

PROMOTING DECENT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN CAMBODIA

FINAL EVALUATION

Ganesh P Rauniyar
Independent Evaluator

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Development Programme.

PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS

Project Information		
Project title	Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia	
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Corporate outcome and output	CPD Output 1.2: Government fosters productivity alongside inclusive/sustainable growth. CPD Output 1.4: Young women and men have opportunities to progress through access to information, skill development and improved employment policies	
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Region	Asia and the Pacific	
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Project dates	Start	Planned end
	04 April 2019	31 October 2022
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Implementing party¹	UNDP Cambodia	
Evaluation information		
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Final/midterm review/	Final Evaluation	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	2019	2022 (June)
Evaluators	Ganesh P. Rauniyar	
Evaluator email address	Ganesh.Rauniyar@gmail.com	
Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	9 August 2022	31 October 2022

¹This is the entity that has overall responsibility for the implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

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The project team deserves to be congratulated for an excellent job in implementing the project during a challenging time dominated by COVID-19.

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ACRONYMS

ATQ	Accounting Technician Qualification
BRH	Bangkok Regional Hub
CADT	Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CO	Country Office (Cambodia)
CPD	Country Programme Document, 2019-2023
ESO	Ecosystem Support Organization
HR	human resources
I4.0	Industry 4.0
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
ICT	information and communications technology
IHPP	Impact Hub Phnom Penh
ILO	International Labour Organization
JEP	Junior Entrepreneurs Program
KE	Khmer Enterprise
KICPAA	Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MISTI	Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology, Innovation
MLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, Sport
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTC	Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication
MSME	Micro-Small-Medium Size Enterprise
NAC	National Accounting Council
NEA	National Employment Agency
PDYEC	Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	small and medium-size enterprise
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TIC	Techno Incubation Centre
TOT	training of trainer
TSC	Techo Startup Center
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework, 2019-2023
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
YEAC	Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) formulated the *Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia (PDYEC) Project* in 2019 to address major challenges encountered by youth such as lack of confidence, weak support services, limited information, limited skills and knowledge, lack of capital, and technology access, and lack of enabling environment. It aimed that young Cambodians would enjoy full and productive employment and decent work with adequate earnings based on improved skills, decent employment (on the job or self-employment), and active engagement in the community co-creating initiatives to address pressing issues. The project had three key outputs:

Output 1: Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus on I4.0;

Output 2: A scalable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated growth and comparative advantage for Cambodian youth in the context of the emerging digital economy and I4.0; and

Output 3: Youth (and young aspiring entrepreneurs) have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy, as a result of entrepreneurship training.

The theory of change was based on a sound problem tree analysis that highlighted the prominent challenges and critical roles of gender mainstreaming and private-sector partnerships in transforming inputs and activities into outputs. UNDP implemented the project under the direct implementation modality (DIM) in partnership with key government agencies and private sector service providers. The project implementation commenced in April 2019 and all activities were completed by 30 June 2022 and financially closed on 31 October 2022 (inclusive of a six-month no-cost extension). The project had a budget of USD1,721,823.43, comprising USD800,000 from the Russian Federation Trust Fund at the United Nations, USD886,823.43 from UNDP, USD15,000 from the Khmer Enterprise of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (Cambodia), US\$10,000 each from two private entities 3E-Fii and Smart Axiata.

A final evaluation was conducted as per UNDP requirements with a twin objective of accountability to the project stakeholders and organizational learning. It covered the entire project duration and all activities implemented by UNDP Cambodia and project partners and contractors. The evaluation process intermittently commenced on 9 August 2022 and ended on 31 October 2022, and it followed the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Also, it assessed crosscutting themes of gender equality and social inclusion. In all, 68 individuals including project beneficiaries participated in the evaluation through interviews or focus group discussions. The primary audience of the evaluation report is UNDP, the donors, relevant government agencies, development partners with an interest in the youth empowerment agenda of Cambodia, and other relevant stakeholders. It employed a mixed method approach using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data and information available through the project records and primary data collected during key informant interviews and focus group discussions. It adhered to the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines,

United Nations Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, and Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance.

Relevance: The project was aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023, the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2019-2023, and the Royal Government of Cambodia's Rectangular Strategy, and Cambodia's priority for the digital economy including the preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (I4.0). The project design demonstrated adequate flexibility and it was designed to support policy through research and studies, improve the entrepreneurship landscape for youth, strong emphasis on gender mainstreaming, and identified relevant risks and mitigation measures. There was, however, a disconnect between the theory of change and the project's results framework, lacking an operational strategy for the social inclusion of persons with disability and the LGBTIQ+ community. It also lacked a clear framework for partnerships with private sector entities. While the project design focused on digital skills development, it was limiting in building stronger job-skills linkages. It also lacked vertical and horizontal linkages across the three outputs. Overall, the evaluation assesses the project's relevance as moderately satisfactory (3).

Coherence: The project was coherent with the government's development priorities including Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2035, development priorities of development partners especially the International Labour Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Food Programme, and the Asian Development Bank. It was also aligned with the mandate of the UNDP Youth Co: Lab initiative, and broadly coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals 8 in particular. It was, however, challenging for several development partners to work together under the 'One UN' spirit because of the time-consuming consultation process, inadequate human resources in respective agencies, and competition for funds. Overall, the evaluation assesses the project's coherence as moderately satisfactory (3).

Effectiveness: The project board remained effective in providing timely guidance and support to the project team, delivering capacity-building activities virtually, institutionalizing accountancy technical qualification in seven universities, expanding the business mentoring programme to other sectors, contributing to improved general entrepreneurship ecosystem, strengthening the capacity of relevant ministries and institutions. The project produced several studies/research papers, but the short implementation period did not permit it to exert significant influence on government policy on the youth employment agenda. The project activities were formulated on a rolling basis depending on the availability of suitable implementing partners and relatively short engagement periods meant limited contribution towards the project's objective. This could have been avoided with an ecosystem mapping exercise before project commencement. A lack of strategic guidance limited the project's outreach to some of the disadvantaged intended beneficiaries such as persons with disability, ethnic groups, and LGBTIQ+ groups. Also, although the project engaged private sector entities for service delivery on project funding, proactive contributions from the willing private sector would have helped the project downstream. Overall, the evaluation assesses project effectiveness as satisfactory (2).

Efficiency: The project fully used the available budget from different sources and it also covered costs associated with the six-month extension without seeking additional funding. The financial resources were reasonably distributed across the three outputs defined in the project document. There was a consistently high degree of appreciation for the quality of support under the project to different beneficiary groups. The project was able to reprogramme the delivery of several activities remotely with some needed

adjustments due to prolonged restrictions and the impact of COVID-19. However, the virtual delivery also created fatigue and a lack of concentration under several activities. Advance action on building stable partnerships at the time of project design would have accelerated the implementation of some of the activities. A cost-effectiveness analysis of viable options before commissioning contracts and a subject matter technical specialist within the UNDP Cambodia Country Office would have streamlined various options tried. There was a need for more efforts in building synergies with other national and international development partners. Overall, the evaluation rates project efficiency as satisfactory (2).

