

Trade Facilitation Office (TFO) Canada

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IDRC GRANT / SUBVENTION DU CRDI : - WOMEN IN TRADE KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM TO BOOST INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



Women in Trade Knowledge Platform to Boost Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Grant No. 109348-001

The Project is implemented by the Trade Facilitation Office (TFO) Canada with financial assistance of the International Research Development Centre (IDRC) to create a Women in Trade (WIT) Knowledge Platform that will produce research on trade and women's economic empowerment, build capacity of stakeholders and disseminate knowledge on women's inclusion in trade.

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South-East Asia: Cambodia and Vietnam

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
BRIDGE	Belonging, representation, inclusion, diversity and equity
CAD	Canadian dollars
CBI	Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSEA	Centre for Study of the Economies of Africa
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LDC	Least developed countries
MI	Mekong Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprise
TFO Canada	Trade Facilitation Office Canada
TSI	Trade Support Institution
TSO	Trade support organization
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
USD	United States dollar
WIT	Women in Trade
WITISG	Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

ABSTRACT

Trade Facilitation Office Canada (**TFO Canada**), with the financial assistance of Canada's International Development Research Centre (**IDRC**) and the technical support of TFO Canada Dr. Yiagadeesen Samy (Director, Normal Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University) and regional research organizations- Centre for Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) and Mekong Institute (MI), worked in partnership and implemented an innovative initiative to produce research on trade and women's economic empowerment, build capacity of stakeholders and disseminate knowledge on women's inclusion in trade. The research project "Women in trade Knowledge Platform to Boost Inclusive and Sustainable Growth" has completed its third year in December 2022 and met its objectives.

The objective of the research project is to examine the relationship between trade and job creation for women, and the extent to which these jobs contribute to women's economic empowerment. The research project uses both original survey data and qualitative methods to answer the following research questions as they relate to Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs): 1). Why – and under what circumstances – do some trade sectors create more jobs for women and others do not? 2). To what extent are the jobs created contributing to women's economic empowerment? 3). What strategies and policies are needed to ensure these sectors work optimally? The project focused on six developing and least developed countries (LDCs) in South-East Asia: Cambodia and Vietnam and Sub-Saharan Africa: Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Madagascar.

The research was carried out in 2021-22 and focused also on the impact of Covid-19 on the SMEs surveyed. A survey data was collected from 610 SMEs across the six targeted countries in 2021. It is well-known that SMEs contribute significantly to output and employment across countries, yet they are comparatively underrepresented in trade. We also know that trade brings benefits for women in terms of jobs and economic empowerment. However, women entrepreneurs and workers face specific constraints both within and outside household. We were thus motivated to find out why and under what circumstances trade leads to increased employment of women, and whether there were also positive implications for wages, working conditions and skill levels. To put it differently, it is perhaps too simple to assume that trade will necessarily lead to an improvement in outcomes for female workers and employers, and thus improved empowerment.

A few highlights from the survey data: We found that the degree of favourability towards women-owned companies varied across countries, regions and sectors and importantly that there was no compelling evidence of higher favourability towards women-owned SMEs engaged in exports. We also found that the distribution of employees is favorable in some countries (e.g., Cambodia, Senegal, Vietnam) but more favorable towards men in the case of Ghana, Madagascar, and Nigeria. The distribution tends to also vary across sectors; we did not find any compelling evidence that there were deliberate attempts to hire women in order to bridge gender gaps. Skills and productivity were the main drivers, for why women are hired; women-owned exporting SMEs tend to hire more women than men (though we cannot discount that this may have more to do with the nature of work). Exporting SMEs pay their workers more than non-exporting ones. Most SMEs surveyed provide similar non-wage benefits to men and women, but there are gender wage gaps at the country level.

Survey respondents identified a number of gender-related constraints and others such as access to market information for both exporting and non-exporting SMEs.

The qualitative case studies generated a number of interesting findings, confirming some of the survey data analysis. We know from existing studies and the survey data that we collected that access to finance is a major constraint for women-owned SMEs. We also found that providers of capital would benefit from gender mainstreaming training that would allow them to serve women-led entrepreneurs with unique needs more effectively. Another issue that became clear from our analysis was that while trade empowered women through job creation, female workers are often crowded in low-skilled low-paying jobs that do not contribute significantly to reductions in inequality. Various barriers surrounding traditional gender norms, information gaps and limited access to, or control over, economic resources remain daily obstacles for women engaged in trade.

The research also offers a number of policy recommendations that are both specific and cut across each country examined for this project.

KEYWORDS

- Gender equality in trade
- International trade
- Inclusive trade; inclusive trade policies
- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Women's economic empowerment
- Women Exporters
- Cambodia, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, Vietnam

1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research project is intended to contribute to developing local research capacity to carry out evidence-based research in Women in Trade, explicitly identifying and promoting best practices for increasing gender equality in trade by improving women's economic empowerment through job creation and contributing to sustainable and inclusive growth.

To this end, TFO Canada carried out an extensive review of the literature on gender and trade. The review consists of a range of key documents, including relevant reports from the World Bank and regional banks, the International Trade Centre, UNCTAD, UN Women, the International Labour Organization, the OECD, and so on. It also includes reference to reports from leading gender and trade research institutions and networks (e.g., International Gender and Trade Network, BRIDGE, Trade Knowledge Network, etc.).

Although the discussion on gender and trade is not new, reliable empirical evidence remains scarce. Following are some of the gaps:

- Lack of gender disaggregated data
- Lack of research on effects of trade on women's employment, particularly in the informal sector
- Lack of sector-specific data particularly for agribusiness and services sectors and more broadly lack of gender-sensitive value chain analysis. Limited transferability of case-study type research to other regional contexts
- Limited research on impact of the provision of business services on women exporters or how trade facilitation activities are contributing to women's participation in trade

Based on the review of the literature, and the research gaps identified above, the research project focused on the following three broad research questions as they related to SMEs:

1. Why – and under what circumstances – do some trade sectors create more jobs for women and others do not?
2. To what extent are the jobs created contributing to women's economic empowerment?¹
3. What strategies and policies are needed to ensure these sectors work optimally?

These questions reflect a real interest for how trade can create employment for, and empower, women, and how trade can yield the maximum benefits for women.

¹ UN Women defines women's economic empowerment as "women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; their access to and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions." (See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>, accessed on May 15th, 2020).

2. OBJECTIVES

Focusing on SMEs across various sectors of economic activity, the overall objective of this research project is to establish a Women in Trade (WIT) Knowledge Platform to promote better access of women-led businesses to Canadian and international markets and contribute to boosting an inclusive and sustainable growth. Through the examination of the relationship between trade, job creation for women, and women's economic empowerment.

WIT Knowledge Platform has the following **three specific objectives**:

- 1) Produce knowledge, evidence, and practical recommendations on how to boost access of women-led businesses to Canadian and global markets
- 2) Establish a multi-stakeholder platform made of researchers, civil society organizations, women-led SMEs, and Trade Support Institutions (TSIs) and promote research, policies, and practices towards a better participation of women in global trade.
- 3) Support capacity building of the recipient and developing country research partners (CSEA and MI) as thought leaders in the field of trade for development

Objective1: Research

In order to fulfill the first objective of producing knowledge on trade and its link with women economic empowerment, TFO Canada sought to identify the research questions that WIT Knowledge Platform will address. To this end, TFO Canada carried out an extensive review of the literature on gender and trade: McGuinness (2004), Aguayo-Tellez (2011), Shaw (2010), Fontana (2006, 2009), Bussolo and De Hoyos (2009), Tran-Nguyen and Beviglia (2004), including works discussed in these reviews. We also draw on analysis of data from recently completed projects as well as learning lessons from the implementation of these projects and results achieved. The literature review identified gaps and challenges which led to the 03 main research questions (*See section1*).

