint UN Women and ASEAN workplan may contribute to future policy changes as well as enhance reporting on women's economic empowerment.

Examples of progress towards normative and policy change in the region influenced by WEA (reported by UN Women)

#### Indonesia

Memorandum of understanding between UN Women and Indonesia on women's economic empowerment signed in February 2022: UN Women and the Public Service Agency (BLU) of Government Investment Center (PIP), a fund coordinator of the Ultra Micro Financing (UMi) programme that is overseen by Indonesia's Ministry of Finance, signed a memorandum of understanding to accelerate the economic empowerment of women ultra-microbusinesses in Indonesia. UMi is a social assistance programme that assists owners of microbusinesses, especially those who are not bankable, to become independent business owners. The memorandum aims to further expand partnership in advocating for women's rights to equal economic opportunities.

#### India

- Review of the implementation status of the Companies Act (appointment of women directors) & POSH Act[LW3]
- Readiness of companies to report on the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting mandated from 2023
- Supporting the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in assessing the Challenges of Implementing Laws aligned to Reporting Law

#### Vietnam

WEA launched 15 e-learning courses on business management and leadership skills for women, with 7700 women receiving the training in Viet Nam. This programme resulted in the creation of a web-based gender-responsive enterprise assessment tool for SMEs in the portal of the government Agency for Enterprise Development.

Regarding communications, the second WEA donor report notes that the #WEPsAwards campaign reached more than 16 million unique social media and Internet users during the reporting period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021), generating more than 10,000 online interactions and engagements, including on the awardees' social media accounts and company websites. Further, a dedicated [website](#) houses all information related to WEPs, eligibility, categories, recordings of information sessions, judges, previous awardees and is where all applications are submitted. Although detailed information about the process and application are available on the website,

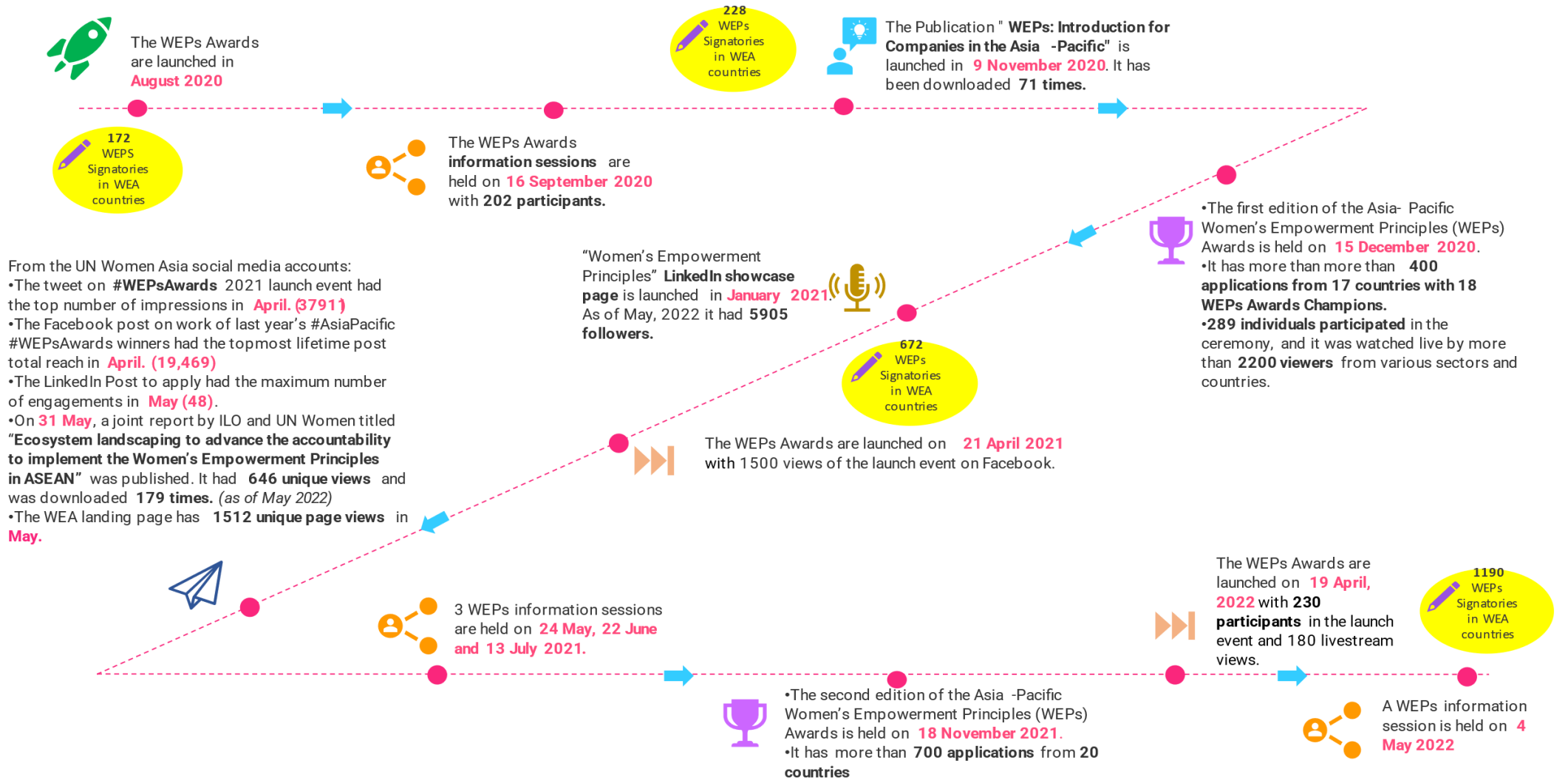
<sup>6</sup> UN Women Viet Nam Annual Report 2021

Live Q&A sessions and information sessions throughout the application period were held to increase the understanding on WEPs and boost applications to the awards. While the WEPs awards application process is available in four languages (Thai, Vietnamese, Bahasa and Chinese), some company interviewees found the application process challenging and expressed language barriers in filling out the application forms. Additional resources to accommodate translations in other languages (especially non-WEA countries) can address this gap and ensure that the application process is friendly to smaller organizations who wish to apply for the awards. Further, one individual consulted expressed that there is scope to make the WEPs awards selection process more collaborative and allow for interaction amongst judges who can share opinions and collectively decide who should get the award. The WEA team notes that this process was consciously kept structured to assure a fair and unbiased process.

The evaluation team has mapped how the WEPs Awards process built momentum to mobilize additional WEPs signatories (figure 5).

Figure5: WEPs momentum building

# The WEPs Awards Journey– Momentum Building



## 2.3 Capacity building on WEPs

Awareness raising on the WEPs and WEPs implementation training was delivered under the WEPs Activator initiative and other modalities. For the WEPs Activator one day information sessions on the WEPs were held in Malaysia<sup>7</sup> with over 250 companies and 60 companies underwent WEPs implementation training which consisted of four days' worth of sessions (one training and one follow up for Leadership and Workplace or marketplace). Modules on leadership were followed by 41 Malaysian companies with follow up discussions with an established leader. For the marketplace module 30 companies participated with follow-up discussions with established leaders on gender inclusive policies at the workplace and gender responsive procurement and marketing. In addition to this, a WEPs Activator approach was also applied with 16 EU based companies who also received one to two days per month training on the WEPs over 10 months provided by UN Women and BSR (who has developed all WEPs capacity building materials with UN Women) to members of the EU based trade organization Amfori. This was the key implementation mechanism for WEA to ensure EU-based corporates with Asia-based suppliers were targeted through WEPs capacity building. Other capacity building activities on the WEPs were also delivered by various providers in China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand where UN Women also has field presence. For example, in China two industry sector organizations for textiles and ICT are providing capacity building, disseminating relevant information and offering technical support around the WEPs and integrating the WEPs in their industrial CSR guidance.

A capacity building evaluation framework was used to gauge the WEPs capacity building models across 8 criteria: diagnosis, design, delivery, synergies and follow-up, enabling environment, individual change, organizational change and impact and sustainability (see annex 15 for more details on the framework and criteria). A breakdown of participants interviewed to inform this assessment has been provided in table 2, this information was also triangulated with desk review and surveys conducted by the WEA team as noted in the synthesis report.

Table 2: KIs related to WEPs capacity building models

Initiative	Interviews (Female)	Interview (Male)	Total	Response rate (interviews/total # of trainees)	Implementing partner interview (Yes/No)
<b>WEPs Capacity building</b>	9	1	10	(Universe not provided)	Yes
<b>WEPs Awardees</b>	12	3	15	1.2% (15/1190)	-

*Additional interviews were also conducted with partners of other capacity building initiatives undertaken by WEA such as with Empretec India Foundation, UNCTAD, and European Business and Technology Center. Stakeholders from Women's Business Council of the Philippines, Philippine stock exchange, Indonesia Business Coalition for Women's Empowerment, Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council and AWEN who were involved in capacity building efforts were also interviewed to enhance evidence for this case study.*

- Diagnosis and design:** For the WEPs activator in Malaysia, the majority of training participants were women with CSR, D&I, HR and sustainability responsibilities in medium to large companies. Much of the approach in developing materials with partners and capacity building activities with companies included offering self-assessment tools, Gender Gap Analysis tools and WEPs Action Planning Tools. Coupled with knowledge products and technical inputs, this helped increase the effectiveness of adult learning. Design of clear sustainability strategies for capacity building beyond the WEA programme implementation period was not explicit; in theory CO's could have integrated plans for follow-up, but in Malaysia this would be difficult given UN Women does not have physical presence. However, a Private Sector Collaboration Agreement signed in mid-2022 with the WEPs Activator local implementing partner, Lead Women has helped sustain the capacity building beyond the end of the WEA project. Monitoring and follow-up to strengthen the capacity of companies to implement the WEPs is not yet foreseen.

<sup>7</sup> The evaluation team notes that UN Women does not have a field presence in Malaysia - it was selected by the donor as one of the priority countries for implementation.

- **Delivery, synergies and follow-up:** WEPs training was localized and adapted in EU, China, India, Malaysia and Thailand. Time and resource constraints limited the strong roll out of a standard approach in all countries. The WEA team noted that this was done consciously to enable countries to develop their own customized approach and training materials. Companies, in some cases, reported that there was insightful sharing on the experiences of invited companies that had already implemented WEPs, as well as discussions among the participating companies. A survey of the EU companies participating in the WEPs activator showed that 55% were motivated to become a WEPs signatory. The WEPs 5: Enterprise and supply-chain development and marketing practices was seen as the principle with the biggest opportunity to drive change in their company. In response to this, WEA is implementing in the last four months of the programme in 2022 the WEPs GRP Capacity Programme and has developed a GRP Assessment tool. On the other hand, it was also reported that some training sessions only presented the principles (albeit expertly) one by one, but with no interactive discussions, presentations by speaker companies or Q and A sessions. This is perhaps a reflection of not all WEPs trainings being designed in the same way and depending on structure and funding some were able to offer more sustained mentorship and peer exchange. EU companies while reporting positive experiences with WEPs training (Amfori), indicated minimal contact with WEA company participants in the AP region as this was not foreseen in the WEA objectives. However, they all have a large supplier base in Asia. Due to COVID-19 many of the companies were also greatly challenged with their own supply chains and subcontracting suppliers to work with supply chains in AP.

**Enabling Environment:** Companies and women’s business organizations reported awareness of knowledge products, announcement of WEPs awards, etc. on social media. Combined with capacity building this led to reported changes in their organizations (gender action plans, company websites with more information on WEPs and GE commitments, collection of sex-disaggregated employee data, plans to develop actions to apply GE policies and awareness to supply chains, etc.), although no evidence of these changes was submitted. While there are WEA surveys of self-reported changes, evidence of these is limited. To support building an evidence base of WEPs implementation best practices, the team is finalizing a set of technical WEPs Case Studies covering the 7 WEA countries. Information on WEPs awards at national and regional levels was shared through the website, social media and networks as well as events and webinars.

The following barriers were identified:

- Implementing WEPs is a step-by-step process for companies to cover all the principles, so takes time, especially for smaller companies.
- Reluctance/hesitancy of companies to get involved with public reporting on WEPs

WEA could implement initial awareness and mobilization of companies but monitoring and supporting implementation remains a challenge. Companies would like:

- More accompaniment on application of WEPs (beyond signatories), especially on monitoring and supply chain/community engagement
- Continuation of WEPs Awards
- More networking and exchange post COVID
- Suggestions of certification (principle by principle or all) to enhance company’s image and recruitment attractiveness.