Sustainability: The project has enhanced the capacity building of some of the key institutions. For example, equipment support for the Institute of Technology of Cambodia is being used to train youth in drone applications and robotics. Likewise, the Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors is capable of conducting accountancy technical qualification examinations in partnership with relevant universities. The Impact Hub Phnom Penh can impart business mentorship training to existing and aspiring entrepreneurs. Also, the digital skills profile and career pathways developed with the project's support serves as a good resource for human resource planning for the digital economy. However, there is a need for a strategic approach to systematic planning based on the demand for skills by businesses and industries. Access to finance without tangible collateral is still prohibitive, particularly for the poor and vulnerable youth. There is also a call for an effective and sustainable approach to linking skills to jobs through the active participation of private sector entities. Overall, the evaluation assesses project sustainability as moderately satisfactory (3).

Impact: It is too early to assess the impact of several project activities initiated under the project. Some visible positive impact has been documented by SHE Investment from women-led businesses. There has been an improvement in the entrepreneurship ecosystem with project support through the business mentorship programme, training in digital technology, and placement of graduates through internships, etc. However, more needs to be done for the project impact to be meaningful. Some actions needed to focus on outcomes rather than just outputs through a programmatic approach, pragmatic project implementation period, sound monitoring and evaluation system for needful corrective actions, and feedback loop based on lessons. Overall, the evaluation rates project impact at this stage as somewhat satisfactory (4).

Cross-cutting themes: The project performed satisfactorily in mainstreaming gender in project activities. In aggregate terms, there was a 55:45 split between women and men participants in core project activities. However, despite some efforts, it could not enroll persons with disability and those from the LGBTQI+ communities. The evaluation did not come across any reported cases of environmental degradation or mismanagement of project funds. Overall, the evaluation assesses cross-cutting themes as moderately satisfactory (3).

Overall performance summary:

Evaluation Criteria	Performance Rating	Rating Score
Relevance	Moderately Satisfactory	3
Coherence	Moderately Satisfactory	3
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	2
Efficiency	Satisfactory	2
Sustainability	Moderately Satisfactory	3
Impact	Somewhat Satisfactory	4
Cross-cutting themes	Moderately Satisfactory	3
Overall	Moderately Satisfactory	3

Lessons: The evaluation draws on project design and implementation findings, and it offers the following lessons:

A project design based on robust consultations with relevant stakeholders and beneficiary groups and mapping key actors can strengthen project design ownership and commitments towards sustainable solutions to the employment and income challenges faced by the Cambodian youth. Combining the technical knowledge of UNDP staff and experts with relevant representatives of local youths, civil societies, and private sector entities including entrepreneurs and potential employers can further strengthen the relevance of the project.

The results framework of a project with appropriate indicators and realistic targets must be fully aligned with the theory of change so that interventions can be designed and implemented effectively. The choice of relevant indicators also helps in regular monitoring and evaluating progress and supports timely corrective actions.

Cost-effectiveness analysis can help the selection of efficient and sustainable choice of interventions delivering value for money and high social and economic impact. A cost-effective analysis of potential alternatives would have been helpful. Future UNDP project designs can benefit from such an exercise and contribute to scaling up proven activities in the future.

It is important to have an appropriate title for the project based on the comparative advantage of the supporting lead agency. UNDP can capitalize on its core strength and focus on Cambodian youth's economic empowerment through inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem development. UNDP has longstanding experience in several countries in supporting entrepreneurship development, while other agencies such as ILO concentrate their efforts on decent jobs and employment conditions.

UNDP projects can benefit from a clear roadmap for localizing the “leaving no one behind” (LNOB) agenda. UNDP projects can benefit from clarity in implementation modality and pragmatic indicators and targets in PRODOC for ensuring the active participation of disadvantaged and vulnerable youth groups including the poor, rural youth, women, PWD, and LGBTQI+.

Often project resources tend to be limited and the payoffs are greater if resources are devoted to fewer activities more deeply to realize tangible results. At the same time, wider partnerships can attract additional resources. The UNDP resources have a dual role – direct funding and leveraging resources from other sources. The UNDP pilot projects (such as this one) should benefit from supporting interventions with a greater likelihood of success.

Flexibility in project design can deliver positive results. The flexibility in the project allowed the delivery of lessons using online platforms instead of face-to-face engagements with the students and intended beneficiaries, although some missed out on the full benefit because of geographical locations.

Recommendations: The evaluation offers a set of six key recommendations:

Prioritise youth economic empowerment as one of the key pillars in the next CPD for Cambodia with a focus on improving and strengthening Cambodia's youth entrepreneurship ecosystem, particularly by prioritizing the disadvantaged youth population and localities. Key actions recommended are:

- (i) Adopt a programmatic approach to youth economic empowerment in the country supported by market-driven entrepreneurship development;
- (ii) Design a holistic approach to youth's economic empowerment based on higher income opportunities. The approach should create a conducive policy environment for the public and private sector entities' active participation and support access to technology, finance, market, and institutions;
- (iii) Support the institutionalizing of a blended approach to capacity development, context-specific curriculum development guided by local capacity, strengthening and scaling up of a mentorship programme, and selecting appropriate service providers and participants for capacity development. The action needs to be back up by a sound monitoring system to support any course corrections;
- (iv) Prioritize current and potential women entrepreneurs and those from other disadvantaged groups and provide scholarship support.

Keep the project design flexible for greater adaptability with a clear focus on achieving intended outcomes as long as:

- (i) The project design is a result of a robust consultation process including direct beneficiaries, potential private and public sector agencies;
- (ii) The project results framework is fully aligned with the theory of change, UNDAF and CPD for Cambodia, and the government's development priorities;
- (iii) Qualitative and quantitative project indicators are simple, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) and baselines can be established;
- (iv) There are vertical and horizontal linkages among the activities, outputs, and outcomes; and activities should be impact-driven;
- (v) Implementation capacity exists in public and private agencies or can be supported within a reasonable timeframe at an early stage of project implementation;
- (vi) Local implementation partners are identified through an appropriate due diligence process including their capacity assessment.

Support mainstreaming ATQ and business mentorship in the national and provincial curricula of selected universities and educational institutes. Key actions recommended are:

- (i) Promote a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ministries and key pre-identified universities and training institutes for curriculum reform in courses associated with ATQ and mentorship programmes to mainstream good accounting practices and business mentorship skills in enterprises;
- (ii) Promote a third-party entity to monitor and report progress in mainstreaming.