To answer these three main research questions, the project used a mixed-methods approach, namely the collection and analysis of survey data for 610 SMEs across the six targeted countries, complemented by qualitative methods in the form of focus-group discussions and key informant interviews – with employees and SME owners, government officials and trade support institutions. The research provides also a number of policy recommendations that are both specific and cut across each country examined for this project.

Objective2: Dissemination, uptake, and impacts

The research design and methodology, preliminary research findings and final research findings and analysis were shared through multi-stakeholder consultations and dissemination events in two regions sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia.

The multi-stakeholder consultations took place at different stages of the project: Research design, research implementation, and research dissemination stages and involved key public and private sector actors, such as business associations and chambers of commerce, export promotion agencies, especially those representing businesswomen and exporters, research institutions/ academia, Business member Organizations, civil societies, policymakers, and other trade experts.

Objective3: Capacity Building

Through the WIT Knowledge Platform, TFO Canada, with active involvement of Professor Yiagadeesen (Teddy) Samy from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) of Carleton University in Canada, collaboratively worked and supported capacity building of researchers from two regional research institutions - Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa ([CSEA](#)) based in Nigeria and Mekong Institute ([MI](#)) based in Thailand. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) workshops were conducted for TFO Canada staff and partner institutions (MI and CSEA) staff to deepen their understanding and practice of gender and social inclusion mainstreaming. Through this workshop, an explorative discussion on applying 'equity' lens to these socio-economic priorities. For more details please see Annex 4.

TFO Canada and regional research institutions also actively engaged local TSIs in the collection and analysis of data for this research project.

The research project also helped strengthening TFO Canada's capacity as a thought leader on Trade and Gender for developing countries.

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the Concept Note submitted to IDRC in December 2019, a work plan² was prepared in detailed discussion with the Canadian researcher-Dr. Yiagadeesen Samy (Director, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University) and the two regional research partners-CSEA and MI and submitted to IDRC in July 2020. To address gender equality and social inclusion issues, a gender expert was consulted for input on design of the quantitative and qualitative research instruments (*See Annex 1*). With input from the gender expert and further consultations with CSEA, MI and Dr. Samy, the development of the revised research methodology among all the partners was completed during Year1. There were no changes in orientation i.e., research questions and objectives from the Concept Note.

The project used a mixed-methods approach, namely the collection and analysis of survey data for 610 SMEs across six countries, complemented by qualitative methods in the form of focus-group discussions and key informant interviews – with employees and owners of SMEs, government officials, and trade support institutions. Conceptually, mixed methods are helpful because they allow researchers to make sense of contradictions between quantitative and qualitative information, they foster a participatory approach across the research process, and they ultimately provide a more nuanced and deeper understanding of a particular question or questions. Specifically, TFO Canada, building on the experience that it has accumulated in collecting in-house data from its clients, potential clients, and existing projects,

² A detailed work plan with updated dates is outlined in *Annex 3*.

we used quantitative data and methods to examine broad trends and causal paths related to these research questions. In addition, we used other relevant existing data, such as data from the World Bank Enterprise Surveys, as well as data from the regional research partners-Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) and Mekong Institute (MI).

The quantitative analysis allowed us to identify more specific questions that the case studies can answer in more detail. In addition to surveying the SMEs, during the 3rd year of the project, the analysis was complemented by case studies in six target countries through qualitative analysis using three main research tools, namely FGD (Focus Group Discussions), KII (Key Informant Interviews) in both regions and IDI³ (In-depth Interviews) with women entrepreneurs in South-east Asia region.

Guidelines for FGDs are detailed in *Annex 2*. FGDs were organized, in each of the six countries, for:

- Managers and employers
- Government officials and TSOs
- Employees/workers

The KIIs were conducted mainly with women entrepreneurship associations and leaders of Trade Support Organizations (TSOs) from the samples that were initially surveyed⁴.



Focus Group Discussions



Key Informant Interviews



In-depth One-One Interviews

The qualitative component of the research agenda adopted a multi-stakeholder approach involving key private and public sector actors and influencers, such as business associations and chambers of commerce, export promotion agencies, especially those representing businesswomen and exporters.

These FGDs, KIIs and IDIs helped to complement the evidence emerging from the survey data collected and to better understand the challenges of women engaging in trade in the target countries. Further, these interviews fully captured the information sought to answer the research questions. The FGD, KII, and IDI also provided an opportunity to understand women-in-trade issues at a deeper level than we could access with the survey and to gain a deeper understanding of existing knowledge, or to gain the "why" and "how" of issues affecting women in trade.

The unit of analysis for this research project was SMEs⁵. It is worth reiterating that SMEs contribute significantly to job creation (60-70% of workers in the majority of countries) and growth across countries. In the African context, it is estimated that they employ 80 percent of the workforce in both the formal and informal sectors. The contribution to employment and growth is also significant across the South-East Asia region but there is greater variation across countries. Ultimately, our goal is to understand why certain trade sectors and strategies are more conducive for women's economic empowerment and why others are not.

³ IDIs with women entrepreneurs were conducted in Southeast Asia region to understand the perspectives of women as employers in the trade sectors and to get insights into their overall entrepreneurship experience.

⁴ IDIs were done with women entrepreneurs in Vietnam and Cambodia

⁵ Quantitative survey was done for formal as well as informal SMEs. Qualitative survey was done for formal SMEs Only.

Through focus-group discussions with female SME employees, specific questions about the relationship between job creation and women's economic empowerment were raised. Questions included: the nature of jobs; job opportunities and advancement opportunities for women; voice within the SME; control over income, time and decision-making within the household. Participants were also asked to reflect on what decent work means for them and how their current roles contribute to the latter; alternatively, specific questions that relate to various aspects of decent work were asked.

According to the ILO:

"Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men." <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis enabled us to draw conclusions related to the following four broad categories of inquiry which will lead to both recommendations for policy and practice. Some of the specific questions highlighted below are more amenable to empirical analysis, such as: which sectors are creating more jobs for women as a result of trade, and do these sectors matter for Canada? How does trade affect employment and income for women and men in the SMEs under consideration? Is there a significant difference in employment by sector? How does women ownership of SMEs affect the outcomes?

Specific Research Questions:

Opportunities

- In which sectors/products/services in each of the selected countries will trade maximize the growth of "decent jobs" for women?
- Do these sectors/products/services have a market in Canada or elsewhere?
- To what extent are women-led companies present in these sectors/products/services?
- What are the competitive advantages? How could innovative technologies enhance competitiveness?

Challenges

- What are the key constraints faced by SMEs and, in particular, women-led companies to increase their exports to destination markets, including Canada?
- Are there contextual and structural constraints at the country-region-level, sector-level or gender-related constraints to expanding exports to the destination market?
- What are the technological challenges, particularly for women-led SMEs?
- What have been the long and short term effects of external shocks (e.g., COVID-19)?

Enabling Environment

- What role can public and private Trade Support Institutions (TSIs) in the selected countries play to improve the enabling environment/ reduce the barriers for SMEs and in particular women-led exporters?
- What role do trade agreements and, in particular, gender chapters play to improve the enabling environment for women-led and men-led SME exporters?

- What is the role of public policy in the trade, SME and gender equality space?
- What factors contribute to the sustainability of export growth in sectors that increase the creation of “decent jobs”?