- **Individual and organizational change:**

- Most of the global companies already have GE/D&I policies and practices. 88.8% (N=135/152) respondents to the *Trends and Future Opportunities to advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector - Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia-Pacific* survey conducted by the regional WEA team said that their company had commitments and/or have taken action for gender equality prior to becoming a WEPs signatory.<sup>8</sup> Companies were able to introduce changes to varying degrees as a result of capacity building on WEPs provided under the WEA programme. For many participating companies it is too early to identify significant results or impacts given the short implementation periods. A number of companies, however, are readying themselves to embark on a deeper dive into the Gap Analysis Tool and WEPs implementation. They are starting, for example, to

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<sup>8</sup> The response rate for this survey was low (10.8% or N = 152/1405), therefore the results of this should not be generalized.

collect internal data (e.g. gender pay parity), disaggregate staff data by gender, “have conversations” at different levels of the company about recruitment and promotion procedures, linking to D&I and sustainability, appointing an employee responsible for GE and D&I (e.g. D&I staff in Axiata Malaysia), and strategizing to get more women into senior management and onto boards. However, lack of hard evidence on progress is a challenge.

- Companies interviewed by the evaluation team also reported that they were already on a journey for GE/WEE especially in terms of their workplace policies with initiatives such as gender balance in recruitment and promotion, tackling gender bias, and adopting sexual harassment prevention and work and life balance policies.
- Such companies typically also had CSR programmes and community projects. They were also aware of some gender issues in relation to optimising their consumer and client reach. A few were just starting gender conscious processes in relation to their supply chains. In their search going forward they found UN Women and the WEPs very helpful in that it provided a structured and comprehensive framework for capturing and integrating both workplace and marketplace gender aspects as part of a promising business model. While some companies implemented GE actions, these were not yet written down in policy documents. There is some wariness in rushing to have written policies that later are not implemented. The awareness raised by the capacity building on WEPs has led to a number of companies expressing the need for further study, learning, networking and exchanging experiences on how to integrate GEWE in business models appropriate to their economic sector in order to lay a basis for the design and formulation of their written GE policies. For global companies, their efforts to influence and support their branches or affiliates in other countries on GEWE was another action. In one example, a subsidiary of a global firm (China) signing the WEPs at country level motivated its headquarters in another country (NY) to also become a WEPs signatory.
- Companies reported that the WEPs principles concerning monitoring and reporting and to WEE in relation to the supply chain remained as challenges. However, applying the Gender Gap Analysis Tool had enabled them to assess where they stood with regard to policy and practice on GE/WEE and demonstrated the value of tracking progress and to recognise that “what gets measured gets done”.
- Those business organizations active in introducing and adopting changes were mainly women’s business organizations, such as Philippines Women’s Business Council and Indonesian Business Women’s Coalition. In one case, the Business Sector Advisory Council for UN Women in India (BSAC) assists women entrepreneurs of SMEs in supply chains. While uptake and sustained engagement varied in different countries, WEA also engaged national business organizations, such as the Philippines Makati Business Club, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce of Industry, and the China Electronics Standardization Association. There is scope for the team to engage national employers’ organizations moving forward, as there is no evidence of this being done through WEA. Foreign chambers of commerce appear more active with some of the global companies participating in WEA being also active members of the foreign chambers – e.g. in Vietnam. WEA collaboration with national stock exchanges including on “Ring the Bell” for International Women’s Day represented an entry point for advocating gender equality with publicly listed companies.
- The majority of participants in the WEP capacity building activities were women, mostly coming from positions in their companies responsible for HR, CSR, D&I and sustainability. Similarly, as noted by some WEPs awardees consulted in this evaluation, women were the majority of those involved in entry preparations for the activities around the WEPs awards. It could be said they were already champions in their companies and that the WEPs capacity building helped to reinforce their knowledge and strategies as well as their role in their companies. Some companies are led by women CEOs and have a significant number of women on their boards and were already champions. The WEP awards also reinforced and recognised such companies for their role. To what extent male champions and CEO/senior managers became champions as an outcome of the capacity building is less clear, although the WEA team noted that this was not an intended outcome of WEA interventions.

- **Impact and Sustainability:** Institutionalising WEE efforts in state entities and private sector organizations/networks is a key means of sustaining results. An example is the creation of the first institutionalized WEPs Working Group platform partnership with the Indonesia Business Coalition for Women's Empowerment (IBCWE)



and Indonesia Global Compact Network (IGCN). The platform hosts regular business forums with 200+ business representatives in Indonesia for learning about WEPs implementation and promoting business action for gender equality. In India the WEPS signatory companies continue to engage in exchange. This has led to forums, with the aim to facilitate conversations and knowledge sharing between companies on good practices on business models for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment at the workplace, marketplace and communities. Post COVID-19 pandemic, the companies plan to rotate hosting the forums face to face and to identify joint community projects to implement.

A summary of criteria wise assessment of the WEPs capacity building model as per the capacity building framework has been presented in table 3.

*Table 3: Summary of criteria wise assessment of the WEPs capacity building model (as per capacity building evaluation framework – details provided in annex 15)*

Criteria		
Diagnosis	<b>Needs assessment</b>	<b>Vulnerable Groups (VG)</b>
	Yes	Some companies have CSR community projects for VG.
Design	<b>Responds to needs</b>	<b>Sustainability strategies identified</b>
	Was more based on advocacy and promotion of WEPs	No, but local partners capacitated and empowered to continue promotion and technical assistance, to deliver deeper WEPs trainings and specialized modules (SH, GRP etc.) to continue supporting companies to implement.
Delivery	<b>No. of participants reported</b>	<b>Training content</b>
	60 companies 16 companies Two one month phases with weekly sessions over a period of 10 months	Business Case in GE, WEPs Thematic training, and Gender Gap Analysis Tool, WEPs Action Planning Tool
Synergies and Follow-up	<b>Support beyond training and links</b>	<b>Monitoring of application</b>
	Beyond awareness training, self-assessment and signing the WEPs, there is a need to develop practical tools and support for companies to fully apply the WEPs, particularly on supply chain and monitoring aspects.  In Malaysia, companies used the WEPs Action Plan Tool with suggested KPIs, timeframes, benchmarks and full indicators for each WEP. Follow-up sessions examined progress and next steps.	Results reflected in annual reports, mid-term evaluation and interviews.  Some form of certification for WEPs could help motivate taking the corporates’ application of WEPs further. UN Women headquarters is working on this.
Enabling Environment	<b>Enablers</b>	<b>Barriers</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s Business Associations</li> <li>• Government policies/engagement</li> <li>• Locally based implementing partner</li> <li>• EU partners</li> <li>• Donors</li> </ul>	More support needed from male company leadership and decision makers  Lack of adequate government policies and programmes on gender equality and private sector
Individual Change	<b>Skills/knowledge gained</b>	<b>Application of skills/knowledge</b>
	Knowledge of WEPs Knowledge of where their company stood on gender equality through application process for WEP awards and the gap analysis tool	Individual women’s participation helped reinforce their leadership roles, visibility and influence in their companies’ efforts in HR, CSR, D&I and sustainability.

<b>Organizational Change</b>	<b>WEPs Sign-ups June 2020 (2019 Baseline) and Progress reports</b>	<b>Community Value chain linkages</b>
	WEPs sign-ups (June 2020, 2019 Baseline) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China: 333 (37)</li> <li>• India: 327 (49)</li> <li>• Indonesia: 158 (13)</li> <li>• Malaysia: 79 (5)</li> <li>• Philippines: 116 (5)</li> <li>• Thailand: 89 (5)</li> <li>• Viet Nam: 129 (42)</li> </ul> Progress reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China: 2 progress reports</li> <li>• India: 4 progress reports</li> <li>• Indonesia: 1 progress report</li> <li>• Malaysia: 2 progress reports</li> <li>• Philippines: 5 progress reports</li> <li>• Thailand: 1 progress report</li> <li>• Viet Nam : 1 progress report</li> </ul>	A couple of examples of companies engaging in applying GE/D&I policies to value chain through training and contracts. A number of companies have community outreach programmes.
<b>Impact and Sustainability</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Transformational change on GE/WEE?</b>
	Design of gender action plans in progress and assignment of staff to GE/D&I responsibilities in some companies	There is limited evidence and to capture changes would need ongoing longer-term monitoring and reporting  Full application of all WEPs principles still needed in participating companies  Increased networking and involvement of more national business and employer organizations and security exchange commissions, as well as government enabling policies are needed to push for transformation

### III. Way forward on sustaining WEPs

WEPs was established in 2010 and has been a longstanding global initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact. As evidenced by the drastic increase in signatories in WEA countries, the WEA project has helped to accelerate progress in terms of awareness and uptake of WEPs signatories in the region by establishing a comprehensive approach encompassing advocacy, capacity-building and incentives (WEPs awards). However, it is still early days for the region. On the basis of consultations and desk review, how companies have used the WEPs framework as a guide for developing their gender equality policies and practice, the impact of these initiatives, and their contributions towards gender equality, as well as the impact on company outcomes (the business case) are unclear. The WEPs design and approach could be revised to capture these various aspects. Few WEPs signatories submit progress reports to the UN WEPs data base. Although it was not part of the WEA objectives given the short timeframe, if UN Women had resources and ability to commit to the longer-term, this angle would be necessary for deepening and sustaining results.

The EU-led FPI evaluation “WEPs companies survey” asked respondents if their company reports externally on gender indicators, to which only 37% responded (N=41/111) in the affirmative. WEA recognizes that advancing gender-responsive business conduct in the private sector requires further systemic change of accountability and transparency and has, therefore, taken on a support and advisory function to help companies operationalize

their WEPs commitments. However, the take-up in the implementation of WEPs is not monitorable with the WEA M&E system or with the current WEPs reporting tool. To ensure sustainability, strengthening monitoring of a cohort of WEPs signatories will be necessary, as well as sharing information on how WEPs signatories are employing the principles as a means to inspire others. It is important to capture not only good practices but also challenges and how these might be overcome. This reflects a need for strengthened accountability and a monitoring mechanism for the WEPs. The Regional WEA team has noted that it is in the process of developing WEPs technical case studies addressing actions, challenges, and results. As of finalizing this case study, 5 have been published on weps.org and the remainder are yet to be finalized. The published case studies include three 'WEPs in Action' profiles ([WEP 2](#) on Extended Maternity Leave (Malaysia), [WEP 2](#) on gender-inclusive performance management and [WEP 6](#) on support for women's livelihoods in rural communities (India), and [WEP 6](#) on a community campaign to end sexual violence (Indonesia)) a 'Leaders in Action' profile ([Suzy Hutomo, Founder and Executive Chairperson, The Body Shop Indonesia](#)) and a 'Spotlight WEPs Ally' profile ([Securities and Exchange Commission of Thailand](#)). Together with an impact evaluation exercise, results could be better captured with learning about what works.

Company interviewees gave a strong endorsement for the continuation of the WEPs awards under the aegis of UN Women. However, it is unclear how the WEPs award process and accompanying activities can be maintained and institutionalized over the longer term. The main challenge recognized by stakeholders both internal and external to UN Women is that there is currently no way to hold companies accountable for reporting on progress implementing the principles to which they have agreed. Given that it has been a recognized challenge with WEPs, UN Women headquarters is working on a "WEPs 2.0" plan. The proposal is to establish an assessment and action planning process and charge for services provided by UN Women to companies in relation to WEPs implementation. However, UN Women personnel in the Asia and the Pacific region are still unclear about how it will work in practice.

Nevertheless, stakeholders consulted highlight that the WEPs model has the most potential for sustainability given that it is a globally recognized and established normative framework, with processes such as the awards and targeted awareness-raising and capacity-building in place and ongoing collaboration with partners, national business networks as well as regional organizations. The draw for companies is clear. They receive recognition and publicity through the WEPs awards and other processes. Further financial support is required to support teams in non-WEA countries which can mobilize companies to apply to the WEPs. However, it is unclear whether ROAP can continue to manage WEPs over the longer term given the current funding situation (WEA is ending, and DFAT is funding elements such as WEPs Awards for a limited time only). Table 4 highlights WEPs practices which should continue, those with potential and areas that need attention.

Table 4: WEPs practices which should continue, those with potential and areas that need attention.

	Practice with potential	Attention needed
<b>WEPs Awards and engagement with private sector companies to maintain momentum and continual increase in WEPs signatories.</b>	Linkages with EU and AP organizations such as ASEAN, (or other regions)	Resource Mobilization is underway, but it is unclear how the WEPs awards process can be maintained and institutionalized over the longer term outside of WEA. without secured funding. Especially, as the financial support cannot come from the private sector itself as this would cause potential conflict of interests.  Capacity building: recognizing initiatives were short-term, identify means for monitoring the impact over time of WEPs application on the economic empowerment of women.
<b>Tools: Gender Gap Analysis Tool and training materials</b>	Working with local partners with WEE expertise to deliver training and monitor progress on WEPs implementation.	Development of practical tools for applying the WEPs at the work place and market place particularly for supply chain and reporting aspects of the WEPs. Piloting of a potential certification process for application of WEPs by signatory companies which needs to be globally organized and guided.

