



## Mandate Spotlight: 060 Cambodia, Nomi Network

## Supporting women's economic empowerment in the handicraft and fashion sectors in Cambodia

**Location:** Cambodia

**Beneficiaries:** Nomi Network Cambodia (NNC)

**Consultant:** Globally Cool

**Start:** April 2022

**End:** April 2023

**GAC Contribution:**

CAD 188,209

### Context

This mandate in Cambodia was focused on addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of Cambodia's ambition to transition from a Least Developed Country (LDC) to an Upper-Middle Income country by 2030. A key aspect of this initiative was the empowerment of women-owned and led enterprises, particularly in the manufacturing sector, which plays a pivotal role in Cambodia's economy. This sector has a strong presence of women workers but is marked by issues such as unsafe working conditions, discrimination, and limited formalization.

Nomi Network Cambodia (NNC), an independent non-governmental organization, is at the forefront of this effort, aiming to strengthen its capacity to train and support women-owned and led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). With the assistance of CTIF and technical partner Globally Cool, the mandate focused on areas like digital marketing, export promotion, and women's entrepreneurship to foster economic resilience and growth among these enterprises. Moreover, the mandate emphasized social inclusion and gender equality, actively involving women throughout its activities.

Cambodia's economic landscape is evolving rapidly, with a focus on productivity, competitiveness, and economic diversification. The mandate aligned with Cambodia's goals to enhance competitiveness, integrate into global markets, and leverage regional trade opportunities. It also acknowledged the significance of the manufacturing sector, particularly garments, in driving economic growth, where women constitute a substantial portion of the workforce. By supporting women-owned MSMEs and fostering economic empowerment, this project contributes to Cambodia's vision of a brighter and more prosperous future, while also addressing the challenges posed by the loss of LDC status and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Brief Description of the Mandate

This mandate focused on empowering women entrepreneurs and enhancing economic development, particularly within Cambodia's fashion and handicrafts sector. It aligned with the vision and mission of Nomi Network Cambodia (NNC) and CTIF's mandate management framework. The initiative aimed to support women-owned and led micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through various strategies, including marketing and export promotion. Technical partner Globally Cool played a pivotal role in developing training modules and organizing a networking event to connect NNC's MSME partners with potential buyers. This comprehensive approach sought to boost the resilience and growth of women-led businesses while promoting social enterprises, fair-trade practices, and women's economic empowerment.

### Selected Key Results

- **Marketing Export Strategy:** This mandate, involving 10 members through surveys and 11 interviews, crafted a comprehensive Marketing and Export Strategy (MES) for Nomi Network Cambodia (NNC) and its MSMEs. It involved virtual meetings, interviews, surveys, on-site visits, and thorough research, resulting in an advisory report and a promotional video to effectively communicate the strategy.
- **Capacity Building:** Flexible training, both physical and virtual, equipped over 25 MSMEs with export marketing, branding, promotion, and digital marketing skills. A "train the trainer" course ensured knowledge transfer to NNC staff.
- **Networking Event:** A study tour to the HGH India trade fair provided valuable exposure and feedback. A subsequent virtual B2B event connected NNC and its MSME partners with potential markets and buyers,

fostering partnerships and trade opportunities. The virtual B2B event involved 50 women representing 25 MSMEs.

- The mandate enhanced NNC's capacity, empowered MSMEs, supported advocacy efforts for a conducive business environment, and facilitated access to new markets, fostering women-led MSME growth and responsible business conduct in Cambodia's fashion sector.

### Environment & Climate Change

Environmental sustainability and social compliance were paramount throughout the training program, recognizing their critical importance to potential buyers of handicraft and fashion products. The program addressed these themes comprehensively, offering guidance on affordable environmental standards and certifications for both domestic and international markets, emphasizing clear communication of these certifications on landing pages and within company messaging. The marketing and export strategy report also underscored the significance of sustainability, providing advice to Nomi Network Cambodia and its members. Sustainability remained a central theme in the matchmaking event, where international experts reinforced its importance in the fashion, home decoration, and textiles sectors. Adhering to sustainability practices and effectively communicating them has become essential for exporters, aligning with global trends and meeting buyer requirements.

### Follow-up Support

This mandate successfully delivered a comprehensive Marketing and Export Strategy (MES) for Nomi Network Cambodia (NNC) and its Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) through a meticulous data-driven approach. The MES resulted in an advisory report and a promotional video designed to effectively communicate the strategy. Recommendations include a follow-up by CTIF to determine MES implementation, guided by a marketing export consultant, and providing one-on-one coaching to selected businesses to enhance their export readiness, online presence, and promotional materials. Addressing the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs is emphasized, recommending tailored export training, expanded training topics, promotion of role models, incorporation of circular design principles, women's network partnerships, and a focus on environmental sustainability to empower women-led MSMEs in Cambodia's fashion and handicrafts sector.

### Gender and Social Inclusion

This mandate contributed to Cambodia's economic growth, particularly in the manufacturing sector, benefiting women-owned and -led enterprises and local communities. It addressed competitiveness challenges in Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan, fostering business resilience and expansion. Challenges faced by women in the workforce, especially in the garment sector, were identified. Gender-related barriers in entrepreneurship were also recognized, including limited access to markets and complex regulations. Nomi Network Cambodia (NNC), which empowers women and supports fair trade businesses, played a key role. NNC faced pandemic-related challenges but witnessed increased demand for its support as Cambodia's economy recovered. The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach ensured gender and social considerations were integrated into activities, accommodating diverse needs, such as language support and childcare during training sessions.

### Testimonials



*Image 1: the trainer and participants of the first on-site training in Phnom Penh, in October 2022*

*"I'm glad that I have joined this course. The trainers are friendly and active, and they have shown us actual examples that are really easy to understand. Trainers always tried their best to answer all of the questions that were bothering us, and their answers were helpful in some way.."*

*- Ms. Maryka Saroeun, Social Media Officer of Village Work*