Impact

- What is the impact of increased trade on employment and income for women and men from vulnerable groups in the selected developing countries?
- To what extent does increased trade increase ‘decent’ jobs?
- What sectors/products/services create more jobs and specifically more jobs for women (per region, country, and policy environment)?
- Do women-led companies create more jobs for women and more ‘decent’ jobs?

All of the specific questions were addressed qualitatively and expanded upon, and modified in consultation with key stakeholders (*See Annex 1 & 2*).

4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project Beneficiaries

This research benefitted the private sector (SMEs, business associations), policy makers as well as academia to identify challenges and opportunities to achieving women's economic empowerment in the target countries.

Project Components

The research project has the following 04 components:

Component 1: Research design and validation
Main activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Identify data requirements and gaps in TFO Canada's database, focusing specifically on SMEs in 06 identified countries - Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria Senegal, Cambodia, Vietnam and develop questionnaire in collaboration with partners (CSEA and MI) for data collection.b) Arrange the first multi stakeholder consultation to present and discuss the research plan and methodology.c) Finalize empirical methodology to answer research questions.
Component 2: Research Implementation
Main activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Obtain quantitative data from SMEs respondents from 6 target countries.b) Complete quantitative analysis of datasets developed.c) Develop plan for case studies (specify research questions, finalize methodology, agree on source and number of interviewees, specify format and content of 6 research reports).d) Arrange the second multi stakeholder consultation to present preliminary findings of quantitative analysis and the proposal for qualitative analysis.e) Finalize quantitative analysis and plan for case studies (qualitative analysis).f) Co-author two research reports with CSEA and MI based on quantitative analysis.g) Interview stakeholders for case studies.h) Prepare case studies for presentation.
Component 3: Capacity Building
Main activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Facilitate research partners' capacity building on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).b) Facilitate TSI capacity building on GESI (under WITISG Project funded by Global Affairs Canada).c) Facilitate TSI capacity building on trade promotion (under WITISG Project funded by Global Affairs Canada).
Component 4: Dissemination
Main activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Present results from the research reports in regional multi-stakeholder forums in Africa and Asia.b) Prepare qualitative research reports based on case studies.c) Arrange one research seminar to be hosted by TFO Canada/IDRC in Canada to present results from the research reports.d) Prepare policy papers, book manuscript for publication.

The following table summarizes the activities completed under this research project and their timelines:

Activity	Component	Timeline	Status
Create an Approach Note based on the Concept Note	1	Year1	Completed
Contract research partners (CSEA, MI) and discuss activities, responsibilities, and timelines	1	Year1	Completed
Identify data requirements and gaps in TFO database, focusing specifically on SMEs in 6 target countries and develop questionnaire in collaboration with partners (CSEA and MI) for data collection	1	Year1	Completed
Finalize the research questions with input from gender expert	1	Year1	Completed
Arrange multi stakeholder Consultation 1 on the research plan and methodology	1	Year2	Completed
Finalize empirical methodology to answer research questions	1	Year2	Completed
Obtain quantitative data from SME respondents from 6 target countries	2	Year2	Completed
Facilitate TSI capacity building on gender (under WITISG Project funded by Global Affairs Canada)	3	Year2	Completed
Facilitate TSI capacity building on trade promotion (under WITISG Project funded by Global Affairs Canada)	3	Year2-3	Completed
Complete quantitative analysis of datasets developed	2	Year3	Completed
Develop a plan for case studies (specify research questions, finalize methodology, agree on source and number of interviewees, specify format and content of research reports)	2	Year3	Completed
Arrange the second multi stakeholder consultation to present preliminary findings of quantitative analysis and the proposal for qualitative analysis	2	Year3	Completed
Finalize quantitative analysis and plan for case studies (qualitative analysis)	2	Year3	Completed
Facilitate research partners' capacity building on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	3	Year3	Completed
Co-author two research reports with CSEA and MI based on quantitative analysis	2	Year3	Completed
Interview stakeholders for case studies	2	Year3	Completed
Prepare case studies for presentation	2	Year3	Completed
Facilitate TSI capacity building on trade promotion and research (under WITISG Project funded by Global Affairs Canada)	3	Year3	Completed
Present results from the research reports in regional multi-stakeholder forums	4	Year3	Completed
Prepare qualitative research reports based on case studies	4	Year3	Completed

Arrange one research seminar to be hosted by TFO Canada/ IDRC in Ottawa, to present results from the research reports	4	Year3	Completed
Prepare policy papers, book manuscript for publication	4	Year3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy papers Completed • Book manuscript (<i>Publication scheduled in 2023</i>)

In Year 1, the project commenced with detailed discussions between TFO Canada, Dr. Yiagadeesen Samy (Director, Normal Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University), and regional research organizations- Centre for Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) and Mekong Institute (MI) on research methodology, roles and responsibilities and timelines (as presented in the Concept Note submitted to IDRC in Year 1).

In Year 2, CSEA and MI arranged the first multi stake-holder consultations workshop to validate the research methodology and objectives, facilitated a questionnaire survey of 610 SMEs in the six target countries of the two regions.

The table below is the summary of the 1st multi-stakeholder consultations event.

First multi-Stakeholder consultations		
Region	Africa	Asia
Country	Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Senegal	Cambodia and Vietnam
Event Date	June 17, 2021	April 29, 2021
Number of events	01 event	01 event
Delivery approach	Virtual	Virtual
Number of participants	54 participants from 04 countries	33 participants from 02 countries
Objective	Share the research plan and methodology (including the SME survey questionnaire in order to collect feedback from participants.	
Type of stakeholders	Key public and private sector actors, such as business associations and chambers of commerce, export promotion agencies especially those representing businesswomen and exporters, research institutions/ academia, Business member Organizations, civil societies, policymakers and other trade experts.	

During these consultations, the research plan and methodology (including the quantitative survey instrument) were shared with stakeholders and finalized based on their feedback. A field testing was then carried out by CSEA and MI to refine the questions.

Based on the finalized questionnaire (*See Annex 1*) surveys were conducted during Oct-Dec 2021 for 610 SMEs - Vietnam (107), Cambodia (101), Ghana (112), Madagascar (90), Nigeria (98), and Senegal (102) –

from 03 Sectors - Agriculture (133), Services (205), Manufacturing (272). The data analysis also started in late December 2021 and was completed in February 2022.

In addition to that, Trade Support Institutions' (TSIs) capacity building on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) was completed in all 06 target countries and the training of trainers were conducted in 06 target countries, funded through the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable growth project (funded by GAC) and managed by TFO Canada.

In Year 3, based on the findings of the quantitative analysis, TFO Canada, Dr. Yiagadeesen Samy, CSEA, and MI prepared a draft methodology for the qualitative analysis and presented that to a second multi stakeholder consultation workshop in the two regions along with the results of the initial quantitative analysis.

The table below is the summary of the 2nd multi-stakeholder consultations event.

Second multi-Stakeholder consultations		
Region	Africa	Asia
Country	Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Senegal	Cambodia and Vietnam
Event Date	Feb 28, 2022	March 03, 2022
Number of events	01 event	01 event
Delivery approach	Virtual	Virtual
Number of participants	27 participants from 04 countries	16 participants from 02 countries
Objective	Share the preliminary findings of the SME survey (quantitative analysis) conducted and to collect feedback from the participants to further improve data collection tools for the qualitative study.	
Type of stakeholders	Key public and private sector actors, such as business associations and chambers of commerce, export promotion agencies especially those representing businesswomen and exporters, research institutions/academia, Business member Organizations, civil societies, policymakers, and other trade experts.	