Strengthen UNDP Cambodia's management of youth-related projects further. Key actions recommended are:

- (i) Promote cross-project collaboration culture and strengthen the internal collaboration among the UNDP Cambodia projects further since youth are key players across all sectors;

- (ii) Deepen technical collaboration with Bangkok Regional Bureau's initiatives on youth economic empowerment;
- (iii) Minimize project start-up delays through communication with the relevant agencies and recruit and mobilize qualified staff on longer-term contracts for the project duration (performance reviewed every six months) in the interest of having a stable project team that ideally serves through the project implementation period.

Strengthen the project monitoring and evaluation system. Key actions recommended are:

- (i) Identify a dedicated project team staff for the monitoring and evaluation function;
- (ii) Focus on indicators and targets to monitor and report well beyond the input-output relationship and towards outcomes and impacts on the population and environment (activities should be impact-driven);
- (iii) Plan to capture quantitative progress against targets, as well as quality and units, costs keeping in mind value for money;
- (iv) Ensure a feedback mechanism for needful corrective actions during project implementation.

Continue to pursue collaboration and partnerships with other agencies active in the youth economic entrepreneurship landscape. The other agencies ideally should be a manageable set and could include the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UN Specialized Agencies, bilateral agencies, and reputable private sector entities. While partnerships are time-consuming and at times frustrating, but common agenda and agreed *modus operandi* with clear lines of responsibilities are likely to deliver a greater impact to the people and communities at large.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Cambodia carried out a labour force survey in 2019, indicating that about 1.5 million youth (15-24 years of age)¹ represented 57.2% of the country's labour force comprising 59.1% male and 55.6% female.² The survey pointed out that about 97.5% of the youths in the labour force were employed with small differences between males and females and between the urban and rural areas. Craft and related trade accounted for dominant employment areas for both males (33.7%) and females (38.1%). The agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector employed 26.3% of male youths while manufacturing attracted 39.4% of female youths. The survey also found that 12.7% of all youths (13.8% females and 11.4% males) were not in employment, education, or training (NEET). The share of NEET was somewhat higher in rural (12.9%) than the urban areas (12.2%). An OECD review noted that despite the low youth unemployment rate in Cambodia, the quality of jobs remained low.³ The review also pointed out that early school dropout was the biggest problem for secondary- and tertiary-school-aged youth, attributable to a host of factors, including financial constraints, geographical disadvantage for the rural communities, low quality of teachers, low incentives for the teachers, and demand for children's labour in farming work.

2. In 2019, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted the predominance of youth in the working-age population (43% at the time of project formulation) and demographic transition called for rapid economic growth and social transformation.⁴ Also, the government's priority for a digital economy and Industry 4.0 (I4.0) agenda required youths' access to decent and high-value jobs and their ability to start and sustain enterprises by responding to rapid technological change. On this backdrop, UNDP designed the *Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia (PDYEC) Project* to support Cambodia to promote and expand decent employment among youth (15-30 years old) and identify and test avenues for youth **to maximize returns on their jobs and income opportunities** in the context of I4.0 by focussing on skills upgrading, improving linkages between jobs seekers and employers, and promoting youth entrepreneurship.

3. The theory of change for the project (Appendix 1) identified major challenges encountered by the Cambodian youth such as lack of confidence, weak support services, limited information, limited skills and knowledge, lack of capital, and technology access, and lack of enabling environment. It was expected that the project support would result in young Cambodians enjoying full and productive employment and decent work with adequate earnings based on improved skills, decent employment (on the job or self-employment), and active engagement in the community co-creating initiatives to address pressing issues. The project had planned to deliver three outputs:

- (i) Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus on I4.0;
- (ii) A scalable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated

¹ The United Nations defines youth as persons in the 15-24 years age group, while the government's employment policy considers 15-30 years old individuals as a youth.

² National Institute of Planning. xxxx. *Report on Cambodia's Labour Force Survey 2019*. Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh.

³ OECD. 2017. *Youth Well-being Policy Review of Cambodia*, Paris.

⁴ UNDP. 2019. PRODOC. PDYEC Project, Phnom Penh.

growth and comparative advantage for Cambodian youth in the context of the emerging digital economy and I4.0: and

- (iii) Youth (and young aspiring entrepreneurs) have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy, as a result of entrepreneurship training.

4. The project was also expected to contribute to United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Outcome 2 for 2019-2023 which states that by 2023 women and men in Cambodia, in particular those marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from expanded opportunities for decent work and technological innovations and participate in a growing, more productive, and competitive economy, that is also fairer and environmentally sustainable. It was also expected to contribute to the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2019-2023 Output 1.2 (Government fosters productivity alongside inclusive/sustainable growth) and Output 1.4 (Young women and men have opportunities to progress through access to information, skills development, and improved employment policies). Furthermore, the project was to apply UNDP Signature Solutions of (i) keeping people out of poverty and (ii) women’s empowerment and gender equality. The project was expected to contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicators 4.4, 8.5, and 9.2.⁵

II. DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTIONS

The project document (PRODOC) elaborated on activities envisaged under each of the three outputs, and these are summarized in Table 1 along with the types of specific activities undertaken by the project. The narrative in this section is drawn from the project completion report (PCR).

Table 1: Activities Planned and Accomplished under Project Outputs (2019-2022)

Project Output Area	Activity Planned (PRODOC)	Activity Conducted
<i>Output1: Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus on Industry 4.0. (no change)</i>	1.1. Review and gauge the impact of employment of I4.0 technologies/automation with a focus on youth; 1.2. Outreach and sensitization to examine methods to connect youth entrepreneurs to I4.0 technologies, and pilot some of these tools;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing Cambodian Youth Digital Literacy • Digital Skill Assessment • Assessing a Country's Adaptation Capacity to Industry 4.0 • Model for Promoting Industry 4.0 Technology • Development of ICT Skills Framework/Occupation Profiles

⁵ Indicator 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

Indicator 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Indicator 9.2: Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise the industry’s share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in the least developed countries.

Project Output Area	Activity Planned (PRODOC)	Activity Conducted
	1.3. Study on skills projections in response to the emerging digital economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Career Guidance and Employment Service
<p>Output 2: A variable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated growth and comparative advantage for Cambodian youth in the context of the emerging digital economy and industry 4.0.</p> <p>Revised as: A scalable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors.</p>	<p>1.4. Develop and implement career pathways for industrial park workers;</p> <p>1.5. Develop a new training programme with an innovative delivery mechanism; (2.3)</p> <p>1.6. Develop “Accountancy” Technician Qualifications; (2.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore financial and other incentives to encourage employers to invest in training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting Technician Qualification (ATQ) Implementation Skill Certification Programme for SME Cluster Park Digital Upskilling for Youth Employability
<p>Output3: Youth (and young aspiring entrepreneurs) have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy, as a result of entrepreneurship training (identified by Output 1 analysis).</p> <p>Revised as: Youth entrepreneurs have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy.</p>	<p>1.7. Review and advance the entrepreneurship training package to enable reaching out to Industry 4.0 level;</p> <p>1.8. Establish partnerships with training service providers (public and/or private) for business incubation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enroll and train young (and young aspiring) entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bluetribe Incubation Programme Supporting Young Women Entrepreneurs Access to Entrepreneurship Training Development of Start-ups/SMEs Mentors' platforms and mentors' capacity Development of entrepreneurship mentorship guidelines Building an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Source: PRODOC, 2019, and project final progress report, 2022.