<b>Engagement and networking with women's business associations promoting WEPs take up and policy change</b>	Formation of coalitions and collaboration across different groups of women's business organizations and linkages with mainstream business organizations for increased impact of advocacy efforts.	Deepening collaboration with chambers of commerce, security exchange commissions and mainstream national business organizations, chambers of commerce and employers' organizations to promote institutionalization and sustainability of WEPs initiatives.
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Companies consulted indicated the need for producing data and research on the gender breakdown of suppliers at the country level. Making these publicly available (such as through a publicly available sex-disaggregated business database) would be of key assistance for companies to contribute to WEE by being able to identify and assess women-led businesses to be potentially contracted as suppliers. Some companies are starting to work with women owned suppliers through community outreach and CSR programmes. For them, and most companies, the biggest challenges for WEPs implementation are those principles related to supply chains and reporting. Support for company networking among WEPs signatories to exchange information on challenges and lessons learned on WEPs implementation was signalled as a need. The evidence base on how these companies have updated or adopted policies based on WEPs is still unclear; there is limited understanding about the extent to which WEPs has stimulated catalytic results for gender equality within the private sector; and there is a need to build evidence from WEPs signatories about the business case that can be used to mobilize support from others.

UN Women also has an important role to play in emerging areas of common interest such as gender-responsive procurement. Advocacy on gender-responsive procurement is emerging as a strategy for enhancing the participation of women-led businesses and entrepreneurs in supply chains to gain market access and increase income through procurement opportunities. There is still much to learn on how to mobilize companies and to establish legal frameworks, which are lacking in most countries. One conceptual linkage was provided in India, where there was the idea to link the individuals who participated in skills building training through the Second Chance Education programme with WEPs signatories or with WEA Industry Disruptor training programme participants in India to support gender-responsive procurement and hiring. Attempting to link women-owned SMEs to business supply chains has contributed to forging research and thinking, as well as to the design of future projects on the concept of gender-responsive procurement as a strategy for women suppliers to access opportunities for enhanced incomes. At the time of the evaluation, the WEA team has been implementing 2 pilot capacity building programmes with 50+ companies (in India and in the EU in partnership with trade organization amfori) over a period of 6 weeks and through an implementing partnership with WeConnect. This included 6 deep-dive trainings, a GRP assessment per company and peer exchange amongst business. The results will also further inform the new 'WeRise Together' programme with DFAT which aims to work to connect entrepreneurs and WEPs signatories to advance gender-responsive procurement.

#### IV. Overall key suggestions

WEPs opens the door to multiple avenues of potential collaboration with the private sector. Moving forward, work remains to be done in strengthening networks, developing WEPs implementation tools, advocating the business case and strengthening policy efforts to link workplace and marketplace dimensions of women's economic empowerment that lead to benefits for working women across the informal and formal economy spectrum, including the most marginalized within these groups. Contributions to gender-responsive business approaches could be made through partnerships with larger agencies and UNCT joint programming work at country level. UN Women can highlight the potential WEPs creates for working with local partners to interact with companies on WEPs implementation. UN Women could help spearhead supply chain linkages and connections between WEPs signatory companies/corporate sector and women-owned SMEs.

UN Women's added value is its convening role, as it provides the potential to link the private sector with government and civil society and, via WEPs, link the United Nations with private companies through direct partnerships. By strategically utilizing WEPs as a framework for action, WEA provided an entry point to test innovative new approaches and move towards a blueprint for UN Women's formal private sector engagement.

However, the next Strategic Note period will be essential to promoting UN Women’s value added within this space and ensuring internal agreement on how best to support private and public sector linkages in women’s economic empowerment.

UN Women has increased visibility on women’s economic empowerment through the WEPs approach and has a critical role to play in building on WEPs momentum and supporting the private sector in WEPs implementation. The creation of WEPs platforms in countries supported by women’s business organizations and company networks also provides avenues for sustainability. More needs to be done to strengthen accountability and networks in this area so that private sector actors can learn and encourage each other and contribute to broader social and cultural change.

The evaluation recommends that UN Women should define how it will:

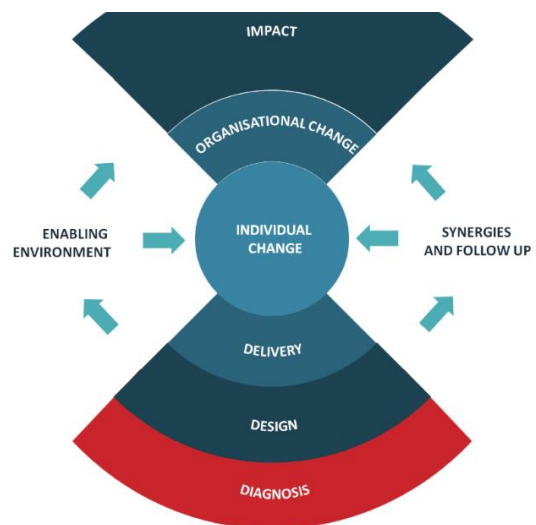
- **Support and sustain WEPs** (in line with the corporate approach moving towards enhanced accountability); continue investing in WEPs awardees and building an influencer/training of trainers approach (adapted to local context).
- **Build and use evidence on the business case** for advocacy efforts.
- **Ensure follow-up** with WEPs awardees and signatories, sharing tools and inviting participation in a monitoring exercise.

## Annex 15: Case Study 2 - Capacity building for developing models and upscaling approaches for women’s economic empowerment in the work place and market place

Figure 1: Capacity building framework

### Capacity Building Evaluation Framework

The framework for this case study drew upon existing frameworks applicable to capacity building: 1) UN Women’s evaluation framework used for the Regional Evaluation on UN Women’s Capacity Development Initiatives in East and Southern Africa focusing on criteria of diagnosis of the problem to be addressed with the training, design and delivery of the training intervention and follow up to support application<sup>9</sup>; 2) Capacity Development Evaluation Framework of the Food and Agricultural Organization<sup>10</sup> observing design and implementation of the intervention and changes caused at individual and organizational level, and the extent to which enabling environment was created for application and sustainability of the results; 3) Kirkpatrick’s model<sup>11</sup> exploring participant’s reaction to the training, learning of knowledge and skills, ability to apply them and cause impact and 4) COM-B model<sup>12</sup> emphasizing that behavioral change requires developing capabilities and existing opportunities and motivators. The adapted capacity building framework focuses on the following aspects:



<b>Diagnosis</b>	Were capacity needs assessments completed and how? Were all relevant stakeholders including vulnerable groups involved? Have existing capacities and context been considered?
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<sup>9</sup><https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=10137>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA5668EN/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/Our-Philosophy/The-Kirkpatrick-Model>

<sup>12</sup> <https://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42>

<b>Design</b>	Did the design of training mostly respond to the identified capacity needs? Were there planned synergies with other project components? To what extent were follow-up actions and strategies for ensuring sustainability of efforts identified?
<b>Delivery</b>	To what extent did the delivery provide an adequate learning environment? Was there an appropriate selection of beneficiaries who will likely act as agents of change? Are beneficiaries satisfied with the quality of delivery?
<b>Synergies and Follow-up</b>	To what extent did the capacity building interventions provide support beyond the training sessions? Is beneficiaries' success in application continuously assessed? Is there a need for strengthening synergies of trainings and capacity building with other WEA components and UN Women WEE interventions? Is there a need for monitoring how beneficiaries apply knowledge and skills? Does there need to be more coordination and sharing across the region?
<b>Enabling Environment</b>	What were the enablers and barriers to application of learnt knowledge and skills? Did the overall programme address them? What more or different technical and practical support did companies and entrepreneurs request?
<b>Individual Change</b>	To what extent did the WEA interventions enhance beneficiaries' functional and technical skills and their knowledge? To what extent do they use gained knowledge and skills?  Did most changes occur at the level of individual change and as immediate effect of the support provided? Did WEA have pre- and post- testing to measure learning? What were the results at individual level? Did capacity building for women entrepreneurs result in improvement of self-confidence, sense of agency and power and understanding of their own rights?
<b>Organisational Change</b>	To what extent did the interventions contribute to changes adopted by the enterprises, companies or business organizations? Did the capacity building contribute to adoption of: gender equality policies, strategies and practices? Did adoption of the WEPs framework lead to company training programmes, allocated budgets or personnel, changes in internal organization? Or in interactions with the community and value chain, gender sensitive institutional response etc.? Did capacity building support build champions in the companies and organizations? Did capacity building efforts lead to wider organizational transformation?
<b>Impact &amp; Sustainability</b>	Did the capacity building interventions contribute to ownership and sustainability of the results? Was there transformational change in addressing gender equality and women's empowerment and lasting positive effects on women's needs and rights? Was there systematic capturing of results information? Are there sustainable results? Is information about impact and sustainability available?

Case study methods included interviews and focus groups with entrepreneurs and companies that participated in the capacity building efforts, including from the Industry Disrupter, WeRise, Care Accelerator and Market Vendors (104 persons, breakdown below) interventions to share impact stories and assessment of capacity building approaches as well as market observation (table 1), which was triangulated with the desk review of reports from UN Women. The capacity building assessment for the evaluation analysis draws on the SN 2018-22, the reconstructed theory of change on WEE for this evaluation and objectives set out in project documents. Part 1 of this case study uses the above-mentioned framework for capacity building efforts under the WEA programme (see table 1) and part 2 utilizes this framework for capacity building efforts undertaken as part of the Markets for Change project in Fiji.

Table 5: Breakdown of participants interviewed (WEA and M4C)

Initiative	Interviews (Female)	Interview (Male)	Total	Response rate (interviews/total # of trainees)	Implementing partner interview (Yes/No)
Industry Disruptor (1.0 and 2.0)	11	-	11	10.6% (11/103)	Yes
We Rise	2	-	2	2.4% (/84)	Yes
Care Accelerator	4	2	6	46% (6/13)	Yes
Market Vendors*	90	14	104	(Universe not provided)	Yes

*\*A simultaneous Audit exercise held by the IEAS in the Fiji MCO also helped to provide inputs to the case study on M4C. The KII's held as part of this exercise include interviews with members from the Nausori Town Council and the President, VP and Treasurer of the MVA in Nausori along with the M4C programme lead in UN Women and the UNDSS Field security associate. Market Observation tool used for 4 markets (see annex: Data collection tools)*

## PART 1 WeEmpower Asia Programme (WEA)

The main models employed were based on capacity building combined with an ecosystem focus to connect relevant stakeholders. These were delivered by various providers experimenting with different training methodologies. The two main approaches consisted of capacity building for women-owned SMEs (utilizing different training partners and approaches) and capacity building for private sector companies on the WEPs.

Various training modalities were rolled out for delivering gender responsive business and entrepreneurship skills for women-owned SMEs under the Industry Disrupter, WeRise and Care Accelerator initiatives. Mentoring and coaching for individual women business owners were features of the capacity building approaches.

For the **Industry Disrupter** the DO School Industry Disrupter challenge provided an innovation platform bringing large corporates together with women-centric enterprises from India and Europe to tackle sustainability challenges in the fashion industry. The 3-month incubation covered individual coaching, business development strategies and market access. The online curriculum took entrepreneurs through the process assessing their current situation and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on them personally as well as on their ventures. A larger group of 230 women-owned SME's undertook awareness training through a 6-week online course and two cohorts of 20 women-owned SMEs received more intensive training (5-day boot camp) with 6 EU and India based industry partners participating with a view to potentially becoming suppliers to them. The Industry Disrupter aimed to connect industry players to the women-owned SMEs.

For **WeRise** the primary targets for capacity building were women-led SMEs in the 'missing-middle' as they are considered too big for microfinance institutions and too small or risky for traditional finance providers such as commercial banks. There were weekly sessions held over one month for accelerators (training of trainers) and two to three days training for 84 women led SMEs in Indonesia and 420 in Thailand. Links were made with women entrepreneurship and business organizations.

**The Care Accelerator** programme supported entrepreneurs to transform caregiving challenges into employment and business opportunities, provide products, services, or technological solutions that can make care more accessible and affordable, and improve the overall quality of care services on and offline. The partner Seedstars identified 144 startups in the care industry in Asia-Pacific and beyond and the selected 13 startups participated in a 4 months program with the different sessions; webinars and individual mentoring on a weekly basis. There were two tracks introduced within the programme: the Gender Equity Track and Business Track. The start-ups came from seven countries - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore and Thailand. Five were involved with child care, 6 with elderly care and 2 combined.