Using the finalized tools, CSEA and MI completed the qualitative research and analysis (including case studies reports) in June 2022 and presented the findings in the third round of regional multi-stakeholder forums in Africa and Asia.

Regional multi-Stakeholder forums		
Region	Africa	Asia
Country	Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Senegal	Cambodia and Vietnam
Event Date	July 19 (<i>in-person event in Senegal Madagascar participants joined virtually</i>). July 20 (<i>in-person event in Nigeria; Ghana participants joined virtually</i>).	July 15 (Cambodia) Aug 10 (Vietnam)

Number of events	02 events	02 events
Delivery approach	Hybrid	In-person
Objective	Share research findings of both qualitative and quantitative analyses along with policy recommendations with stakeholders from both regions (Africa and Asia) in order to reflect on these findings and share their own experience.	
Type of stakeholders	Key public and private sector actors, such as business associations and chambers of commerce, export promotion agencies, especially those representing businesswomen and exporters, research institutions/academia, Business member Organizations, civil societies, policymakers, and other trade experts.	

Finally, the final dissemination of the quantitative and qualitative research findings took place in Canada on Nov 25, 2022. TFO Canada also arranged capacity building of CSEA Staff (Dec 05-06, 2022; virtually) and MI Staff (Dec 13-14, 2022; in-person in Thailand) on GESI.

Lessons learned

The most important aspects for the success of this research project were:

- The involvement and participation of stakeholders at different stages of the project: Research design, research implementation and research dissemination stages; including the private sector as a key stakeholder and exporting SMEs in the targeted developing countries - Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, Cambodia, and Vietnam - especially women-owned businesses.
- The contingency strategy used by research partners during the data collection phase which ensured collecting relevant data despite the pandemic. For instance, in Cambodia and Vietnam, data collectors were hired and approached stakeholders (Chambers of commerce and other related organizations/associations) and contacted SMEs individually to obtain their interest and involvement.
- Tripartite discussion and exchange of knowledge and experience at different stages of the project: This includes TFO Canada, Dr. Yiagadeesen Samy (Director of the Normal Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University) and regional research organizations - Centre for Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) and Mekong Institute (MI) - who have contributed to the success of the project by sharing their experiences, perspectives, and knowledge.

5. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Following is a summary of the expected project outputs and their status:

Expected outputs	Adjustment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One concept paper: overview of research problem, including literature review, research agenda, and refined methodology and workplan (<i>See Annex 3</i>) 	None	Completed and submitted to IDRC in year 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two quantitative papers (one for each region) and six qualitative papers (one for each case study) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One (01) quantitative paper - for both regions. Two (02) qualitative papers (one per region) <p>Note: <i>A book proposal was submitted to the publisher in Dec 2022.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed and submitted to IDRC in year 3 <p>Note: <i>Book Publication (Planned in 2023)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two policy briefs summarizing the findings of the quantitative analysis (one for each region) 	One (01) policy brief summarizing the findings of the quantitative analysis and covering both regions.	Completed and submitted to IDRC in year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two policy briefs summarizing the results of the case studies (one for each region) 	Six (06) policy briefs summarizing the results of the cases studies (one per country)	Completed and submitted to IDRC in year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A database for quantitative analysis as well as an online knowledge platform on women in trade 	Survey data for 610 SMEs across six countries (Cambodia and Vietnam from South-East Asia; Madagascar, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal from sub-Saharan Africa)	Submitted to IDRC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A capstone report compiling and summarizing the different research outputs and findings 	None	Completed and submitted to IDRC in year 3

Research

The project used a mixed-methods approach, namely the collection and analysis of survey data for 610 SMEs across the six targeted countries, complemented by qualitative methods in the form of focus-group discussions and key informant interviews – with employees and SME owners, government officials, and trade support institutions. The research project results completed are as follows:

- Survey data for 610 SMEs across six countries (Cambodia and Vietnam from South-East Asia; Madagascar, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal from sub-Saharan Africa)
- Survey report based on survey data collected.

- Case study report for the 04 sub-Saharan African countries based on qualitative analysis (focus-group discussions and key informant interviews)
- Case study report for the 02 South-East Asian countries based on qualitative analysis (focus-group discussions and key informant interviews)
- 07 policy briefs (01 based on the survey findings; 06 for the country case studies based on the qualitative analysis)
- 01 capstone report

Capacity building

Through the WIT Knowledge Platform, an additional impact was to build the policy-making capacity of TSIs and other policy makers and implementers in the area of inclusive growth. In Dec 2022, a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) workshops were conducted for TFO Canada staff and partner institutions (MI and CSEA) staff to deepen their understanding and practice of gender and social inclusion mainstreaming. Through this workshop, the research partners also developed their institutional gender action plan.

In addition, under WITISG, local TSIs (from the six target countries) received in 2021-22 training on gender-responsive services and training on trade promotion and research, in particular impact assessment and market intelligence and implementation of monitoring & evaluation systems, so that they can generate not only the data for this research project but also their own data.

The research project also helped strengthening TFO Canada's capacity as a thought leader on Trade and Gender for developing countries.

Policy/practice influence

During the third round of regional multi-stakeholder forums, the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses, along with specific policy recommendations, were shared with the stakeholders from both regions (Africa and Asia) in order for them to reflect on these results and share their own experiences, considering country-specific contextual and structural factors. This allowed us to propose generalizable strategies and solutions for supporting women exporters and develop policy recommendations for evidence-based best practices to promote gender equality in trade, improving women's economic empowerment and contributing to sustainable and inclusive growth.

After three rounds of regional multi-stakeholder forums, the final research findings were presented by CSEA, MI, Dr. Teddy Y. Samy, and TFO Canada during the dissemination event (hybrid) on November 25, 2022, in Ottawa, Canada.

In addition to these multi-stakeholder forums, TFO Canada hosted regular seminars and workshops under Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth - WITISG⁶ with Trade Representatives from Embassies, High Commissions, and Consulates that are based in Canada. These meetings, which are funded by Global Affairs Canada project funds, provided an excellent opportunity to share during the life

⁶ This project will be funded primarily by Global Affairs Canada and TFO Canada is implementing the activities in 20 countries (Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia).

of this project. It should also be noted that TFO Canada is regularly invited to present at various trade and development events (both in Canada and abroad), thus allowing many other opportunities to exchange on what we are learning through this initiative. All research findings will be housed on the TFO Canada website (www.tfocanada.ca).

The research provides also a number of policy recommendations that are both specific and cut across each country examined for this project. Our analysis points to a number of recommendations that could be implemented to improve our understanding of how SMEs can empower women through trade. These include: the need to collect gender-disaggregated data for more regions/countries and sectors, and for both exporting and non-exporting firms; direct policies to support women entrepreneurs, including those that are interested in exporting their products; implementation of affirmative action that leads to substantive gains for women; addressing trade-related constraints that are context-specific such as access to finance, market access information, or through trade support organizations; and helping SMEs recover from the effects of the pandemic.