Activities under Output 1: Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus on Industry 4.0.

5. **Assessment Report on Digital Literacy for Employability and Entrepreneurship among Cambodian Youth.**⁶ The report was based on a sample survey of 1,285 individuals (54.4% female) comprising 869 high school students, 284 undergraduate students, 80 working youths, 23 youth community members, nine factory workers, 12 high school teachers, and eight university lecturers. The assessment shows some interesting findings such as (i) low to below average digital literacy level in all three youth groups with the lowest safety competency level, (ii) higher digital literacy level in the highly urbanized areas than the rural areas, (iii) those with higher educational attainment performing better

⁶ <https://www.undp.org/cambodia/publications/digital-literacy-employability-and-entrepreneurship-among-cambodian-youth> (accessed 19 September 2022).

than those with lower educational attainment, (iv) the ownership of digital device (mobile phones and computers) performed better in digital literacy, (v) female respondents scored lower than their male counterparts, (vi) literacy levels at the time of assessment was considered unsuitable for work in information-heavy sectors, and (vii) high degree of vulnerability to cybercrimes. While the report was framed under the pre-pandemic conditions, it also noted COVID-19's impact as the institutions were not equipped for e-learning, teachers had extremely limited options and knowledge in the delivery of e-learning, and students were not prepared for distance learning, especially with low digital literacy and no computer ownership. As reported in the project completion report (PCR), the project has shared the report with the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and the technical working group on the design and implementation of digital skill assessment and key partners designing skills development programmes.

6. ***Assessment Report on Demand and Supply of Digital Skills in Cambodia.***⁷ The assessment was based on a sample survey of 1,022 students, 202 firms, and 18 universities and technical and vocational education and training institutions for preparing ICT skills for the digital economy and IR4.0. The report was launched in November 2021 with an audience of 300 people (31% women) representing government agencies, development partners, universities, employers, and students. Key findings from the assessment are:

- (i) The top five services or products ICT firms have offered include retail sales and maintenance of ICT devices; software, applications, and ICT systems (human resources, payroll, tax, accounting, and finance); graphic and multimedia design; network, telecommunications, and internet; and digital marketing. These are considered high-growth areas for businesses and employment opportunities for youth.
- (ii) Potential new business areas are cloud services, data management systems, and financial technologies (fintech). Also, future occupations in demand include ICT sales professionals, software and application developers, e-marketing professionals, and web developers and programmers. New opportunities are emerging in data science.
- (iii) The average wage premium of graduates with ICT majors is estimated at around 10%.
- (iv) Enrolment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) continues to be male-dominated while female students mainly enroll in non-STEM majors such as business, accounting, and other social sciences. Also, opportunities for machine learning, artificial intelligence, fintech, and data science are limited/non-existent. The report also pointed out that higher education institutions are facing challenges in keeping up with technological changes due to funding shortfalls, lack of human resources, and uneven ability and preparedness of students in STEM programmes in terms of mathematics and digital literacy.
- (v) Students' concerns include future career prospects arising from labour market competition, lack of work experience, and limited English language proficiency. The report also notes that many schools have established offices to support students' career prospects and have included mandatory internships.

⁷ <https://cdri.org.kh/publication/demand-for-and-supply-of-digital-skills-in-cambodia> (accessed on 19 September 2022).

7. **Adaptation and Adoption of Industry 4.0 in Cambodia.**⁸ The report was commissioned by UNDP to the Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge. The study noted increasing foreign direct investment and a demographic dividend of young people. It further iterated that the country has opportunities to exploit technological spillovers from FDI, leverage participation in global value chains, and to further develop established international economic partnerships. The local private sector stakeholders had identified energy management; predictive maintenance; traceability; inventory and distribution management services; increasing value-added from food processing; the creation of more sophisticated tasks and better-paid jobs; and integration into regional supply chains as the specific opportunities from I4.0. It also acknowledged that the level of I4.0 in Cambodia was still low and the majority of firms were at a basic level. At the firm level, barriers to adopting Industry 4.0 in Cambodia included a lack of awareness of digital technologies and their benefits; the perceived high costs of technologies; an aversion to the use of new technologies; skills gaps; limited access to training and technical assistance; and constrained access to finance.

8. The report put forward several suggestions such as (i) raising awareness of I4.0 technologies and their benefits and making these technologies widely accessible and developing skills needed to use them by enabling investments in basic and digital infrastructure; improvements in the institutional framework, addressing financial constraints, and strengthening linkages between innovation actors; (ii) conducting sector- and firm-level analysis; (iii) identifying practical mechanisms for the roll-out of I4.0; and (iv) identifying key actions and agreeing on steps for implementation of the national roadmaps to bring local stakeholders together and co-develop options.

9. **Model for Promoting I4.0 Technology.** The project supported the Centre of Excellence at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC) to establish an I4.0 technology laboratory and engage youth technology entrepreneurs in improved research and technology prototype facilities. According to the PCR, 250 youth (30% women) were engaged and received technology education from the Centre. The Centre's newly designed technology incubation model is integrated into the university's Technology Incubation Programme and the larger start-up ecosystem. ITC has established a formal partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding in September 2021 for a long-term collaboration on research and development related to I4.0 technology and technology transfer and application in the key industrial sectors. UNDP partnered with ITC to produce a video in raising awareness of emerging technologies and demonstrate active models to students, faculty, and staff in different universities.

10. **ICT Skills Framework/Occupational Profiles.** The project supported the National Employment Agency (NEA) in drafting 75 skills/occupational profiles.⁹ The project organized dissemination workshops in May 2022 in collaboration with NEA in Siem Reap, Kampot, and Stung Treng for the provincial staff of the Ministry of Education, career counsellors, and human resource (HR) agencies. It is expected that these profiles would be updated and used by counsellors and related professionals to provide career guidance and human resource development activities, promote the development of the Skills Council for the ICT, and contribute to addressing skill mismatches. The profiles are the outcome of a consultative process involving an international UNDP expert, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, ICT firms, human resource agencies, universities, training providers, and ICT graduates. The

⁸ <https://www.undp.org/cambodia/publications/adaptation-and-adoption-industry-40-cambodia> (accessed 19 September 2022).