### Findings:

<p><b>CRITERIA 1</b></p>	<p>Were capacity needs assessments completed and how?            Were all relevant stakeholders including vulnerable groups involved?            Have existing capacities and context been considered?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
<p><b>DIAGNOSIS</b></p>	<p>Capacity needs assessments carried out at different stages during the WEA implementation were relevant and mainly aimed at assessing the needs of women owned SME's and women entrepreneurs. Activities included reviewing, mapping and assessing from the literature their needs, as well as identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing trainings and services providers to meet these needs.</p>

	<p>The UN Women’s Asia-Pacific Needs Assessment for More Gender -Inclusive Entrepreneurship<sup>13</sup> conducted in April 2020 with Bopinc found that up to 34 per cent of entrepreneurs could be forced to close their business entirely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The assessment was the first ever online consultations in the region and formed the basis for a successful transition to digital modalities for programme implementation.</p> <p>The COVID -19 pandemic greatly affected the methodology of assessing capacity building needs and the WEA programme adapted quickly and effectively in carrying out a comprehensive regional survey and three in depth country surveys on the impact of COVID 19 on women SME’s and women entrepreneurs and switching to online modalities to conduct the planned assessments and identify service providers.</p> <p>The WEA inception document, workplans and annual reports contain detailed situation analysis, diagnosis and identification of target groups and their needs, implementing partners and stakeholders in relation to the delivery of capacity building with the private sector on WEE.</p> <p>A broad range of stakeholders were involved to identify and assess needs. These included women’s business organizations, implementing partners for research, knowledge production and sharing in support of capacity building, CSOs, NGOs, academia, national governments (women and gender machineries, labour ministries, ministries trade and industry, etc.), UN Women COs and UN agencies. For example, in Indonesia, UN Women mobilized 40 actors to voice their interests and needs regarding Gender Lens Investments (GLI).</p> <p>The first year of WEA implementation focused on setting up partnerships, engaging the relevant stakeholders and networks, conducting assessments and developing strategic assets. Implementing partners contracted generally had strong expertise on entrepreneurship skills and gender equality as well as coaching and mentoring capacities. However, there were challenges in linking women entrepreneurs to investors and access to finance (programme implementation being too short). Some of the more localised partners had strong local knowledge of culture and language and already established relationships with companies and business/entrepreneur organizations (e.g. the Textile Information Center and the China Electronics Standardization Association in China, ConnectedWomen in the Philippines and the Kenan Foundation in Thailand).</p> <p>Target beneficiaries of capacity building initiatives included women owned SMEs, women entrepreneurs and women market vendors.</p> <p>There was some awareness on the part of stakeholders and beneficiaries around the potential of linking marginalized women entrepreneurs into the value chain and/or providing them support through the community CSR/sustainability programmes of private sector companies. However, addressing vulnerable groups was not a key objective of most capacity assessments, whether they be the more marginalized in the informal economy or those discriminated against in formal sector workplaces (disability, LGBTIQ+, ethnicity, etc.). This was not envisioned in the WEA approach.</p>
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Needs assessments among women-owned medium-sized enterprises and organisations that support them (entrepreneur associations, chambers of commerce, and other professional networks) identified their needs for training and other support (financial and non-financial services). This included conducting a gender needs assessment of the **entrepreneurship ecosystem across the seven WEA countries**. This was used to develop regional training materials in synergy with connecting women entrepreneurs with a gender-lens to large multinational value-chains and to address sustainability issues.

In Thailand WEA, in partnership with the Kenan Foundation conducted in the last quarter of 2020, **a needs assessment of the private sector** (covering tourism, jewellery and FinTech). Through in-depth interviews, the aim was to identify barriers and equip women owned SMEs and entrepreneurs with the specific skills they needed for succeeding in these sectors. The assessment showed that companies have limited understanding of the concept of gender equality and women’s empowerment and a low level of interest in advancing WEE even though several of the companies already had some gender-sensitive practices.

In December 2019, the WEA China team analysed the challenges and needs of women entrepreneurs from SMEs by conducting **a focus group research** which informed the design of WEA activities to empower women entrepreneurs.

A rapid assessment was conducted on the regulatory environment in WEA countries relevant to the development of **care entrepreneurship models**, WEA completed a policy review of unpaid care work policies in

<sup>13</sup> <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/asia-pacific-needs-assessment-for-more-gender-inclusive-entrepreneurship>



the Asia-Pacific as well as documented good practices from the EU. In addition, an employer-supported care survey and a Care Entrepreneurship Landscaping was conducted to inform future programming.

The regional entrepreneurship needs assessment survey in Asia-Pacific conducted in April 2020 was used at the same time to capture **the impacts from COVID 19** for 307 women entrepreneurs, 81 accelerators, 38 investors and 73 other organizations (NGOs, corporations, consultancies). The survey was conducted in collaboration with the BOP innovation Center (UN Women’s service partner). The majority of entrepreneurs were negatively affected by COVID (86%) and indicated the support they needed was access to networks and finance, and increased visibility. Responses of entrepreneurs, accelerators and investors to the survey also identified a significant list of their learning needs.

WEA, in collaboration with Investing in Women, also conducted large-scale surveys of the effects of COVID-19 on the private sector in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam to better assess the impacts and needs of both employers and employees.

The impact of COVID-19 affected the modality of conducting capacity building needs assessments with face-to-face discussions with stakeholders being changed to online modes, for example discussing with the Viet Nam Women Entrepreneur Council how to conduct the training needs assessment and select potential trainers and trainees online. For the India Disruptor programme, assessment of capacity needs was done through emails and survey questionnaires and virtual meetings leading to capacity building activities through webinars.

For WeRise Indonesia women-led SMEs in the **‘missing-middle’** were targeted as they were considered too big for microfinance institutions and too small or risky for traditional finance providers such as commercial banks. There were 84 selected women SMEs from different areas in Indonesia that received training on the use of the toolkit for entrepreneurs.

Training approach	Target group	Needs assessment	Vulnerable Groups (VG)
WeRise	Women business owners Indonesia Thailand	Yes	The target group was the “missing middle” women SMEs
Care Accelerator	Women-owned or women-benefitting care entrepreneurs in APAC	Yes	Care employees/domestic workers
Industry Disruptor	Fashion/textile entrepreneurs India EU	Yes	Some of entrepreneurs reach out to VG for sourcing products and services
Regional	Seven countries	Regional assessment Impact of COVID 19 identified learning needs of entrepreneurs, accelerators and investors	Yes
Country level	Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam	Similar national assessments of COVID-19 impact	Yes

<p><b>CRITERIA 2</b></p>	<p>Did the design of training mostly respond to the identified capacity needs?  Were there planned synergies with other project components?  To what extent were follow-up actions and strategies for ensuring sustainability of efforts identified?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
<p><b>DESIGN</b></p>	<p>The design of capacity building activities responded to the needs of participants as evidenced in their overall positive appreciation. The choice of implementing partners was also reflected in the design based on their knowledge, expertise and previous experience of working with profiles of similar target beneficiaries.</p> <p>The design of capacity building was innovative with respect to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The identification of target groups such as a focus on women SME's as the "missing middle";</li> <li>2. Choice of industries such as care providers (emerging care economy focus) and industries where many women are present such as the fashion and textile industry in India;</li> <li>3. Strong focus on integrating gender issues in entrepreneurship skills training and the development of SME business models;</li> <li>4. Participation of large industry players in the case of Industry Disrupter.</li> <li>5. Inclusion of training of trainers and codesign of training material for We Rise.</li> </ol> <p>In most cases, the founders/CEOs of established women SMEs in the textile/fashion sector was among the selection criteria for the participants' training in India (ID), whereas in Indonesia, most of the participants were small and micro enterprises mostly in the food and beverage Industry.</p> <p>Much of the approach in developing materials with partners and capacity building activities with women entrepreneurs included offering self-assessment tools. Coupled with knowledge products and technical inputs, this helped increase the effectiveness of adult learning. The WeRise Toolkits for Entrepreneurs and Accelerators was co-created by women entrepreneurs for women entrepreneurs, accelerators and finance experts from both Asia and Europe, through interactive workshops and pilot training sessions with them, set out to make the materials as practical and applicable as possible. They included modules on "Assessing your finance needs" and the WEPs self-assessment tool for SMEs. Online Tools in Vietnam were also developed to support changes to and implementation of the gender-responsive SME Law.</p> <p>The design of the capacity building sessions to some extent included opportunities for learning through interaction with other companies and enterprises to share challenges and experiences. This was somewhat hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowledge products such as research on ecosystems were designed to be shared across WEA programme components. WeRise materials were built on for designing the Care Accelerator component which was launched later in the overall WEA programme work plan.</p> <p>While WEA was the first of its kind and therefore provided space for testing, opportunities for strengthening coherence across the WEA components in the future were identified. While there was some alignment across the region for the WEPs efforts, different capacity building approaches were applied in different countries. For the entrepreneurship components, these were all designed differently reflecting a bottom-up approach based on country contexts and the different methodologies utilized by the various implementing partners.</p> <p>Capacity building design for some components included follow-up for selected small groups (around 20 in most cases) for deepening learning with training experiences spread over longer periods of time (6 and 10 months, bootcamps). This allowed for participants to begin to apply some learnings in their companies and enterprises. Design of clear sustainability strategies for capacity building beyond the WEA programme implementation period was not explicit; in theory CO's could have integrated plans for follow-up Further capacity building to achieve outcomes for women entrepreneurs over a longer term was not foreseen in the design phase. For the Industry Disruptor, networking among the trainee cohorts has been initiated that has the potential to sustain efforts. It is unclear whether the current resource mobilization efforts would allow UN Women to follow-up with the same cohorts who already received initial training. It is expected that the generation of knowledge products and capacity building materials together with lessons learned are assets that can be used for resource mobilization and built on for future programmes with the private sector in the region.</p>

The WEA team noted that the WEA programme was designed to focus on the "missing middle" as a means for catalyzing gender responsive business practices among entrepreneurs. Selection criteria for WEA capacity building activities did not directly target marginalized or vulnerable women either in the informal sector or in the corporate sector. For example, for the Industry Disruptor, criteria included that the SME a) be women-led or owned, b) offer a Product or service that benefits women, or c) have a majority female team. The selection of participants for the more intensive training included the following: individual aspects such as motivation, vision and drive; organizational criteria, such as venture maturity, sustainability and scalability of business model; and scope of impact on environment, gender equality, and society. Interviews revealed that most of the

women SMEs were small and most women had tertiary education signifying that they had already reached a certain level of empowerment. Many were also committed to sustainable environmental practices. For WeRise, participants in the training of trainers were mostly tertiary educated women running an SME. Future efforts on gender responsible procurement could target marginalized women entrepreneurs by integrating them into supply chains, especially those “missing middle” trained SME’s from WEA.

<b>CRITERIA 3</b>	<p>To what extent did the delivery provide an adequate learning environment? Was there an appropriate selection of beneficiaries who will likely act as agents of change?</p> <p>Are beneficiaries satisfied with the quality of delivery?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
<b>DELIVERY</b>	<p>Generally, training delivered under the WEA programme and its partners provided a positive learning environment and reflected the innovative approaches of the training design. Evaluation interviews with stakeholders and trainees and around 30 post training and events surveys available captured some feedback from participants. Most of these were positive about the relevance and quality of the training with a significant number indicating that their individual capacities to promote GE/WEE were strengthened.</p> <p>There was a good appreciation by participants of the training materials and knowledge products produced under WEA. Accelerators and women entrepreneurs especially welcomed the mentoring and coaching provided by the implementing partners.</p> <p>Participants of one survey rated the workshops and training to increase business-development for knowledge, entrepreneurial skills as very relevant for their organizations and 75% agreed that the WEA products were of high quality.”</p> <p>There were some reports on challenges in delivery, such as delays in development of the training manuals, delays in training start dates and delays in contractual arrangements. This translated into rather short implementation periods with participants expressing the desire for longer “handholding” for their journey that could lead to potential access to financing and links to investors or contracts in the supply chain as ways to grow their businesses.</p> <p>It was also noted that training activities could have benefited from adoption of a more interactive approach in training methodology in some instances.</p> <p>At times knowledge of implementing partners on some technical aspects of gender equality and on local contexts and culture was limited and lack of translation into local languages was identified as a barrier.</p>

	Target group	Responds to needs	Sustainability strategies identified
WEPs Accelerator			
WeRise	Women owned businesses across Indonesia and Thailand	Yes	No, but TOT approach and working with women’s business associations could help sustain momentum. Indonesia has included all content in their existing WeLearn Platform which is accessible to entrepreneurs and will continued to be used
Care Accelerator	Women owned care entrepreneurs	Yes	No, but plans to expand efforts on care economy work more generally and a follow-up contract with IDRC (Canada) in place which is supporting Value for Women to carry out care entrepreneurship research including analysis of CA pilot.
Industry Disruptor	Fashion/textile entrepreneurs India EU	Yes	No, but connections starting between 2 training cohorts and with a few investors Links made with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, GOI, to potentially replicate the Industry Disruptor Model in the software industry

The entrepreneurship capacity building targeted women SMEs generally. Most target groups (companies and women owned businesses) interviewed expressed wishes for longer implementation periods and support for

building more interaction and networking among them for sharing challenges and good practices, business models and launching collaborative initiatives in the community. For example, the WEPs awardees wanted to have more exchanges; it could have also been envisioned to link the WEPs awardees with the entrepreneur capacity building participants.