6. PROJECT OUTCOMES

The research outcomes are summarized in the table below:

Activity	Immediate outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Ultimate outcome
Component 1: Research design and validation	Research methodology takes account of gender equality issues and regional context	Improved capacity of researchers and TSIs to gather and analyze gender-disaggregated trade and employment data	Trade-generated economic growth benefits in developing countries women and men more equitably
Component 2: Research Implementation	Policy makers and practitioners have access to evidence-based research for formulating policy and putting into practice	Policy makers put in place more effective policies related to inclusive growth	Research implementation

Knowledge Generation

- The research benefitted the private sector (SMEs, business associations), policy makers as well as academia to identify challenges and opportunities to achieving women's economic empowerment in the target countries. This was made possible through the involvement and participation of stakeholders at different stages of the project: Research design, research implementation and research dissemination stages; including the private sector as a key stakeholder and exporting SMEs in the targeted developing countries - Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, Cambodia, and Vietnam - especially women-owned businesses.
- TFO Canada and regional research institutions also actively engaged local TSIs in the collection and analysis of data for this research project. In addition, under WITISG project, local TSIs (from the six target countries) received training on gender responsive services and training on trade promotion and research. The research project also helped strengthening TFO Canada's capacity as a thought leader on Trade and Gender for developing countries.
- Through the WIT Knowledge Platform, an additional impact was to build the policy-making capacity of TSIs and other policy makers and implementers in the area of inclusive growth. Through GESI workshops, regional research partners deepened their understanding and practice of gender and social inclusion mainstreaming and also developed their institutional gender action plan with the guidance of TFO Canada GESI expert.

Change

- Despite the fact that social changes take time to occur, the project provided effective strategies and policies to enhance impact of trade sectors (in particular for women-owned SMEs), along with specific actionable plans for Government and TSOs.

For instance: In Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Senegal, many recommendations were put forward by the participants at the FGD/KIIs with government officials and TSOs, including **Capacity building for women, creating more advocacy and more support packages for women-owned businesses, Strengthening association with women-owned businesses.**

The Ghana case study also submits that *“SMEs need support in terms of how they will do proper documentation/certification since this is important if you want to export. Also, financial support and market access or linkages is important. . . existing policies favour big firms and not SMEs. We should have pro-SME policies to encourage them to venture into export”* - TSO KII participant, Ghana.

Sustainability

- In particular, we will aim to identify effective strategies appropriate for women exporters from LDCs and Sub-Saharan Africa. These strategies will be applied by the multi-stakeholder forum members. In addition, TFO Canada will apply and test the new and innovative strategies in its ongoing and forthcoming projects, for example WITISG, thus creating an immediate feedback loop.
- Achieving gender equality in trade participation requires intentional policies and strategies from both the government and trade support organizations. The project contains solutions to enable women-led SMEs from developing countries to benefit from international trade opportunities, which can be used by both the private and public sector at country, regional and global levels.
- This research will also better position TFO Canada as a thought leader on trade and development from a gender perspective. Furthermore, the Knowledge Platform will inform and be informed by ongoing implementation of trade promotion projects such as WITISG and other future opportunities.

Gender Impact

- During research implementation, the planning process ensured the following:
 - Gender equality specialist was consulted in order to address gender equality and social inclusion issues and to provide inputs on the design of the quantitative and qualitative research instruments.
 - External support was sought from women's organizations, key female and male decision makers, leaders, and allies
 - The objective of gender equality is not lost in rhetoric or in preoccupation with agency processes.

- Gender analysis is an essential tool for understanding the local context. For the SME surveys, a gender analysis was applied to gather information on:
 - The differential perspectives, roles, needs, and interests of women and men in the country, sector, or institution, including the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men;
 - The relations between women and men pertaining to their access to, and control over resources, benefits, and decision-making processes;
 - The potential differential impact of a trade and development program or project interventions on women and men, girls and boys;
 - Social and cultural constraints, opportunities, and entry points for reducing gender inequalities and promoting more equal relations between women and men;
 - The capacity of institutions to program for gender equality; and
 - The differences among women and men and the diversity of their circumstances, social relationships, and consequent status (e.g., their class, race, caste, ethnicity, age, culture, and abilities). Data, disaggregated by sex, as well as by age and socio-economic and ethnic groups, were collected.
- During multi-stakeholder and dissemination events: Participatory approaches were used, where women and men actively took part in the discussion of the research findings.

Beneficiaries' Contribution

- The regional research partners contributed a total of **CAD 26,477** in-kind⁷ to the project (MI: **CAD 10,483** and CSEA **CAD 15,994**) which represents 4.5% of the total project value. This reflects the level of engagement of the regional research partners in the project. TFO Canada contributed a total of **CAD 370,973** for 06 research countries for TSI Capacity building under WITISG project funded by Global Affairs Canada which represents **63%** of the total project value.

Lessons Learned

- **Component1: Research design and validation**
 - A key to the success of the research project was the consultation of a gender expert to address gender and social inclusion issues and to provide input into the design of the quantitative and qualitative research instruments.
 - Throughout the research design, an exchange of knowledge and experience at different stages of the project was planned. This includes TFO Canada, Dr. Yiagadeesen Samy (Director of the Normal Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University) and regional research organizations - Centre for Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) and Mekong Institute (MI).
 - Capacity building of researchers from 2 regional research institutions - Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa ([CSEA](#)) based in Nigeria and Mekong Institute ([MI](#)) based in Thailand. A GESI

⁷ Includes but not limited to volunteer time, travel, accommodation, room and equipment rental, hospitality expenses borne by implementing partners in the target countries.

workshops were delivered to deepen partners' understanding and practice of GESI mainstreaming.

- Level of engagement of all parties in the project was also reflected in the total in-kind contribution. For instance: under WITISG project, TFO Canada facilitated trainings to local TSIs (from the six target countries) in 2021-22, on gender-responsive services and on trade promotion.

- **Component2: Research Implementation**

- Local TSIs involvement in the collection and analysis of data for this research project.
- One of the most important aspects for the success of this research project was the involvement of stakeholders (from all 06 target countries) and the participatory approaches used at different stages of the project: Research design, research implementation, and research dissemination stages; including the private sector as a key stakeholder and exporting SMEs in the targeted developing countries - Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, Cambodia, and Vietnam - especially women-owned businesses.
- During the data collection phase (in 2021) Cambodia and Vietnam suffered from waves of Covid-19 and applied certain level of lockdown. Most of SMEs were struggling on their business and didn't have time and patience to respond to the research questionnaire but preferred to focus more on their business operation. A contingency strategy was used by the regional partners which ensured collecting relevant data. For instance, in Cambodia and Vietnam, data collectors were hired and approached stakeholders (Chambers of commerce and other related organizations/associations) and contacted SMEs individually to obtain their interest and involvement.

7. OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Multi-stakeholder consultations and partnership with regional research organizations at different stages of the project (research design, research implementation, and research dissemination) and the involvement of key public and private sector stakeholders – such as business associations and chambers of commerce, export promotion agencies, particularly those representing businesswomen and exporters, research/academic institutions, business member organizations, civil society, policy makers and other trade experts – ensured that all parties' viewpoints and reflections on the research results, including their own experience, were properly incorporated.

The research findings point to a number of recommendations that could be implemented. The following specific interventions can be considered for strengthening women in the trade sectors from developing countries in Africa and Southeast Asia:

Actionable Plans for Trade Support Organizations (TSOs)

- **Capacity building for women.**
 - TSOs should train women on export strategies, standards, packaging, branding, and certification.
 - Women in trade should also be supported and trained by TSOs on access and use of digital technology. This could include capacity building activities on the usage of digital marketing tools, conducting online market research and virtual market linkages, digital brand building and product promotions, digital supply chain management, and digital financial services, and digitization of trade finance instruments.
 - Industry-specific trade market information or online resource center in local languages for women exporters to diversify their target markets/industries and access the market in exporting countries.
 - Demand-based vocational training for women working in trade to diversify their employment opportunities and move into management positions in the trade sector.
- **Creating more advocacy and more support packages for women-owned businesses.**
 - TSOs could engage in massive awareness campaigns about development in international trade such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It is also necessary to integrate gender components into trade-related policies and strategies, including bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, to ensure equal access to trade opportunities for women in the global value chain.
 - TSOs need to amplify the voice of women in trade policies and negotiations. Most women see TSOs as a channel to convey their concerns to government authorities and other stakeholders for gender-sensitive trade reforms.
- **Having a stronger association with women-owned businesses.**
 - TSOs need to associate more closely with women, particularly in rural areas. Findings from the study (in Africa) indicate that most women at the grassroots level are not aware of the operations of the TSOs. Partner with institutions across the trade sectors to promote skills development for women in trade and women-led organizations.