⁹ The original target was 100 profiles but 75 profiles were deemed sufficient by NEA.

project guided stakeholders to utilize the ICT Occupational Profiles and Career Pathways to benefit public employment services, employer's career maps and job description development, training providers' course designs, and individuals' skills development effort to stay competitive in the job market.

11. ***Strengthening Career Guidance and Employment Service.*** The project supported NEA in organizing a face-to-face career fare before COVID-19 pandemic. However, it was not feasible during the pandemic and hence the project supported developing a national online career platform and smartphone application by redirecting available project funds. The platform was used to host the 2021 Online National Career Fair and Productivity Conference. According to the project data, 95 employers offered 22,000 job opportunities and provided job information to more than 104,000 individuals in November 2021 alone. A total of 657 individuals representing government, private sector, and development partners participated in a National Productivity Conference on I4.0 technologies in key sectors of the economy and COVID-19 Recovery. The PCR also noted that the findings from the conference are being used by the Ministry of Economy and development partners including UNDP, ILO, UNIDO, and others in shaping/informing relevant policies, including interventions to address the skills gap in the workforce. Furthermore, the PCR also reported that during the project period, 687,780 youth benefitted from the government employment services on career guidance and job information. Of those youth, 1,804 young persons secured a job directly through the National Career matching initiative supported by UNDP.

Activities under Output 2: A scalable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors.

12. ***Accountancy Technician Qualification (ATQ).*** As per PCR, UNDP partnered with Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors (KICPAA) in setting up the ATQ system including developing curriculum tailored to the needs and local context, putting in place the governance of the ATQ and institutional arrangements. It also helped KICPAA in organizing seven activities such as (i) arranged printing of learning materials and brochures for training organizations (TO), (ii) organized training of trainers (TOT) for lecturers teaching technical qualification (TQ) 1 to TQ 3, (iii) conducted TOT for new examiners from TQ1 to TQ8, (iv) developed new examination questions for TQ1 to TQ6, (v) organized workshops on bookkeeping and practices and accounting software, (vi) provided scholarships to take the test and examination, and (vii) developed ATQ video training available on the learning hub. UNDP and KICPAA established a formal partnership through a Letter of Agreement to promote the ownership of KICPAA for the ATQ programme. The project funded technical support from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) and funded by the project, KICPAA is reportedly fully capacitated and it is leading the ATQ ensuring the sustainability of the programme. The programme has selected and trained 81 students or individuals (54 in ATQ1, 44 in ATQ2, and 81 in ATQ3). Also, 36 local examiners are qualified as ATQ examiners. One public and six private universities have signed MoUs with KICPAA to integrate and teach ATQ in their accountancy curricula. This has resulted in 836 students at these universities learning ATQ contents in their academic programmes. A total of 453 students were registered and were planning to take the ATQ tests soon. The project considers these achievements to surpass the expectation despite the pandemic-led closure of the universities.

13. ***Skills Certification Programme for SME Cluster Park.*** In early April 2019, UNDP and World Bridge agreed to establish a small and medium enterprise (SME) cluster within the Industrial Park. While two consultants were recruited for the project to prepare an investment proposal and investment memorandum for the innovative SME cluster park to be funded under a public-private partnership (PPP)

financing modality and to conduct an SME cluster park stakeholder mapping analysis in preparation for establishing the cluster. However, the skills training programme has been limited to ATQ. The skills certification programme has not progressed in the absence of the SME cluster park. The Project Board agreed to drop the initiative because the establishment of the Industrial Park had been delayed and there was no clear indication from the World Bridge as to when it could happen.

14. **Digital Upskilling for Youth Employability.** The project supported the design and rollout of PowerUp Cambodia to provide digital skills training and a work placement model. The Step IT Academy is providing skills training and work placement opportunities to 87 youth from across the country. The first cohort of the training took place between mid-June to mid-December 2021. The Digital Careers pathway covered the main digital skills for successful employment in any field and is open to all, but it is specifically targeting unprivileged groups (job-seeking youths, prioritizing female youth, and youth with disabilities). The programme has enrolled 58 students. The second program on advanced digital skills offers professional skills in digital marketing and data science and analytics. It is open to university graduates interested in reskilling with employment. A total of 29 students received a full scholarship for the six-month training programme. The programme uses a Telegram chatbot to keep the students engaged and track their progress in the coursework. An open-source platform (Moodle) is used to manage coursework and review learning materials. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports partnered with the Open Education Resource Platform for the Pathways to Digital Skills course and content materials accessible to students. In total, 30 graduates had paid work placement after they finished the skills training programme. Eleven interns were placed with private company partnerships such as BI Solution, Zillanium Group and Amret Microfinance, Sabay, Zooms Group, and Grow4Growth. And, 19 students who are already employed value how the training could accelerate and increase the efficiency of their work at an individual and company level. The programme is, however, yet to enrol a student with a disability.

15. It should be noted that the digital learning programme started during the second half of the project leaving little time for making necessary adjustments. UNDP explored potential to enrol person with disabilities as well, but no application was received. However, the project realized that inclusive learning where PWD can also enrol with other students was not possible. Training to PWD required a tailored curriculum and learning approach/methodology, including significant investment in equipment and facility beyond the provisions in the project budget. Due to time constraint, UNDP decided to consider such provision in its next programme. The evaluation notes that UNDP Cambodia developed a proposal for this purpose and it has been submitted to UNDP headquarters during the second quarter of 2022. The proposal has two components: (i) focus on digital skills development of PWD and (ii) young entrepreneurship development.

Activities under Output 3: Youth entrepreneurs have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy.

16. **Bluetribe Incubation Programme.** The project partnered with UNDP's Accelerator Lab, Khmer Enterprise, Smart Axiatia, and 3E-Fii to establish an entrepreneurship training programme for inspiring youth to start their business and to support the early development and growth of their startups. From a pool of more than 300 applicants, the programme selected 20 potential founders (42% female) through a

competitive process.¹⁰ Seven startup business models in telemedicine, construction, care economy, transportation, and ecotourism sectors have submitted their business plans and presented them to advisors for feedback, these have been conducted via weekly pitches and September Showcase. Two startups also received financial and professional support for business registration. One of the startups (KLEMBOX) has accelerated digital project-based learning in public schools by deploying experimental learning kits alongside an offline learning lab and tested with four public schools in the provinces. Another startup (HOMEAPP) has progressed significantly in terms of business model and financial success.

17. **Supporting Young Women Entrepreneurs.** In partnership with SHE INVESTMENTS, the Young Women Entrepreneurs Programme was established in late 2019 and 27 of the 30 selected young women entrepreneurs successfully completed the Incubation and Acceleration Programme which involved training on managing and scaling up micro and small enterprises. The project supported capacity development, mentorship, and networking initiatives, and it covered key learning topics of gender discussions, goal setting, personal finance, marketing strategy, business financial management, human resource management, leadership, business model and plan, business presentation, and digital marketing.