More timely access through social media and websites where knowledge products, links and yearly calendared events could be found was also a wish expressed by some entrepreneurs consulted. More information on the business case for GE, D&I was a need identified by stakeholders. A specific need in the region is for sex-disaggregated data on supplier chains and research on strategies to promote/apply GEWE/D&I to value chain and support to women owned businesses as suppliers and distributors. This could tie in with community sponsored action through CSR and company sustainability strategies. The WEA and ADB regional research on the current state of GRP as well as the development of the GRP Assessment Tool for companies to measure supplier diversity has contributed to responding to these needs.

For Industry Disruptor, the post trainings assessment showed that 82% participants reported gained skills and knowledge on creating a gender-equitable, sustainable fashion venture, 93% participants would highly recommend the programme to others and 88 % strongly agreed that the programme met their expectations and objectives (mid -term evaluation). Some participants felt that certain training sessions were interesting but needed more learning time. While the topics and information shared in the training sessions were much appreciated, some participants felt that some were more like academic lectures and would have liked more time to practice learnings and then reconvene for feedback. While participants appreciated those training sessions held in their own languages such as Hindi and Bahasa, other participants wished that the sessions could be run in their local language.

	Target group	No. of participants reported	Training content
WeRise	Women owned businesses Indonesia Thailand	84 enterprises 420 training sessions Weekly sessions over one month	For women entrepreneurs: Assessing finance needs, accessing the right finance, understanding gender bias, gender inclusive business and being a WEPs champion. For accelerators: gender- smart representation, gender-smart outreach, and building a gender- smart network. Request for less on theory and more on practical approaches and discussions such as on how to tap into supply chain.
Care Accelerator	Women- owned and- benefitting care entrepreneurs enterprises	13 enterprises over 4-5 months	Gender equality awareness, entrepreneurship and leadership skills, business development, social media marketing, branding and educating clients, sexual harassment. Mentoring aspect and suggestions for local TOT valued. Request for similar approach to ID with industry representatives.
Industry Disruptor	Fashion/textile entrepreneurs India EU	230 companies 120 companies from India and EU, 6 week online once per week. 2 cohorts of 20-23 for 1 week “bootcamp”	Skills and knowledge on creating a gender-equitable, sustainable fashion venture, sales, pitch training for investment readiness and pitching to industry partners, training on marketing including digital marketing and e-commerce. Mentoring and peer learning approaches appreciated. Tools and frameworks shared on enterprise development and gender more attuned to developed economies and need to be adapted to local context.

**CRITERIA 4**

To what extent did the capacity building interventions provide support beyond the training sessions?  
Is beneficiaries’ success in application continuously assessed?

	<p>Is there a need for strengthening synergies of trainings and capacity building with other WEA components and UN Women WEE interventions? Is there a need for monitoring how beneficiaries apply knowledge and skills? Does there need to be more coordination and sharing across the region?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
<p><b>SYNERGIES AND FOLLOW UP</b></p>	<p>The WEA programme was a new initiative of UN Women to advance engagement with the private sector and allowed for testing new approaches. In line with country contexts and needs the search for new modalities and entry points, meant that the different components were quite varied and disparate in terms of country context, industry sectors and target groups. For some components there was continuous support and follow up with small cohorts over periods of 6 months (Industry Disruptor - India). For other components and in general, the implementation phase was quite short due to the need to prepare and translate training materials, delays in contractual arrangements with partners, changed implementation modalities through COVID-19 (shift to digital implementation) etc. Therefore, the time period available for assessing the application of beneficiaries' learning has been limited.</p> <p>During evaluation interviews it was possible to capture a number of follow up key actions of companies and women entrepreneurs. The interviewees were eager to share their initiatives and to reflect on their experiences and future directions with the evaluators.</p> <p>There was not much linkage planned between capacity building approaches and materials that were developed with several partners for the different components. However, the WeRise tools, were shared for the design of the Care Accelerator capacity building (which was with the same implementing partner). Given short implementation periods, there has been little time for sharing, adapting and applying all the materials generated across the WEA components and broader WEE efforts in the region.</p> <p>In India, learning and initiating potential supplier contacts through linkages with large global MNEs for the ID was much appreciated although follow-up links was limited to one MNE. WEA team has noted that they are working on follow-up through new programming resources that are being mobilized.</p>

The Care Accelerator (CA) initiative was developed for a limited number of entrepreneurs (13) to ensure tailored support and exchange to gather learnings for future scale-up.

As a response to COVID-19, where the exacerbation of women's already skewed care burden became evident, the CA came on board at a later stage of the WEA programme as an innovative pilot with the potential to contribute ideas and approaches to those aspects of the care economy that match supply and demand for child and elder care through capacity building. However, interviewees indicated that approaches need to be adapted to local context as there are important differences between countries in the region, as well as between mentors' and mentees' countries. There is a big challenge in the area of regulation that needs to be addressed and UN Women could play a proactive role with a view to sustainability. There is increasing interest of development partners, as well as impact investing, grants, private funding (i.e. employer-supported care) to support enterprise models to grow the care economy. Combining public sector funding and regulation would support public and private sector business models as a strategic approach to address the nexus of alleviating the unpaid work of women. Such an approach could increase women's labour force participation and derive GDP benefits because of the increased economic empowerment of women. This would involve collaborative efforts across agencies for significant policy change and to advance an enabling environment beyond direct capacity building of care entrepreneurs. As part of the Care Accelerator pilot, WEA also conducted a rapid policy analysis, ran a survey with corporates to examine opportunities for employer-supported care, and engaged investors to test their awareness of and interest in investing in care enterprises. WEA has been seen by partners consulted as a pioneer in the Care-Entrepreneurship space furthered by global efforts such as the [Care Economy Knowledge hub](#).

Women business owners greatly appreciated the mentoring and coaching they received through the various WEA initiatives. Innovative aspects of the WEA programme included imparting knowledge on GE/WEE as part of the entrepreneurship training, linking small suppliers with large global companies and strengthening networks of women entrepreneurs. However, there are a considerable number of large players in the field of skilling women entrepreneurs with common goals of building an entrepreneurship culture, gaining access to finance and markets, attracting investors and increasing their incomes through expansion of their businesses. These players have their own approaches, tools, training materials and programmes, often over longer-term

development time frames. UN Women would be well placed to tap into these and support a more gender-responsive approach in business models for women SMEs.

While the WEA implementation period on women’s entrepreneurship was short given the recent engagement of UN Women with the private sector, it was useful for UN Women to incubate and demonstrate **gender responsive** innovations together with creative implementing partners. Working together with existing long-standing players on entrepreneurship in order to integrate the learnings of UN Women from WEA interventions on women’s entrepreneurship will be key for their scale up. An emerging area for UN Women partnerships is further innovation and exploration on gender responsive procurement and linking small women owned companies into the business value chain.

Scaling up more and better sharing across the region could be a next step, utilizing the learnings, training modules, innovative approaches, knowledge products in the design of future programmes at CO/MCO and RO levels.

Training approach	Target group	Support beyond training and links	Monitoring of application
WeRise	Women owned businesses in Indonesia	Interviewees reported finding investors and meeting buyers would be helpful as a next step as well as learning from other countries about how they run small businesses.	Results reflected in annual reports, mid-term evaluation and interviews. Need for monitoring application of learning over time.
Care Accelerator	Women- owned and-benefitting care entrepreneurs enterprises	Interviewee reported lack of plans and information on follow-up and what next for training cohorts. Need for links to COs and investors and networking with other care entrepreneurs	Results reflected in annual reports, mid-term evaluation and interviews. There was a six-month monitoring with participants through Seedstars, but there is a need for monitoring application of learning over time.
Industry Disruptor	Fashion/textile entrepreneurs India EU	Topics were very good but too much to absorb and practice in such a short time period. Issues of sustainability in fashion industry need to be addressed in training sessions.	Results reflected in annual reports, mid-term evaluation and interviews. Need for monitoring application of learning over time.

<b>CRITERIA 5</b>	<p>What were the enablers and barriers to application of learnt knowledge and skills?  Did the overall programme address them?  What more or different technical and practical support did companies and entrepreneurs request?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
<b>ENABLING ENVIRONMENT</b>	<p><b>Enablers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing women’s business and entrepreneurship organizations on the ground and regionally Indonesian Business Women’s Coalition, Women’s Business Council of the Philippines, Lead Women, UN Women Business Advisory Council in India, Asian Women’s Entrepreneurship Network</li> <li>• Implementing partners with entrepreneurship and GE expertise</li> <li>• Network of UN Women offices, staff and UN partners</li> <li>• WEA worked with all these but to a lesser extent with UN partners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Entrepreneurs would like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More linkages to finance access, markets and investors</li> <li>• Continued mentoring over longer periods of time</li> <li>• More interactive and participatory training methods in their language</li> <li>• Follow-up plans</li> </ul>

Training approach	Target group	Enablers	Barriers
WeRise	Women business owners and entrepreneurs	Mentoring partner Training manuals Women entrepreneurship organizations Many training initiatives on women’s entrepreneurship across agencies	Need for improved coordination and partnerships among agencies to sustain initiatives. Inadequate legislation and policies to support women’s entrepreneurship.
Care Accelerator	Women- owned and-benefitting care entrepreneurs enterprises	Coaching partner Training manuals	Need for networking among care enterprises Complexity and gaps in care regulations specific to each country and covering expatriate and local care needs, migrant care workers and local and foreign care enterprises.
Industry Disruptor	SMEs in the textile/fashion sector	DO partner Links to potential EU investors (e.g. H&M) Supply chain links to women’s microenterprises in informal economy UN Women’s India Business Advisory Council Academia	Need for strengthening government policies to support women’s entrepreneurship – potential policy developments at state level.

<b>CRITERIA 6</b>	<p>To what extent did the WEA interventions enhance beneficiaries' functional and technical skills and their knowledge?</p> <p>To what extent do they use gained knowledge and skills?</p> <p>Did most changes occur at the level of individual change and as immediate effect of the support provided?</p> <p>Did WEA have pre- and post- testing to measure learning.?</p> <p>What were the results at individual level?</p> <p>Did capacity building for women entrepreneurs result in improvement of self-confidence, sense of agency and power and understanding of their own rights?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
<b>INDIVIDUAL CHANGE</b>	<p>Generally, training delivered under the WEA programme and its partners provided a positive learning environment and reflected the innovative approaches of the training design. There was strong appreciation by training participants of the training materials and knowledge products produced under WEA as well as high praise for the mentoring and coaching provided by the implementing partners. Examples were provided by companies and women entrepreneurs across the region of how learning was translated into actionable measures. Moving forward UN Women could collect these examples, policies and tools developed by participants, and share these good practices to inspire others.</p>

Although quite early in the programme implementation, a progress survey was conducted by WEA from October to December 2020 in all programme countries and at the regional level. The survey was shared to more than 600 people and received 106 responses. In all, 87 per cent of respondents indicated that they took actions towards WEE, including advocating and championing gender equality and WEE, organizing information and exchange sessions and applying resources developed by UN Women/WeEmpowerAsia.

WEA also organized a learning session with representatives of the European Union and UN Women country offices to inform further programme design and contribute to learnings as laid-out in the mid-term review.