- Sector-specific peer support networks among women exporters to exchange information/experiences and create similar support systems. Recognition of performance in gender equality and workplace equity and champion awards for companies in the business sectors. This can also be a tool to inspire other women exporters.

Actionable Plans for Government

- **Increased supervision of Intervention programmes designed to support women.** This can be done by ensuring that actual beneficiaries of intervention programs receive the promised funds. In addition, there is a need to put in place a supervisory panel that ensures that agencies designated for supporting women in trade carry out their duties. This actionable plan is applicable to the four countries in Africa.
- **Provision of production/manufacturing equipment.** The findings indicate that most women do not have some of the equipment required for the manufacturing and processing products in their sector. There is a need to provide these pieces of machinery and equipment at concessional terms, particularly for the women in the textile industry in Madagascar.
- **Improvement in the communication channel on exporting requirements.** There is a need to put measures in place for transparency. This can be done by launching a website dedicated to women, where all the information related to export requirements will be hosted.
- **Improved provision and access to credits.** Government across the case studies should individually set up lower loan rates and guarantee funds. There is also a need to train women in financial management. Gender mainstreaming workshops can be conducted with technical assistance from financial institutions, including SME investment banks, private investors, and trade finance providers, to design, measure and deliver financial products and services tailored to women entrepreneurs/exporters. Furthermore, change the approach to minimize intermediaries between the recipients of intervention funds and the government.

8. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

Survey of SMEs

Background Information

- 1) Country of your company
- 2) What is the name of your company?
- 3) What year did your company start its operations?
- 4) In what sector is your company operating? What product(s) does your company manufacture?
Are you selling final, intermediate or primary products?
Sector _____
Products _____
- 5) On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is more favorable, would you characterize your sector of operation as being more favorable to women-owned companies or not?
- 6) For the last five years, list the yearly value of production of your company (in USD or local currency).

2021 _____

2020 _____

2019 _____

2018 _____

2017 _____

Employees

- 7) How many male and female employees has your company employed in the following years:
 - Today: Women ____, Men ____
 - Two years ago: Women ____, Men ____
- 8) How many of your current employees are regular? Women ____, Men ____
- 9) How many of your current employees are casual? Women ____, Men ____
- 10) Thinking about your ownership structure, how many people own the company?
 - How many are women?
 - How many are men?
- 11) Thinking about your management structure/team (i.e., individuals who plan and make decisions in the business and/or are in supervisory roles) – how many are women/men?
 - Women ____
 - Men ____

Nature of Work, Wages and Benefits

- 12) In your company, are there employment or social protection benefits provided to your employees?
- Yes/no
 - If yes, what employment or social protection benefits does your organization offer?
 - If yes, do all employees receive the same benefits? How are these benefits different for men and women?
- 13) Please provide a breakdown of the following types of jobs in your company in terms of men and women:
- Worker: Women ____, Men ____
 - Supervisor: Women ____, Men ____
 - Business support (accounting, marketing, HR, etc): Women ____, Men ____
 - Senior management (non-production related): Women ____, Men ____
 - Other (please specify): Women ____, Men ____
- 14) What is the yearly average salary for women and men in the following jobs:
- Currently
 - Worker: Women ____, Men ____
 - Supervisor: Women ____, Men ____
 - Business support (accounting, marketing, HR, etc): Women ____, Men ____
 - Senior management: Women ____, Men ____
 - Other (please specify): Women ____, Men ____
 - Two years ago
- 15) Does your company hire specific groups (such as experts/consultants) based on specific skills being sought after? Yes/No. If so, what specific skills are you looking for when hiring female employees (examples might include better productivity, leadership qualities, better technical skills)?
- 16) Do you know if there are government/regulatory incentives for hiring women rather than men for different job positions?
- Yes/no/don't know
 - If yes, please explain what incentives
- 17) Do you know if there are government/regulatory disincentives for hiring women rather than men in different job positions?
- Yes/no/don't know
 - If yes, please explain what disincentives
- 18) Are there any other reasons why you would choose to hire a woman rather than a man?
- 19) Are there any other reasons why you would choose to not hire a woman rather than a man?

Trade-Related Questions

- 20) When did your company start exporting? What are the main countries you are exporting to?
- 21) Do you work with 'subcontractors' or 'agents' to market and sell your products?
- 22) What was your main motivation for exporting your products as opposed to selling locally?
- 23) For the last five years, list the yearly value of exports (in USD).
- 24) If you are not currently exporting, why is that the case? What are the main constraints that prevent you from exporting? What are some of the factors or incentives that would encourage you to export?

- 25) In your opinion, do women-led SMEs/women-owned SMEs encounter more difficulties than men-led SMEs/men-owned SMEs in trade?
- Yes/no
 - If yes, please explain and provide examples.
- 26) In your opinion, are there contextual and/or structural and/or gender-related constraints* at the country/region/sector levels that prevent your company from increasing exports to destination markets?
- Yes/no
 - If yes, please explain and provide examples.

*Contextual constraints could be infrastructure, information, product standards/quality; structural constraints could be government procedures and regulations, business environment, absence of capacity development; gender-related constraints could be lack of support for women-led businesses, lack of access to finance for women.

- 27) Do you think that gender-related constraints are more important, less important or of equal importance as other constraints that prevent your company from exporting?
- 28) Does your company use digital platforms for trade or cross-border ecommerce?
- Yes/no
 - If yes, which digital platforms does your company use?
- 29) Do you think that women-led SMEs face specific technological challenges?
- Yes/no
 - If yes, can you provide examples?
- 30) What have been the effects of external shocks such as COVID-19 on your company? Have these effects persisted over time? How has COVID-19 affected your company's ability to trade?
- 31) If you need information about trade and exports to other countries, where and how do you obtain them? Are there challenges in obtaining this information?

Annex 2: Guidelines for FGDs

Main Research Questions for the Project

- 1) Why – and under what circumstances – do some trade sectors create more jobs for women and others do not?
- 2) To what extent are the jobs created contributing to women's economic empowerment?
- 3) What strategies or policies are needed to ensure these sectors work optimally?

Definitions

UN Women defines **economic empowerment** as “women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; their access to and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions.

Decent work according to the ILO involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men

The OECD defines **economic empowerment** as “the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognise the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information.”

***Note1:** Information about Participants: Need to collect background questions about participants (as appropriate), for example: age, sex, years worked in company, status in company, type of work, sector of work, exporting or not ... etc.*

***Note2:** Need to ensure that different sectors – agriculture, manufacturing and services – are represented.*

FGDs organized as follows:

- 1) Managers and employers
- 2) Government officials and Trade Support Organizations (TSOs)
- 3) Employees/workers: minimum of 2 FGDs with a) women only b) both men and women

1. FGD for Managers and Employers

- **Trade-related questions (for exporting SMEs) - (map to research question 1)**

Lead question: Do exporting SMEs create more jobs for women and if so why?

For discussion:

Q1. Does it matter to you that your company is exporting goods to foreign markets or not? If yes, can you explain why?