18. **Access to Entrepreneurship Training.** The project partnered with the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (YEAC) to scale up the Junior Entrepreneurs Programme (JEP)¹¹ in four provinces (Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, and Battambang). In total 54 youth (60% female) completed the training and 11 of them are already engaged as interns in YEAC member companies. Also, the project in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Co: Lab organized 121 workshops and training sessions to scale up Youth Movers Programme. The topics covered included SDG awareness, digital skills, I4.0 technology, leadership, and employability skills. The Youth Movers Program had 3.198 attendees (44% women).¹²

19. **Developing Startups/SMEs Mentors Platforms and Mentors' Capacity.** UNDP in collaboration with Techo Startup Center and Impact Hub Phnom Penh onboarded experienced mentors onto the Startup Cambodia Platform.¹³ The project was able to help increase the number of local startup mentors, improve a government-owned digital startup mentor platform, develop relevant mentoring guidelines and toolkits, and upgrade onboarded mentors' capacity. At the end of November 2021, 46 mentors (40% women and 70% Khmer speakers) were onboarded onto the platform. The mentors are matched with startups and SMEs across Cambodia including 175 SMEs supported by the incubation programme and

¹⁰ Three founders dropped out due to personal reasons, including the decision to take up a decent career opportunity. The programme runs for 25 weeks and there have been 25 workshops and 12 sessions/events organized as of reporting date. In the curriculum, the Venture Formation phase started on 13 July 2020 and ended on 14 August 2020. Incubation Phase 1 ended on Prototype Day on 28 October 2020. Incubation Phase 2 started on 29 October 2020 and there was a larger focus on customized support for the startups.

¹¹ JEP is integrated as a core programme of YEAC and used as a talent development model by and for its member firms.

¹² The Movers Programme is a regional programme implemented by the UNDP Regional Office in Bangkok in partnership with Impact Hub Cambodia, supported by a UN volunteer. UNDP Cambodia and the PDYEC Project did not have any direct implementation role, but the UN volunteer helped the PDYEC Project with shared human resources with Youth Co:Lab.

¹³ Startup Cambodia is a platform developed by Techo Startup Center, under the Ministry of Economy and Finance, to support local startups and build a vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem in Cambodia. This platform brings together entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders such as government, education institutions, startup founders, investors, and nongovernmental organizations that support entrepreneurs and startup mentors.

innovation challenge jointly funded by UNDP, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Ministry of Commerce.

20. **Entrepreneurship mentorship guidelines.** The project selected Impact Hub Phnom Penh as a service provider for preparing a mentorship training framework and three guidebooks for the startup ecosystem (mentor, startup mentee, and ecosystem support organizations). A total of 50 mentors went through a general training programme and 28 startup mentors (50% women, 86% Khmer speakers, and 42% entrepreneurs) graduated in April 2022 from a full mentor certification programme. Also, the project collaborates with Techno Startup Center on onboarding startup mentors to the national Startup Cambodia, a national platform. It is, yet to fully engage with the entrepreneurs.

21. **Building an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem.** The project collaborated with YEAC to promote an entrepreneurship ecosystem for young people. The achievements in 2020 included an investment guidebook and digital platforms, a startup tax guide and tax incentives, scaling up the global entrepreneurship week in five additional provinces, and piloting JEP for 30 young Cambodian men and women. Twenty-eight of the 30 young entrepreneurs completed the programme, of which 11 (39%) completed the programme and five of them are connected to internship opportunities and gaining practical entrepreneurial internships within the YEAC network.

22. The project has contributed to developing the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in Cambodia. First, it partnered with YEAC, the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation, and other local partners and supported nine events organized to celebrate the Global Entrepreneurship Cambodia Week 2021 attended by nearly 2,000 students and entrepreneurs. Across the country, the events were attended by a total of almost 2,000 participants mainly students and entrepreneurs. Second, it developed a Supporting Young Entrepreneurs Guidebook – Incubator & Accelerator Programmes. Third, a series of entrepreneurship podcasts by local successful entrepreneurs were produced and made available online. Approximately 1,400 people have accessed the learning materials through an online channel.

III. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE

23. The evaluation was commissioned as per UNDP guidelines for decentralized project evaluation which state that it assesses the project's performance in achieving its intended results and its contribution to outcomes and associated theory of change.¹⁴ It complies with UNDP's mandate to evaluate a project with a planned budget or actual expenditure of between US\$ 3 million and \$5 million.¹⁵ The requirement of an evaluation was explicitly stated in the PRODOC. Given a relatively short project implementation period, the Project Board endorsed dropping the midterm evaluation from the project's work programme.¹⁶

Purpose

24. The primary purpose of this project evaluation was to demonstrate accountability for results and to donors and governments involved in financing the project. It also assesses sustainability and

¹⁴ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/section-2.pdf> (accessed 20 September 2022).

¹⁵ *ibid.* Table 1, p. 14.

¹⁶ First Project Board meeting was held on 4 September 2019.

replicability in other settings, both within Cambodia and in other countries. The evaluation had twin objectives of accountability and organizational learning. Accountability covered the extent of project delivery as per project design and resource use, while organizational learning contributed to UNDP's efforts in improving project design and implementation in the country and other similar contexts in other countries. It is a final project evaluation and helps the stakeholders understand what worked and what did not. The findings from the evaluation provide lessons through an independent assessment of the project performance (including performance and results) and potential initiatives to address a conducive environment for decent employment of youth, particularly vulnerable groups including the poor, women, socially marginalized, persons with disabilities, and gender orientation. The findings are also expected to provide future direction to UNDP Cambodia management and like-minded development partners. It also informs the preparation of the UNDP's Country Programme Document (CPD) for Cambodia, 2024-2028.

Objectives

25. The terms of reference for the evaluation outlined the objectives of the final evaluation. These are:

- (i) To review and assess the overall achievements (outputs, outcomes, and impacts levels) of the YEC Project (in comparison with the latest approved result framework) and its contribution to UNDP's Country Programme and national priorities;
- (ii) To undertake an assessment of indicator progress vis-à-vis the targets for both outputs and outcomes, and the proposed budget;
- (iii) To assess the relevance and strategic positioning of the project to respond to the needs and challenges faced by youth in accessing skill development and decent employment;
- (iv) To document good practices, key lessons learned, and recommendations for the potential for replicating and scaling up successful models and interventions and for future programming;
- (v) To assess how the YEC project synergizes or complements initiatives being implemented by others (development partners and relevant responsible government ministries (Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)) to promote skills development and employment opportunities;
- (vi) To assess whether and how the project enhanced the application of a rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment, and participation of other socially vulnerable groups such as youth from provinces or youth with disabilities; and
- (vii) To assess the project's adaptability and resiliency in the context of Covid-19 in realizing the intended results.