Training approach	Target group	Skills/knowledge gained	Application of skills/knowledge
WeRise	Women entrepreneurs in Indonesia and Thailand	Interviewees reported greater agency and self-confidence in building their businesses	Women entrepreneurs are trying to apply the skills gained but indicate they need more support to gain access to finance and markets.
Care Accelerator	Care entrepreneurs in seven countries	Interviewees reported increased insights as to how to approach clients and train care workers	Care entrepreneurs indicated that more networking in the industry is needed, and a major challenge is the complexity of government regulations or the lack thereof.
Industry Disruptor	Women entrepreneurs in the Fashion/ Textiles/Accessories Lifestyle/ Complimentary services	Interviewees reported enhanced awareness of gender issues and relevant workplace measures; greater awareness on recycling and refurbishing textile waste; greater knowledge on sales and marketing	Women SMEs would like to apply their knowledge with smaller players within the local industry so they could learn more from each other and obtain feedback as more practicable than trying to connect to big international players. A greater focus is needed on environmental sustainability issues and how to take this to those microenterprises involved in recycling

<b>CRITERIA 7</b>	<p>To what extent did the interventions contribute to changes adopted by the enterprises, companies or business organizations?</p> <p>Did the capacity building contribute to adoption of: gender equality policies, strategies and practices?</p> <p>Did adoption of the WEPs framework lead to company training programmes, allocated budgets or personnel, changes in internal organization?</p> <p>Or in interactions with the community and value chain, gender sensitive institutional response etc.?</p> <p>Did capacity building support build champions in the companies and organizations?</p> <p>Did capacity building efforts lead to wider organisational transformation?</p>
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	FINDINGS
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurs that participated in the capacity building efforts signed WEPs</li> <li>• A number of initiatives to build wider private sector networks on GEWE/D&amp;I (India, Indonesia and Philippines).</li> </ul> <p><i>Women owned businesses</i> were able to apply skills learned by adopting or strengthening their business plans and market strategies.</p> <p>For some women entrepreneurs, concepts around gender equality at the workplace and marketplace was new. The training programmes brought them new awareness and knowledge of these concepts and how they could be linked to improving their businesses.</p> <p>For other small women business owners, their enterprises already had strong values for GE, inclusion and climate change (India). The training helped to strengthen their GE framework in relation to business skills.</p> <p>Even though small, a number of women business owners became signatories to the WEPs. A portion of women entrepreneurs trained under WeRise were also trainers themselves and helped train, champion and network with other women entrepreneurs on the WeRise modules.</p>

Training approach	WEPs sign ups June 2022 (2019 baseline)	Policy /practice changes/ reported to WEPs data base	Community Value chain linkages
WeRise	Yes	Business models adapted and women business and entrepreneurship organizations more active in promoting WEPs and women's entrepreneurship	No evidence
Care Accelerator	Yes	Changes in approaches to training of care workers and increased awareness on sexual harassment in care enterprises	No evidence
Industry Disruptor	Yes	Gender equality measures introduced (flexible work, paternity leave, etc.)	Some ID enterprises able to source from informal sector rural women microenterprises

CRITERIA 8	<p>Did the capacity building interventions contribute to ownership and sustainability of the results?  Was there transformational change in addressing gender equality and women's empowerment and lasting positive effects on women's needs and rights?  Was there systematic capturing of results information?  Are there sustainable results?  Is information about impact and sustainability available?</p> <p><b>FINDINGS</b></p>
IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY	<p>Capturing the impact of WEA capacity building would require continued tracking of companies and women entrepreneurs as a basis for an impact evaluation.</p> <p>Annual reports capture some results of the different WEA components across the seven countries. WEA capacity building activities contributed to results at the individual and organizational level. These were reinforced by numerous events, many of them in partnership with a range of stakeholders, conferences, the WEPs awards, production of knowledge products, dissemination of information through multimedia. This resulted in a significant</p>

	<p>mobilisation of private sector actors, including companies, women’s business associations, women’s entrepreneurship organizations. The “Movement Creator” component aimed at creating a Gender Champions Network and by March 2021 there were 144 champions/advocates, including business leaders and gender equality advocates.</p> <p>This mobilisation has potential for longer term impact if sustained. The work carried out with local capacity building partners (such as Lead Women, Dharma Life) has potential for tools developed to continue to be adapted and used. The approach of capacity building for accelerators (WeRise) (TOT) in addition to training women entrepreneurs has also contributed to sustainability potential.</p> <p>WEA’s capacity building contribution with governments and stakeholders combined with advocacy efforts that contributed to legislative and policy change has the potential for transformational change on WEE. For example, the web-based gender responsive enterprise assessment tool for SMEs in the portal of the Vietnamese Agency for Enterprise Development and the bills presented in Philippines.</p> <p>The tools and knowledge products generated by WEA if utilised in future programmes and adopted by training institutions could contribute to sustainable results.</p>
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Training approach	Ownership	Sustainability	Transformational change on GE/WEE?
WeRise	Individual women entrepreneurs trying to apply learning to their business models	Women entrepreneurship organizations providing a potential vehicle of sustained application of tools and learning	There is limited evidence and to capture changes would need ongoing monitoring and reporting
Care Accelerator	Individual entrepreneurs trying to apply learning to their care enterprises	Need for more industry participation and support organizations/institutions for sustainability	Continued networking and improved government policies need to reach transformation  Important challenges for enabling regulatory and business environments to support sustainability and transformation
Industry Disruptor	Individual women entrepreneurs trying to apply learning to their enterprises	Networking started among training cohorts but need more structured organizational efforts to carry forward the initiatives.  Potential for replication of training model with Indian government take up in the IT industry	Potential for more transformative results through supply chain linkages and involvement of more larger industry players in the textile industry and complementary market players (i.e investors) to create a more industry-led platform on women’s entrepreneurship in Fashion.  ID helped in creating awareness within the cohort about recycling and refurbishing textile waste. However, some of the corporate players are yet to take the issues of sustainability more seriously.

## **PART 2: Markets for Change (Fiji)**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
<b>DIAGNOSIS</b>	<p><b>The project design was built on UN Women’s prior initiative, Partners Improving Markets (PIM) and the consultation, research, evidence and knowledge building and toolkit development regarding the needs of women market vendors that took place under this initiative were used to inform the training design of M4C. A trainings needs assessment was conducted with market vendors and market management following which the training modules were specifically developed based on this assessment.</b></p>
<p>Was a capacity needs assessment completed? Were all relevant stakeholders including vulnerable groups involved? Have existing capacities and context been taken into account?</p>	<p>M4C builds on PIM’s three years of consultation, research, evidence and knowledge building and toolkit development regarding the needs of women market vendors. PIM conducted research that helped to document the situation of markets and the government staff that manage these markets. This included an economic analysis, survey of managerial staff and an analysis of infrastructure. The assessment also included a mapping of value chains, modes of transport and market use, product types and values, the supply and demand for different goods, revenue generation and collection, wholesale and retail activities, and daily, seasonal and weekly market use. Learnings from UNDP’s Millennium Markets Programme were also incorporated into M4C design. For the market management, it has been reported that the Commonwealth Local Government Forum Pacific Project (CLGF) completed a training needs assessment in all 10 municipal councils, which focused on market management, governance, operational cost and revenue, financial mechanisms, allocation of space and impact of market management on women market vendors. The Mid Term Review (MTR) has also noted that training needs analysis were conducted with the market management.</p> <p>It is unclear whether a needs assessment was done on trainings with vulnerable groups such as rural women or women with disabilities. This is important to understand the demographics of the target population and accordingly tailor the training approach.</p>
<b>DESIGN</b>	<p><b>The project design, which took into account training needs identified by previous programmes, were found to be relevant for market vendors. However, in the absence of a systematic capacity needs assessment, there is scope for the trainings to be diversified to adapt to the changing demand for trainings and to the dynamic crisis context in Fiji.</b></p>
<p>To what extent does the capacity building intervention respond to identified capacity needs? To what extent does it identify strategies for ensuring sustainability of efforts?</p>	<p>The project design of the M4C programme takes into account training needs identified in previous programmes that were implemented in the market - Millennium Markets Programme (UNDP) and PIM (UN Women) as well as through the training needs assessment with market vendors and market council. The M4C ProDoc highlights the training gaps (financial, banking, access to microfinance) for women market vendors as rationale for incorporating the training component in the programme design. The M4C project design identifies that limited training or access has been provided to vendors on microfinance and there is a lack of financial/banking services available at the market. Further, there are no training facility in the markets available for vendors to easily access services and information.</p> <p>The relevance of most of the trainings was confirmed by most market vendors consulted by the evaluation team. The Fiji MCO annual report, 2021 notes that MVAs were engaged to sew a total of 10,000 reusable face masks for the market vendors and Municipal Council market staff as means to provide them with an alternate livelihood option. Further, digital platforms were piloted during COVID-19 and value addition is part of the ongoing training efforts provided to market vendors by UNDP under outcome 2. However, market vendors interviewed by the evaluation team identified that the current topic of trainings need to be further diversified to include skill building such as sewing, baking, condiment making (jam, pickle, chutneys) and online methods of selling digitally so that their product range can be diversified and travelling time (especially for rural vendors) and transport costs reduced. Trainings on broadening knowledge and skills for specific professions, such as for florists, was expressed as a need in order to create successful businesses.</p> <p>97% of the respondent to the Rapid AKVO survey in response to TC Ana said their income had been reduced. There are several reasons that have been identified through this survey which has contributed to the reductions in incomes experienced by these market vendors including: increases in supply chain cost due to high (91%) percentage of plantations being affected by the cyclone and reduction in customers. 23% of the vendors interviewed through the Rapid AKVO survey in response to TC Yasa stated that they are trying to diversify the products in the face of loss of income. Trainings on organic agriculture have also been conducted with women market vendors. In consultations with the evaluation team, vendors expressed that training and information sessions with market vendor farmers on impact of climate change and how they can adapt their agricultural practices to survive in the face of extreme weather changes was a need (UN Women in collaboration with UNDP). A need was also expressed to have more First Aid Training Workshops.</p>
<b>DELIVERY</b>	<p><b>Generally, training delivery by UN Women has provided an adequate learning environment and is of good quality. However, there were some reports on low representation of certain groups due to a training methodology which by design excluded these groups.</b></p>

<p>To what extent did the delivery provide adequate learning environment? Was there an appropriate selection of beneficiaries who will likely act as agents of change? Are beneficiaries satisfied with the quality of delivery?</p>	<p>Market vendors consulted by the evaluation team attended workshops on communications, conflict resolution, financial literacy, leadership skills, customer service, financial management, digital literacy and book keeping. The interviewees expressed that participation in these trainings were high and found them to be of good quality.</p> <p>In Fiji, it was reported that training activities were adapted to rural market vendors (who spend a short time in the market) by holding shorter training sessions at accommodation centres in the evenings or days when casual vendors are in town, taking the training to their communities, and organizing for casual vendors to receive intensive training across a range of topics in just one day. However, the evaluation team’s consultations with market vendors revealed that a key issue was that trainings and MVAs were unrepresentative of casual vendors (who are predominately rural). One of the key reasons for this was because casual vendors are not permanently fixed in the markets and would miss out on vital information on trainings. This is in line with the MTR’s findings on underrepresentation of casual vendors in MVAs. The AKVO analysis (2016-2019) reports that from total of 801 vendors interviewed, only 248 (30%) reported having received training (though it does not categorise MVAs as rural and urban).</p> <p>The MTR noted that financial literacy trainings have been given in all three languages in Fiji (English, Fijian and Hindi). Certain trainings, for example the communication and leadership training conducted by Corerega, had materials which were contextualized into the Rural and Itaukei vernacular. However, one interviewee consulted by the evaluation team expressed that in general, the lack of usage of vernacular languages excluded some women, especially rural women, from the trainings. Further, the training report that was provided to the evaluation team on communications and leadership, there was no data segregated on trainings provided to vulnerable groups. There is scope to use a training of trainers (TOT) approach where UN Women could facilitate training to MVAs who could carry it forward to market vendors. However, in order to ensure that training is inclusive of all demographics (including vulnerable groups), MVAs themselves should have representative voices from these groups.</p>
<p><b>SYNERGIES AND FOLLOW UP</b></p>	<p><b>Fiji MCO annual reports, M4C donor reports and indicator tracking database track the number of women supported to build capacities and skills to participate in the market and the market management. However, it is unclear if the same cohorts are also tracked and if beneficiaries’ success in application continuously assessed. Monitoring how beneficiaries apply knowledge and skills in the long run can provide further evidence on the benefits of the training components of the programme.</b></p> <p><b>While there have been instances of synergies with programmes of other UN system partners, there is space for strengthening synergies of trainings and capacity building with other UN Women interventions and for organisation of refresher and follow-up trainings, especially given the influx of more market vendors as a result of the pandemic.</b></p>
<p>To what extent did the capacity building intervention provide support beyond the training sessions and link with other UN Women or external interventions? Is beneficiaries’ success in application continuously assessed?</p>	<p>M4C’s M&amp;E system is comprehensive and provides credible data at the output level. Fiji MCO annual reports track the number of women supported to build capacities and skills to participate in the economy, including as entrepreneurs as well as those support to access finance and gender-responsive financial products and services. Outcome indicator 2 of donor reports also track the business and leadership skills to advance economic right of market vendors. Annual donor reports quote (through direct input from participants) instances of how uptake of these skills has impacted participants. The programme tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of market vendors practicing improved record keeping and business management.</li> <li>• Number of market vendors with increased access to financial services (including banking, credit, saving, insurance).</li> <li>• Number of market vendor farmers engaging in improved agricultural practices to increase productivity</li> <li>• Number of market vendors engaging in improved supply chains and supplying to new markets</li> </ul> <p>There is scope to expand tracking of how these skills are applied given the wide range of trainings provided under the programme, such as leadership and communication and negotiation and conflict management. Further, it is unclear if the same cohorts are also tracked, if refresher courses are held and if beneficiaries’ success in application continuously assessed. There was a strong expressed desire by the market management, local government employees, MVAs and market vendors themselves for fresh training urgently. A comprehensive qualitative follow-up study on how these learned skills are retained (for example through participation in refresher courses) and applied in the long run can provide further evidence on the benefits of the programme.</p> <p>The pandemic has significantly changed the demographics of the market population. In Fiji, for instance, there are new satellite markets in the outer islands away from the traditional urban centres of Suva, Lautoka, Sigatoka. There is now an influx of more people for e.g., youth, single mothers, semi-professionals, people who lost jobs from the tourism or other industries - who are now farming and marketing successfully (either part-time or full</p>