Q2. Do you think that your sector of work is conducive to the creation of jobs for women? Do you think it would be different if your company did not export? Discuss why.

Q3. Do you think that incomes are different in firms that export in comparison to firms that do not export? Discuss why.

Q4. Do you think that work conditions (for example your hours of work, health and safety standards, overtime pay etc.) are different in firms that export in comparison to firms that do not export?? If yes, can you explain why?

Q5. Do you believe that your supply chain is impacted by your export orientation – if so how. Would business and employment practices be different if you were not exporting?”

- **Income, Opportunities and Agency - (map to research question 2)**

Lead question: Can you make decisions related to your employment and salary?

For discussion:

Q1. Can you make business decisions for the firm? Would it be different if you were a man?

Q2. Are there practices related to income and work conditions in your sector that favor men more than women?

Q3. As an owner of SME, do you have more chance to participate in community groups/ associations/networks, in community decision-making and have leadership role in the community?

Q4. Are there both men and women in supervisor/management roles in your firm? Can women get promoted?

Q5. Are there specific challenges that women face in entering, and being promoted, in your industry?

- **Strategies and Policies (map to research question 3)**

Lead question: What strategies or policies are needed to ensure that women-owned businesses are supported?

For discussion:

Q1. Do women-led SMEs benefit from special programs/incentives to support/encourage them to export their products?

Q2. Are there specific programs/policies and support that you have received from trade promotion agencies? Are there obstacles/challenges to access support and resources?

Q3. Do you think that existing policies promote fair and equitable women participation in exports? How can trade support organizations support women-led organizations and women in general?

Q4. Survey results indicate that gender was not always listed as a major constraint for trade by women-led SMEs, suggesting that there are other constraints. What are they? Please provide examples.

Q5. Survey results indicate that COVID-19 has negatively impacted SMEs. How do you see the pandemic affecting future perspectives for women-led SMEs and trade?

2. FGD for Government Officials and Trade Support Organizations (TSOs)

- **Trade-related questions (for exporting SMEs) - (map to research questions 1 and 2)**

Lead question: Do exporting SMEs create more jobs for women and if so, why?

For discussion:

Q1. In your experience, in what ways are women-owned businesses engaging in exports different from man-owned ones?

Q2. Do you think that some specific export sectors are more conducive to the creation of jobs for women? Discuss why.

Q3. What are the opportunities (and challenges) offered by regional trade agreements for women-led SMEs, in terms of access to global markets, but also more importantly regional markets? Please provide examples.

- **Strategies and Policies (map to research question 3)**

Lead question: What strategies or policies are needed to ensure that women-owned businesses are supported?

For discussion:

Q1. Do women-led SMEs benefit from special programs/incentives to support/encourage them to export their products? If yes, please provide examples. If not, can you think of possible strategies.

Q2. Do you think that existing policies promote fair and equitable women participation in exports? Discuss why or why not.

Q3. How can the government and trade support organizations (TSOs) support women-led organizations and women in general? Please provide specific examples.

Q4. Survey results indicate that gender was not always listed as a major constraint for trade by women-led SMEs, suggesting that there are other constraints. What are they? Please provide examples.

Q5. Survey results indicate that COVID-19 has impacted SMEs. How do you see the pandemic affecting future perspectives for women-led SMEs and trade?

3. FGD for Workers/Employees

- **Trade-related questions (for exporting SMEs) - (map to research question 1)**

Lead question: Do exporting SMEs create more jobs for women and if so, why?

For discussion:

Q1. Do you think that your sector of work is conducive to the creation of jobs for women? Do you think it would be different if your company did not export? Discuss why.

Q2. Do you think that incomes are different in firms that export in comparison to firms that do not export? Discuss why.

Q3. Do you think that work conditions (for example your hours of work, health and safety standards, overtime pay etc.) are different in firms that export in comparison to firms that do not export?? If yes, can you explain why?

- **Income and Work Conditions - (map to research question 2)**

Lead question: Do you consider the income that you earn decent and are your work conditions adequate?

For discussion:

Q1. Are your work conditions (e.g. hours of work, health and other benefits, safety standards etc.) adequate? (For example: are working hours reasonable and can you say no to overtime? are unions a possibility in your sector? are there specific work conditions that would be beneficial to you and which ones?)

Q2. Do you consider that you receive an adequate wage for your labour? Discuss why.

Q3. Are there practices related to income and work conditions in your sector that favor men more than women? Discuss why.

Q4. Do you face discrimination in your work environment. Are there protocols/training in place for dealing with harassment, violence, complaints etc.? Discuss why.

- **Agency (for women) - (map to research question 2)**

Lead question: Can you make decisions related to your employment and salary?

For discussion:

Q1. Can you decide to pursue a new job or a promotion? Has this changed before you had a job and after you had a job?

Q2. How do you decide how the income you earn is spent? Can you make this decision alone?

Q3. Do you have an opportunity to express your opinion and participate in decision-making at work?

Annex 3: Workplan

Roles and responsibilities

TFO Canada will collaborate with NPSIA at Carleton University, CSEA and MI, local Trade support Institutions (TSIs) – public and private – and support organizations that promote women in business and trade.

TFO Canada will be supported by Professor Yiagadeesen (Teddy) Samy who, as a research coordinator, will work with local researchers to implement the research under the guidance and supervision of TFO Canada. It is important to note that the research team, comprised of CSEA and MI will be involved from the outset of this project, providing input into the research design and implementation. Based on consultation with CSEA and MI, which will include input from relevant stakeholders, the NPSIA will develop a methodology paper highlighting the key research questions and how they will be addressed, building on inputs from the different project partners. This participatory and collaborative process from the beginning will ensure our international partners are able to lead the in-country research from a common understanding of the research objectives and parameters.

The 2 research partners- CSEA and MI-will be responsible for the research activities in the target countries in their respective regions-CSEA for Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar and Senegal and MI for Vietnam and Cambodia. They will provide active input to TFO Canada and Dr. Teddy Y. Samy for the research design, data collection instrument and methodology (both quantitative and qualitative parts), collect data for quantitative research (100 data points for each country), assist Dr. Teddy Y. Samy with data collection from open data sources for quantitative analysis, facilitate 3 multi-stakeholder consultations in their regions at different stages in the project, participate in the quantitative analysis and co-author the quantitative analysis report with Dr. Teddy Y. Samy, under the guidance of Dr. Teddy Y. Samy-formulate interview questions and methodology for qualitative research, conduct the interviews and write the (qualitative) case studies and present the findings of the quantitative and qualitative research in the final dissemination event in Ottawa together with Dr. Teddy Y. Samy and TFO Canada.

TFO Canada will be responsible for overall program management, liaising with various stakeholders (including Global Affairs Canada), integrating into the larger GAC program-WITISG, organizing and participating in dissemination events, donor reporting, and monitoring impact and results.