Scope

26. The evaluation covered the entire project duration from 01 April 2019 to 30 June 2022 (inclusive) and included all project activities implemented by UNDP Cambodia and other implementing partners under the direct implementation modality (DIM). The closing date for the project was extended to 30 September 2022 to facilitate the completion of the project completion report, final evaluation report, and financial closing.

Users of Evaluation

27. The primary audiences of the final evaluation are UNDP Cambodia Management and the donor representation in Cambodia, that is, the Embassy of the Russian Federation based in Phnom Penh as well as other development partners having an interest in addressing youth employment and economic empowerment in Cambodia. The report may be of interest to relevant government agencies involved in addressing economic challenges faced by rural and urban youth in the country such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Ministry of Post and Telecommunication; the National Employment Agency; and National Accounting Council. The evaluation report is expected to be of interest to a wider UNDP audience including the Bangkok Regional Hub, Youth Co: Lab, and UNDP Headquarters in New York.

Evaluation Criteria

28. The evaluation was guided by UNDP Evaluation Policy¹⁷ and Guidelines for Decentralized Evaluations in UNDP.¹⁸ It complied with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards¹⁹ and it was consistent with Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance.²⁰ The evaluation has adopted OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.²¹ The relevance assessment covered the appropriateness of project design and analysis of strategies and theory change, implementation arrangements, identification of risks, and risk mitigation measures for skills development and creating employment opportunities in the context of Cambodia's digital economy. The coherence assessment involved ascertaining the extent to which the project design was externally coherent with the activities of other agencies and internally coherent with UNDP's other projects/programmes. For project effectiveness, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the project achieved intended outcomes and outputs as outlined in the results framework. The project efficiency was assessed in terms of timeliness and for the intended purpose of resource utilization. Similarly, project sustainability involved determining how project benefits could be sustained over time after project completion. While the terms of reference for the evaluation did not require an assessment of impact, the final evaluation assessed any evidence of emerging likely impact(s) of the project since it is one of the core criteria of OECD-DAC evaluation. The evaluation also dwelt on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender issues, and disability.

Evaluation Questions

29. The terms of reference for the evaluation provided guiding questions for each of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (Appendix 2). These were modified for the evaluation based on document review, and importantly relevance and coherence were separated for ease of analysis. The refined evaluation questions adopted are presented in Appendix 3.

¹⁷ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2019/DP_2019_29_E.pdf (accessed 18 August 2022).

¹⁸ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/section-2.pdf> (accessed 18 August 2022).

¹⁹ United Nations Evaluation Group. 2017. Norms and Standards for Evaluation, New York.

²⁰ United Nations Evaluation Group. 2011. Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance UNEG/G(2011), New York.

²¹ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf> (accessed 18 August 2022).

Evaluation Limitations

30. The project had several groups of beneficiaries – some could be tracked while others could not be. For example, some of the beneficiaries of incubation, acceleration (under SHE Investment), bluetribe, ATQ, trainees supported at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC), trainees at the Young Entrepreneurs of Cambodia (YECA), and project beneficiaries at the Impact Hub could have been potentially tracked with the help of project partners associated with these initiatives. The support from the project partners was sought to consolidate the beneficiaries' list which formed a sampling frame for drawing a list of participants for a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) in Phnom Penh, Kampong Thom, Kampong Cham, and Siem Reap. The province selection was based on the concentration of project activities and the feasibility of completing the discussion within the available time for FGDs. The evaluation plan included 4-6 participants in each focus group depending on the availability of the respondents. Several beneficiaries had relocated to different places and their contact details were not readily available to respective training institutions. Also, it was difficult to identify beneficiaries of activities with a large number of participants such as career fairs or multimedia work. Given the limited time for evaluation, this group of beneficiaries was not included in the interviews.

31. The project did not collect data on the employment or livelihood status and income data of the beneficiaries, and hence their economic well-being will be difficult to quantify. The relatively short duration of the project and data limitations posed difficulties in documenting the project's impact, although the project had also supported NEA to develop career guidance multi-media contents (e.g. Dr JOB) posted on social media. To a possible extent, representative case studies formed a part of the evaluation exercise. Also, it was expected that not all interviewees would adequately communicate in English with the evaluator.

IV. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

Approach

32. The evaluation design was based on a mixed-method approach comprising a combination of qualitative and quantitative data/information from both primary and secondary sources. The qualitative data was derived from a combination of key informant interviews and focus group discussions with project stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluation timeframe did not permit a standalone survey with the beneficiaries due to the dispersed location of the beneficiaries. However, efforts were made to fully utilize beneficiary-level data collected by the project. Discussions and interviews with stakeholders during the field visits supplemented data and information available from the project records. The evaluation approach was participatory, inclusive, and gender-responsive.

Methodology

33. The evaluation was conducted in three phases – inception, data collection and validation, and reporting.

Inception phase

34. The inception phase involved (i) kick-off meetings with the project team and the UNDP Cambodia senior management team and (ii) an in-depth review of project-related documents including PRODOC, progress reports, a list of project stakeholders and beneficiaries, work plans, budget and expenditure data, quality assurance reports, communication, and knowledge products, and other key outputs available remotely. The kick-off meeting familiarized the evaluator with the subject of evaluation and provided an opportunity to clarify the terms of reference for the evaluation. It also established a common understanding of the evaluation process and expectations. A list of documents reviewed during the inception phase is in Appendix 4. The Evaluation Manager and project team reviewed and commented on the draft inception report. With relevant changes based on comments, the revised inception report was approved by the Evaluation Manager. The inception report contained an evaluation matrix which formed the basis for preparing evaluation questions along the specific evaluation criteria.

Data collection and validation phase

35. The data collection and validation phase involved a field mission to Cambodia from 29 August to 13 September 2022. The evaluator conducted in-person or virtual key informant interviews (KIIs) with project stakeholders and focus group discussions (FGDs) with groups of project beneficiaries. The KIIs covered four groups of stakeholders: (i) project board members and relevant government representatives, (ii) knowledge institutions and consultants, (iii) partners and service providers, and (iv) the project team and UNDP staff in Cambodia and Bangkok Regional Hub.²² The evaluator will also conduct discussions with other relevant development partners involved in promoting decent youth employment including ILO, UNESCO, UNV, UNIDO, and UNICEF. Discussions with the relevant agencies informed the project's relevance and effectiveness in the context of I4.0 in Cambodia. The review of available documents suggested that most of the key informants were based in Phnom Penh while the beneficiaries were present in many provinces. The support of the implementing partners was sought in identifying key beneficiary groups. The FGDs were conducted in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Kampong Cham. The decision on the final venues for the FGDs involved discussion with the project staff and the implementing agencies.