	<p>time). They view marketing as a lucrative livelihood source post COVID-19. It is vital to include these new entrants into trainings efforts of the project.</p> <p>There have been instances of synergies with programmes of other UN agencies. For example, FAO pooled resources with M4C to provide basic farming tools and seeds post tropical cyclones. UNICEF provided basic WASH supplies to municipal markets as part of COVID-19 support. There is scope to hold joint trainings of market management and market vendors and for UN Women to facilitate sharing of lessons learned between MVAs of different markets, which has happened to a limited extent.</p>
<p><b>ENABLING ENVIRONMENT</b></p>	<p><b>While key informants identified support in terms of market infrastructure and representative voice in the market some of the key concerns raised was the inclusion of market vendors in consultations on by laws, timing and design of trainings and recurring crisis in Fiji (Tropical cyclones and COVID-19) restricting training sessions.</b></p>
<p>What were the enablers and barriers to application of learnt knowledge and skills and did the programme address them?</p>	<p>Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Market infrastructure:</b> such as gender segregated washrooms, pavements, securely fenced market shed, accommodation centres, resource centres and presence of public transport enhanced the ability of market vendors to attend such trainings.</li> <li>• <b>Representation and voice of market vendors:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishment of Market Vendors Association and increased gender mainstreaming in the local decision-making process.</li> <li>2. Networking and collective bargaining through MVAs increasing agency of women market vendors</li> <li>3. M4C has engaged with the Ministry for Local Government in Fiji to review the Market By-law across 12 municipal councils in Fiji, resulting in the adoption of a gender responsive/ consultative process with the women market vendors.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Trainings:</b> Financial literacy increasing information on and access to loans/credit/micro-finance</li> <li>• Connecting to service providers with gender equality expertise</li> </ul> <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Representation and voice of market vendors:</b> While consultations have been held in respect on the review of the market bylaws, at this stage they are limited to the council and policy level and do not fully include voices of market vendors yet.</li> <li>• <b>Trainings:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. COVID-19 restricting in-person training exercises</li> <li>2. Lack of timely communication as market vendors, specifically casual vendors, are not told in advance on the details of the training to enable them to plan ahead (childcare arrangements, substitute vendor at stalls, transport). While all casual vendors expressed a keen desire for training, they did mention that previously, some of them did not get the message, or were simply not aware, or could not attend due to the short notice. Lack of prior notice meant they did not have time to organise their income generating alternatives.</li> <li>3. One interviewee also raised that there was lack of access to training in local languages (such as I-Taukei and Hindustani).<sup>14</sup></li> </ol> </li> <li>• Recurring Tropical cyclones: Rapid AKVO Survey TC Yasa: 86% of vendors surveyed across have said that their income has been reduced after TC Yasa. Of this, 53% said their income had been reduced by more than half.</li> </ul> <p>Market vendors would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Market infrastructure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child care facilities (eg a creche)</li> <li>2. Lockers to securely store belongings</li> <li>3. A refrigerator cooler to store perishable items overnight (vegetables, fruits)</li> <li>4. Maintenance of newly installed market infrastructure</li> <li>5. Access to stall space for non-fee paying rural vendors</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Representation and voice of market vendors:</b> New and proposed by-laws be explained in vernacular languages in order to ensure maximum participation, especially of rural women and groups within the market. This will also promote awareness on market issues and help to create a strong sense of ownership (and subsequently compliance) when introduced.</li> <li>• <b>Trainings:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collating information of contacts, addresses, phone numbers so messages on trainings can be digitally disseminated</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> M4C team notes that they ensure at least 1 training staff who is engaged with the skills of translation in vernacular at all trainings whether it is undertaken by UN Women or an external service provider

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Casual market vendors would also like to be consulted beforehand on the timing of the trainings, so they can work properly and take care of competing priorities e.g childcare.</li> <li>3. Trainings in local languages.</li> <li>4. More trainings on digital literacy, using apps and using smartphones.</li> </ol>																					
<b>INDIVIDUAL CHANGE</b>	<p>Training recipients and implementing partners reported advancement of knowledge and skills and awareness raising as evidence of effectiveness of training in creating change at the individual level. Key informants felt confident after attending trainings workshops and expressed that they had enhanced business management and communication skills. Enhancement of communication and leadership skills and collective representation through MVAs have advanced agency of women market vendors. The number of market vendors practicing improved record-keeping, business management and engaging in improved agricultural practices has been tracked through the indicator tracking database. Yet, follow-up and third-party verification are required for ensuring the targeted individuals attended the training and to understand how they are applying learnt knowledge and skills and substantially benefitting from the effort.</p>																					
<p>To what extent did the intervention enhance beneficiaries' functional and technical skills and their knowledge?</p> <p>To what extent are the target beneficiaries implementing/using gained knowledge, technical skills and demonstrating changes and attitudes, behaviours and practices?</p>	<p>A list of trainings conducted by UN Women in Fiji between 2019-2021 have been provided in the table below:</p> <p><i>Table: List of trainings conducted by UN Women in Fiji (2019-2021); Source: UN Women Fiji MCO, not verified by the evaluation team</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="544 779 1506 1263"> <thead> <tr> <th>Title of Training</th> <th>Year the training was delivered</th> <th>How many were trained</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Organic Know How</td> <td>2020</td> <td>102 women market vendors</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Basic Principles of Organic Agriculture</td> <td>2020</td> <td>108 rural based farmer vendors (F-85, M-23)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Getting Started</td> <td>2021</td> <td>38 market vendors (F-36, M-2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leadership &amp; Communication</td> <td>2021</td> <td>44 market vendors (F-35, M-9)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ethics, Governance, Leadership, Communications, Finance processes, Accountability, Gender, Customer Services</td> <td>2021</td> <td>19 Municipal Council Staff (F-12, M-7)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td><b>311 (270 Female, 41 Male)</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All market vendors interviewed by the evaluation team benefitted either from the training or as target beneficiaries of other M4C efforts. Some MVs noted feeling confident after attending workshop on communications and leadership skills. While some MVs reported better communication with customers, it was also felt that vendors were better able to voice their opinions and engage in the decision-making process with the market management. M4C has supported women market vendors' economic advancement through financial literacy, business training as well as digital literacy. Further, developing agency of market vendors through collective representation of interests has been of particular importance to ensure their views and issues are incorporated across all outcome areas.</p> <p>"There is a leader in every woman market vendor" – Women Market Vendor</p> <p>MTR interviews with individual women market vendors who attended training show increases in confidence, business management and ability to communicate and interact with other market vendors, MVA and market management. MTR qualitative interviews show staff better understand and see the importance of gender equality in markets. For some council staff, training helped change their understanding of gender equality and GRB. Pre and post testing was applied in the communication and leadership training (Corerega) to measure learning and to test the change in conceptions of participants.</p> <p>The Annual Report, 2021, has noted that in 2020, 29% of market vendors have been practicing improved record keeping and business management. It also reports that more women are now accessing financial services (including banking, credit, savings, insurance), practicing record keeping and business management and there is also increase in market vendors farmers engaging in improved agricultural practices to improve productivity. However, there is lack of third-party verification on how these practices were applied. There is also a lack of positive results reported in regards to capacity building programmes for women with disabilities/rural MVs. While success stories are part of M4C biannual and annual donor reports, systematically capturing how</p>	Title of Training	Year the training was delivered	How many were trained	Organic Know How	2020	102 women market vendors	Basic Principles of Organic Agriculture	2020	108 rural based farmer vendors (F-85, M-23)	Getting Started	2021	38 market vendors (F-36, M-2)	Leadership & Communication	2021	44 market vendors (F-35, M-9)	Ethics, Governance, Leadership, Communications, Finance processes, Accountability, Gender, Customer Services	2021	19 Municipal Council Staff (F-12, M-7)	TOTAL		<b>311 (270 Female, 41 Male)</b>
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	knowledge and skills learned through the programme were applied could help capture the translation of these efforts to actual results. <sup>15</sup>
<b>ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE</b>	<b>The M4C efforts (training, awareness-raising and government linkage) with Market Vendors Associations has contributed to representative decision-making for women market vendors. However, a TOT approach with MVAs was lacking which could help sustain momentum of trainings and make the market self-sufficient.</b>
To what extent did the intervention contribute to changes adopted by the organization or community in response to the capacity building efforts?	<p>In 2021, a total of 12 Market Vendors Association (MVA) have been registered which have been reportedly made possible through the continued technical assistance and capacity building activities provided by M4C. (Annual Report 2021, not verified by the evaluation team). MTR quantitative data shows MVA executive members in Fiji (22 of 22) agree or strongly agree that the project has strengthened the association's governance and decision-making processes and improved executives' skills to manage and run the association.</p> <p>MVAs established and participating in decision making process: The Fiji MCO (AR 2021) reports that a result of the continuous awareness-raising and remote training and technical support provided to the market vendors across the 13 markets, 12 out of the 13 marketplaces have established and registered their MVAs and have been assessed to be effective, representative, and accountable. Councils have recorded evidence of increased gender mainstreaming in the local decision-making process (e.g., amendments to market policies and/or budgets allocated that specifically address the needs of women market vendors. As far as leadership is concerned, it was noted in this reporting period that all (13 out of 13) of the Market vendors association has at least 50% of the women in leadership roles.</p> <p>MVAs engaged with government: The recognition of the MVAs by the Fiji Government Ministry of Economy to hold its first-ever national budget consultation with them. MVAs shared their challenges during covid 19 in the marketplace and their role to effectively ensure safety protocols in the market for the business continuity of its members.</p> <p>MVAs improving the socio-economic status of women and men in the markets: For example, organizing and providing technical assistance to the member on their application for the Fiji Government loan to small business entrepreneurs to support them financially operating their business during this COVID 19 pandemic.</p> <p>The president of an MVA that was interviewed by the team expressed that because of the ad-hoc nature of trainings, new market executives and market vendors have not been included in these learning sessions and trainings. To fill this gap and to ensure that the M4C model is self-sustaining, they have expressed the need for financial support to carry out their own training with MVs (a training of trainer approach).</p> <p>The extent to which training interventions identify strategies for sustainability of efforts is unclear. There is a need to recognize individual champions across the institutions involved that can potentially take on further application of knowledge and skills provided through GEWE related trainings. There is scope to adopt a TOT approach where UN Women facilitates training to MVAs who can then carry it forward to the market vendors.</p>
<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>In the absence of long term follow up of the beneficiaries of capacity building programme and systematic capturing of results information about impact is not available.</b>
To what extent has the capacity building intervention brought change to final beneficiaries, organizations and communities?	<p>The annual report captures the number of market vendors with increased access to financial services (results includes participants who signed up for financial services for themselves or family members). Data has not been captured on long term benefits for the beneficiaries such as increase of women's role in family decision-making One market vendor reported that the leadership training provided to her also helps her in being the head of women in her village (evidence on how the impact and awareness of the training goes beyond the intended action). However, a need was expressed to also include vulnerable vendors (single mothers/parents/elderly) in such trainings.</p> <p>The initial training on leadership and communications was delivered by FemLink Pacific and the training modules were developed by CLGF for a range of modules which has been used for a number of recurring trainings. Apart from this, the 'getting started' toolkit has been developed which is used for the initial formation of market vendor associations. There is further scope to develop and standardize testes toolkits which can be used beyond the programme.</p>

<sup>15</sup> The M4C team notes that it is not usually possible to track the same market vendors as they tend to come to the market on different days and or may be absent.