Following is the detailed **workplan with timeline, roles and responsibilities**:

Activity/Sub-activity description	Roles/responsibility	Outputs
Component 1: Research design and validation – completed by end of June 2021		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Refine and finalize research questions by August 2020 based on circulated approach note	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dr. Teddy Y. Samy to lead and finalize after consultation with partners (CSEA and MI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalized research questions and updated methodology paper by August 2020

Activity/Sub-activity description	Roles/responsibility	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of using open-source data for quantitative analysis (e.g. national accounts data, World Bank, CBI/Wageningen project) by September 2020 Identify data requirements and gaps in TFO database, focusing specifically on SMEs in 6 identified countries - Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria Senegal, Cambodia, Vietnam - by September 2020; develop questionnaire in collaboration with partners (CSEA and MI) for data collection and finalize by December 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teddy Y. Samy to consolidate data from various open sources in consultation with partners (CSEA and MI) by September 2020 CSEA and MI will provide input and share other data sources; they will also send questionnaire requesting data from SMEs in each of the 6 identified countries by October 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dataset from open sources by September 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi Stakeholder Consultation 1 on research plan and methodology (April-June 2021) Finalize empirical methodology to answer research questions by June 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSEA, MI & TFO Canada CSEA, MI, Dr. Teddy Y. Samy 	
Component 2: Research Implementation – completed by end of September 2022		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain data from 600 respondents from 6 countries (July - December 2021) Quantitative analysis of datasets developed above – February 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSEA, MI Dr. Teddy Y. Samy, CSEA, MI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01 quantitative Research reports (both regions) by September 2022 Six case studies (01 per country) by September 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plan for case studies (specify research questions, finalize methodology, agree on source and number of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Teddy Y. Samy, CSEA, MI; CSEA and MI to write 	

Activity/Sub-activity description	Roles/responsibility	Outputs
<p>interviewees, specify format and content of 6 research reports) by February 2022 [Qualitative Research]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi Stakeholder consultation 2: To present preliminary findings of quantitative analysis and proposal for qualitative analysis to stakeholders and seek their input (Feb-March 2022) Finalize quantitative analysis and plan for case studies [Qualitative Research] by Feb-March 2022 Co-author two research reports with CSEA and MI based on quantitative analysis by September 2022 Interview stakeholders for case studies by June 2022 Preparation of case studies for presentation by July 2022 	<p>case studies with Dr. Teddy Y. Samy's guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSEA, MI & TFO Canada Dr. Teddy Y. Samy, CSEA and MI Dr. Teddy Y. Samy, CSEA and MI CSEA and MI 	
Component3: Capacity Building		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TSI capacity building on gender (January-December 2021) <i>funded by WITISG Project (Global Affairs Canada)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFO Canada 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TSI capacity building on trade promotion and research (April 2021-March 2022) <i>funded by WITISG Project (Global Affairs Canada)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFO Canada 	
Component 4: Dissemination – completed by December 2022		

Activity/Sub-activity description	Roles/responsibility	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional multi-stakeholder forums to present results from 8 research reports (2 quantitative and 6 qualitative) (July-Aug 2022) Prepare 6 qualitative research reports based on case studies (August-September 2022) One research seminar to be hosted by TFO/IDRC in Ottawa, Canada to present results from 8 research reports (November 2022) Preparation of policy papers, book manuscript (Oct-Dec 2022) for publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teddy Y. Samy, TFO Canada and CSEA and MI Teddy Y. Samy, TFO Canada and CSEA and MI Teddy Y. Samy, TFO Canada and CSEA and MI Teddy Y. Samy, TFO Canada and CSEA and MI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research findings and policy recommendations to be disseminated through multi-stakeholder forums and other venues 07 policy papers (<i>01 based on the survey findings; 06 for country case studies based on the qualitative analysis</i>) 01 book manuscript for publication (<i>Publication planned in 2023</i>)

Annex 4: GESI Learning Events for TFO Canada and Research Partners

Preamble

Two events were conducted in person, one with TFO Canada in Ottawa (Dec 1-2, 2022), and one with the Mekong Institute (Dec 13-14, 2022) in Khon Kaen University, Thailand. A virtual training was delivered for the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) based in Nigeria (Dec 5-6, 2022).

Part I | Trade Facilitation Office (TFO) Canada Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Learning Event

Following a training needs assessment survey, an orientation note was prepared for staff, which included an invitation to participants to review the [Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy](#) and its action areas, and to consider a critique presented in the 2019 commentary by the Canadian Global Affairs Institute: [What's New about Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy: The Problem and Possibilities of 'More of the Same'](#).

Participants were introduced to current discourses and GESI lexicon in the context of growing inequalities around the world, economic crises in several countries and regions, and colliding social movements, such as the Me-Too Movement, Black Lives Matter, Nothing about Us Without Us, and the various climate change movements. The COVID pandemic has also laid bare the tenuousness of global supply chains and the growing trend towards more intra-regional trade and bi-lateral trade agreements, along with a more protective trade agenda overall.

One key underlying assumption is that the 'economic inclusion' of women in markets (and trade) might contribute to their empowerment. Participants could explore the meaning of 'instrumentalization' and consider why applying an 'equity' lens can focus praxis on closing gender inequality gaps in the complex arena of international trade.

Participation

- Total 17 participants attended to the training on both days (8 Male & 9 Female).

Modules covered

- Module 1: Overview on where we are - Setting the landscape for TFO's intentions/ contributions
- Module 2: From Intentions to Concrete Actions
- Module 3a: Designing TFO Canada's Gender Equality Maturity Matrix
- Module 3b: A review of resources and actions

A final session was devoted to introducing current international trends in embedding equity principles into organizational culture and values. Participants spent a time exploring the Equity Maturity Matrix as a tool for determining aspirational goals for TFO Canada.

Part II | Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Learning Event

Following a training needs assessment survey, the training content and ensuing discussions went towards:

- Shifting the understanding of ‘gender equality’ from purely disaggregated data to understanding power relationships and the praxis of trade from an ‘equity lens’.
- There is some interest in shifting the narrative to a ‘transformational’ agenda, participants were introduced to the principles of Just Transition, to the potential of green procurement and circular economies, and the potential equity benefits and gains for women and men engaged in trade.
- Participants were taken through an organization value and culture exercise, which seemed to strike a chord with many, and there was some enthusiasm expressed for taking this further for the CSEA’s expressed mandate and commitment.

Participation

- Total 18 participants attended to the training on both days (13 Male & 5 Female).

Modules covered

- Module 1 – Overview on where we are - Setting the landscape for TFO Canada’s intentions/ contributions
- Module 2 – From Intentions to Concrete Actions
- Module 3a – Designing TFO Canada’s Gender Equality Maturity Matrix
- Module 3b – A review of resources and actions

Part III | Mekong Institute Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Learning Event

The Mekong Institute (MI)’s 2021-2025 strategic plan commits to a social agenda that “incorporates social inclusion and vulnerability, digital economy and innovation, and labor mobility to uphold holistic development deliveries.” These three concerns are intended to cut across three regional development priorities of Agricultural Development and Commercialization (ADC), Trade and Investment Facilitation (TIF), and Sustainable Energy and Environment (SEE).

A learning agenda responsive to expressed interests collected through a needs survey, to bring staff up to speed on current discourse and analytical frameworks on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) – through an equity lens. This lens reframes conventional terms like ‘empowerment’ to incorporate individual and collective decision-making powers, and agency.

Participation

- Total 19 participants attended to the training (8 Male & 11 Female).

Modules covered

- Module 1 – **Overview on where we are - Setting the landscape for MI's intentions/ contributions.** This module sets the immediate context and GESI lexicon and showcases 'what might be possible' to set an aspirational framing towards 'transformational change'
- Module 2 – **'from intentions to concrete actions'** suggests entry points for MI to consider, building on its current activities and its strategic plan.

Together, Modules 1 and 2 cover an outward focus on MI's social impacts through its initiatives.

- Module 3 – **Institutional Culture and Leadership** turns attention and focus inwards. For MI to 'walk the talk', what institutional values, vision and supporting policies can position the Institute as a recognized player in social inclusion. Participants were introduced to organizational culture, and how a 'culture first' organization brings equity into the very workings of the organization.