## *Conclusion/way forward/follow-up*

The case studies explored a variety of capacity building approaches, methods and target groups in different settings as a means to advance women's economic empowerment. Analysing and classifying the emergent models will be important for identifying key aspects to be built on and for sharing these with potential internal and external partners that can help take them forward. Lessons learned from the initiatives, including the smaller scale pilots, could be compiled, and systematized to be used in partnerships and joint advocacy with governments for policy and regulatory change. Below are some suggestions derived from the case studies that could be borne in mind for future capacity building efforts.

### **PART 1 WEA Conclusion:**

- The implementation of WEA during the period covered by this WEE evaluation mobilized the private sector to advance women's economic empowerment in the region. WEA advocated an ecosystem approach to link various levels and types of engagement needed to achieve change in the region for the benefit of women's economic empowerment. As a high-profile regional programme WEA reported being able to connect with intergovernmental organizations such as ASEAN and G20, as well as civil society organizations such as the Asian Women's Entrepreneurship Network (AWEN) to push for greater attention to women's economic empowerment. Partnerships with other UN agencies, IFIs, and donor initiatives such as the Australian government's "Investing in Women" played a key role in contributing to generating a large volume of knowledge products. These enabled visibility and advocacy on women's economic empowerment and on emerging key topics such as the care economy and gender responsive procurement. The publications could be used to work with national governments to further enabling policy environments. Piloting gender responsive approaches to women's entrepreneurship and working with women's business organizations to promote WEPs were innovative features of the WEA programme. Promotion of the WEPs translated into a strong mobilisation of private sector companies through the highly successful WEPs awards and the WEPs activator initiatives. These resulted in a large increase in the number of company signatories to the WEPs (see Annex X).
- In three short and complex years (due to COVID-19) WEA was able to set the stage and lay the ground work for greater engagement of the private sector for women's economic empowerment in the Asia Pacific region. Companies will need further support to more fully implement the WEPs principles, particularly in regard to those principles addressing gender responsive supply chain efforts and accountability through monitoring and reporting. Women SMEs will need more support to better utilise the training received to grow and expand their enterprises. More will need to be done to establish stronger enabling environments through policy and legislative change. Maintaining the focus on ecosystem approaches will be key for the multi-faceted actions required to meaningfully advance women's economic empowerment.

### **PART 2 – Markets for Change conclusion**

- The M4C project has made significant strides in ensuring that women market vendors are capacitated to not only attain better business skills, but also to improve their confidence and leadership skills and ensuring that their voices are represented in decision-making processes. Improvements to market infrastructure has also contributed to making marketplaces safer and more inclusive for market vendors. This combination of implementation strategies has led to an overall enhancement of the market environment by supporting gender-equitable economic and socio-cultural empowerment of women market vendors.
- Market vendors will further need consistent support through different types of trainings adopted by the project. A Training of Trainers (TOT) approach, where UN Women facilitates trainings to MVAs who can carry it forward to market vendors can ensure that the learning ecosystem is self-sufficient. The knowledge management function further needs to capture how skills learned have been applied by market vendors in order to provide evidence on transformational change for women MVs which can guarantee continued support. Market facilities are disability friendly with the presence of wheelchair ramps, signage and accessible toilets. More will need to be done to address differential needs of vulnerable groups (rural market vendors, casual vendors, women with young children) to ensure that all women benefit from the intervention.



Table 1 below indicates the models from both WEA and M4C, with potential to sustain the economic empowerment of women.

**Table 1. Models with potential to sustain the economic empowerment of women: WEA and M4C**

	UN Women Added Value	Requirements to Ensure Scalability and Sustainability
<b>Gender-responsive and gender-inclusive entrepreneurship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Women has brought a more <b>gender-responsive</b> and gender-inclusive entrepreneurship training and mentoring approach to build confidence for women-led businesses and entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• The pilot on <b>“care entrepreneurship”</b>, which focused on skill development and supporting women entrepreneurs to run sustainable care businesses, was unique within the world of entrepreneurship training.</li> <li>• In seeking more effective ways to break down barriers to women’s agency and access to income and markets, the profiles of target groups selected were innovative: care entrepreneurs, women-led businesses in the textile and fashion industry, market vendors, and the “missing middle” of women-owned SMEs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of trainers enhances the potential for longer term follow-up. Supporting networks to lead this work and partnering with others to facilitate access to financing and investors would support sustainability.</li> <li>• Creating sustainable opportunities for entrepreneurs operating at the bottom of the pyramid requires that they be included in larger markets, i.e., connecting them to other women-owned and/or other gender-responsive SMEs or digitized markets can strengthen their economic resilience and provide an important income-generating opportunity for marginalized women.</li> <li>• A broader effort for growing the care economy in partnership with others would include a comprehensive approach to promoting workplaces to be more family-friendly; expanding the availability of accessible, affordable, quality care services; skill development for women care workers; and changing the unequal gender division of paid and unpaid work.</li> </ul>
<b>Integrating approaches for environmental sustainability and adaptation to climate change in women’s economic empowerment efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Industry Disruptor in India identified environmental sustainability as a criterion for the selection of women-owned SMEs to participate in capacity-building efforts. Participants were interested to learn more about the concept of sustainability with respect to renewable resources and climate resilience in the development of their businesses and supply chains.</li> <li>• Ensuring that physical infrastructure in markets is resilient to disaster risk and climate change is one of the four outcomes of the Markets for Change project. Multiple sources provided evidence that market vendors in Fiji were consulted on the formulation of market infrastructure response plans for extreme weather and natural conditions. For the accommodation centres, UN Women ensured compliance with infrastructure standards to ensure that the buildings and upgrading works were resilient to climate change. Additionally, Market Disaster Preparedness Committees were set up and local councils moved forward recommendations from the Building Market Resilience to Climate Change report<sup>16</sup> and developed evacuation plans, with signage erected strategically in the markets for vendors and the general public.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Industry Disruptor connected participants with global companies as a means to facilitate exchange on this important topic. However, participants consulted considered some of the companies as not being strong or consistent on sustainability in their own policies and implementation. It is critical to ensure that the global companies engaged are representative of the messages being advocated for through capacity-building efforts.</li> <li>• Market vendors and management gave the feedback that there was further scope to ensure that infrastructure is disaster resilient, especially in terms of proper drainage systems to prevent flooding, and that they are properly maintained to ensure that they are functioning as designed in times of need.</li> </ul>
<b>Networks and grass-roots connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tapping into and catalysing networks is key for ownership and helping to sustain women’s economic empowerment efforts with small target groups. These include women entrepreneur organizations and coalitions, women’s business organizations, market associations and linking women-owned SMEs with larger and global companies and investors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A training of trainers approach with networks would help empower trainers to take the lead and facilitate multiplication and transfer of knowledge.</li> <li>• Encouraging trainees in pilot projects to be part of such networks contributes to sustaining momentum.</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships for scaling up and sustaining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to ownership and an enabling policy environment is the <b>establishment of partnerships</b> with United Nations agencies, governments and civil society for the organization of events, research and knowledge products, guidelines, advocacy, the development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalizing partnerships helps to recognize commitment and how each partner will mutually benefit and ensure that regardless of project funds the relationship and coordination will continue.</li> <li>• Joint programmes are an important avenue for strengthening potential for scalability and sustainability.</li> </ul>

	of training materials and the delivery of skills training.	
<b>Research and knowledge-sharing on emerging areas for attention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of data on time use and a small pilot programme on <i>care entrepreneurship</i> highlighted issues related to the care economy.</li> <li>• Attempting to link women-owned SMEs to business supply chains has contributed to forging research and thinking, as well as to the design of future projects on the concept of <i>gender-responsive procurement</i> as a strategy for women suppliers to access opportunities for enhanced incomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of emerging areas in partnership with others has the potential to overcome persistent obstacles, such as gender stereotyping and discrimination regarding women's equal access to incomes and financing, compounded by gender roles that place on women a disproportionate share of unpaid work.</li> </ul>

## OVERALL KEY SUGGESTIONS BY CRITERIA

### Suggestion 1 – DIAGNOSIS

Most proposal justifications include a strong and accurate diagnosis of problems to be addressed backed up by citing extensive research and statistics. While often reflecting a broad scope of development challenges to be addressed, precisely linking these to the results framework for specific capacity building interventions can be difficult. The design that follows such diagnosis is often too ambitious for the limited resources available. Balancing capacity building of individuals and target groups with institutional capacity building for ownership and sustainability requires diagnosis of the role and capacity of stakeholders and institutions to address the identified development challenges over time. Individual projects that are timebound need to be seen within the longer-term timeframe required in order to really stimulate impact level change.

### Suggestion 2 – DESIGN

For the design of capacity building interventions, baselines and training needs assessments of individuals, target groups and institutions need to be integrated with pre and post testing of knowledge and knowledge application built in. Mapping of the interventions of other actors in the same arena is important for both piloting approaches and models that are different and innovative and for potential partnerships to augment impact and scalability. Design of capacity building is also dependent on the identification of target groups and economic sectors and tailoring the training tools and delivery accordingly. Given UN principle of leaving no behind, ensuring that marginalised and vulnerable groups are part of efforts to advance women's economic empowerment is essential. For example, M4C phase II design has developed a strategy to include rural women vendors who are left out of MVAs due to an urban bias or excluded from trainings due to language or cultural barriers. Work on gender responsive supply chains could help to be inclusive of poor women microentrepreneurs. Identifying ways of engaging more men in the efforts are needed. Expertise relative to the industries and sectors can also be critical for the relevance of the training delivered. Identification and inclusion of institutions that can sustain further capacity building is also important at the design stage.

### Suggestion 3 – DELIVERY

The theoretical foundations and technical aspects of training modules are important for the credibility of capacity building. However, trainees usually wish for a balance between theory and practice. This includes sharing of experiences from successful business operators and entrepreneurs, networking among enterprises and companies and staggering training sessions over time to allow trainees to apply and practice learnings and obtain feedback (double and triple loop learning). Individual mentoring and coaching in tandem with training sessions has been shown to be effective. Training of trainers with local organizations is also effective for sustained capacity building processes and ownership through delivery of training with reference to local laws, languages and customs. Partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders can contribute to delivery of training to more and larger cohorts and their follow-up, as well as unite efforts in influencing an enabling policy environment for the target groups. The M4C project as a whole could develop an overall transfer plan by

<sup>16</sup> UN Women. 2017. *Climate Change and Markets for Change Programmes, Building Market Resilience to Climate Change, Fiji*. Accessed from: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/01/building-market-resilience-to-climate-change-fiji>.

identifying the Government Departments, NGOs, private enterprises and networks that will take up project activities when the project comes to an end. NGOs such as Fiji Women Crisis Centre (FWCC), Empower Pacific (Lifeline and counselling), Red Cross, FemLink Pacific, Medical Services Pacific (MSP) could also be invited to conduct training and awareness.

#### **Suggestion 4 – SYNERGIES AND FOLLOW UP**

Short timeframes for training interventions raise expectations of participants and so need to be integrated into a longer-term programme planning. If this is not possible linking participants with other partners, networks and institutions who can take them further to apply skills learned can make the training delivered more effective. For example, ID could be more effective and sustainable by involving more large Indian players. Synergies between WEE training tools and delivery methods is key to avoiding duplication and generating the UN Women's knowledge base.

#### **Suggestion 5 - ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

The short implementation period of the case study interventions on the ground point to the critical need for further capacity building with private and public institutions to reach higher level policy changes. This will require concerted effort and partnerships across UN agencies and civil society. Further, trainings need to be adapted to suit dynamic country contexts. For example, M4C trainings should include learning sessions on diversifying livelihood options to tackle supply chain impacts and reduced incomes due to tropical cyclones.

#### **Suggestion 6 – CAPTURING INDIVIDUAL, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND IMPACT**

Annual progress reports and interviews can capture some changes, but without an overall results framework for women's economic empowerment, these are at risk of being anecdotal and scattered. UN Women is strong in data collection and analysis, but needs to put in place a more systematic monitoring system with WEE indicators to capture results and measure outcomes of the various WEE projects and initiatives over time.