Reporting phase

36. The reporting phase included (i) a debriefing session at UNDP Cambodia at the end of the field mission on 13 September 2022, (ii) a PowerPoint presentation on key findings and recommendations from the evaluation exercise, (iii) preparation of the draft evaluation report, and (iii) finalization of the evaluation report including an audit trail. The final report will incorporate relevant comments/suggestions on the draft report.

²² The terms of reference for evaluation envisage interviews with specific agencies such as the project board and other strategic partners, the National Employment Agency, the Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training, Khmer Enterprise, the National Accounting Council, Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors, the Embassy of Russian Federation, Cambodia Academy of Digital Technologies, Impact hub Phnom Penh, SHE Investment, Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia, partnering universities under ATQ programme, and other KIIs. The KIIs and FGDs complimented the progress reported in the PCR for the project.

V. DATA AND ANALYSIS

37. The key informant interviews and focus group discussions followed a case-specific selective list of guiding questions to ensure that the discussion remained on track. Purposely, the guiding questions were formulated for application under different contexts. The evaluator with the support of the project team endeavoured to reach out to most of the agencies identified and different beneficiary groups including ATQ graduates and participants in other project-supported initiatives.

38. The ATQ had been a substantive programme supported by the project. However, the list of beneficiaries of the programme was not available at the time of drafting the inception report. The evaluation sought support from the project partner universities/institutes to obtain the list, with possible their current placement locations. As expected, the graduates of the programme will be spread in different parts of the country. The evaluation used a stratified random sampling method to identify major clusters of locations and interviewed four to six randomly selected beneficiaries at each location. The evaluator reached out for interviews with both men and women in rural, semi-urban, and urban areas.

39. Additional candidates for interviews for the evaluation included representative participants in the Bluetribe Founders, Junior Enterprise Programme (JEP), Startups to Springboards, Movers workshops, and SHE incubator and accelerator activities. The locations of the beneficiaries of these programmes except JEP were not known *a priori*. With additional information from the project team, the evaluator will draw a sampling frame for interviews by ensuring equal gender representation and rural/urban split (to the possible extent). The evaluation prepared two case studies (each) based on the participants of the JEP, SHE Incubation, and SHE Accelerator programmes. Since secondary data did not exist, data and information were collected through FGDs.

Analytical Method

40. Data analysis was guided by available data in disaggregated form. The document review was subjected to content analysis, and in the absence of tangible quantitative data except for project finance, the analysis opted for a qualitative approach.

Performance Standards

41. The evaluation adopted OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Crosscutting issues included gender, human rights, and disability. The evaluation applied a five-point scale against each DAC evaluation criterion to assess the performance of the project:

- (i) Highly satisfactory (1): Project performed well overall against each of the evaluation questions;
- (ii) Satisfactory (2): Project performed well overall against the majority of the evaluation questions but there was some room for improvement;
- (iii) Moderately satisfactory (3): Project performed moderately against almost half of the evaluation questions but there was considerable room for improvement;

- (iv) Somewhat satisfactory (4): Project performed poorly overall against the majority of the evaluation questions but there were immediate and considerable steps that should have been taken for improvement; and
- (v) Not satisfactory (5): Project performed poorly in almost all the evaluation questions and there were immediate and major steps that should have been taken for improvement.

Stakeholder Participation

42. All relevant agencies, project beneficiary groups, the project team, UNDP staff, and selected Project Board members took part in the evaluation exercise. The beneficiary groups included ADQ, JEP, incubators and accelerators, and Start-up initiatives. All participants expressed their frank views on their experiences during the participation in the project activities and downstream progress, where relevant. In total, the evaluation consulted 68 individuals comprising 8 UNDP staff and project team members, 30 KIIs, and 30 beneficiaries in 7 FGDs representing key project interventions in the project (Appendix 5). The evaluator presented emerging findings, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation to the project board on 13 October 2022 and their relevant comments have been incorporated in the report.

Ethical Considerations

43. The evaluator adhered to the UNEG Code of Conduct throughout the evaluation implementation. The project team members introduced the evaluator to the respective KII and FGD participants but they did not participate in the interviews and discussions in any form to preserve an atmosphere for a free and frank discussion. Information and data collected during the data collection process were held by the evaluator and these have not been shared with anyone ensuring confidentiality. The primary data and information including interview notes will be deleted/destroyed after the approval of the report by UNDP Cambodia management.

Evaluator's Background

44. The evaluator, Ganesh Prasad Rauniyar, is an independent contractor with no conflict of interest in the project in any form. He has conducted independent evaluations for various agencies including UNDP. He was selected through the competitive selection process. He has conducted several evaluations at different levels including youth economic empowerment and skills development projects and programmes for the UN agencies and multilateral development banks. He has a good understanding of Cambodia's country context and development challenges and opportunities.

Major Limitations of the Methodology

45. The lack of pre- and post-intervention data on project beneficiaries was not available for most of the activities. Limited information was held by the SHE Investment group participants. The evaluation timeframe was not suitable for conducting a beneficiary-level survey for evaluation. It is compounded by the prolonged coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The project team was focused on conducting planned activities. The project had faced challenges due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and associated restrictions on movement and gatherings. The majority of project activities had to be carried out remotely using online platforms and online learning based on digital penetration and reasonable access to the Internet. Some of the project activities had to be canceled or reduced in frequency. Also, the youth located

in provincial areas encountered digital access challenges. The project also had to organize an online National Career Fair. It understands that At least one skill certification programme in the area of ATQ was interrupted and the development of a skill training programme for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) cluster workers had to be put off because of the lack of progress in SME cluster development.

VI. FINDINGS

1. Relevance

Overall Performance	Moderately Satisfactory (3)
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46. The KIIs and UNDP team responded to the question on the relevance of the project. Overall, the project was relevant to Cambodia’s youth. ***Moderately relevant to the overall design and approaches.*** The review of PRODOC suggests that the problem tree analysis was done appropriately and the issues facing youth unemployment were appropriately identified. The design focus on youth and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups including higher participation from females was timely. Over 80% of the KII participants recognized UNDP’s support was relevant to youth’s economic empowerment. The project was aligned with UNDAF 2019-2023 which envisaged that the United Nations will seek to promote labour market opportunities, improve the quality of jobs and youth work preparedness, and address barriers to entrepreneurship.²³ The project is also aligned with the UNDP Country Programme Document 2019-2023 which aimed to empower particularly unemployed youth, among others.²⁴ The project was also consistent with the government’s Rectangular Strategy Phase IV as part of the priority on Human Resource Development. Likewise, the project is also aligned with the government’s National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 which aims at “creating more jobs, in terms of both quality and quantity aspects, for the citizens of Cambodia, especially for the youth through skill training, provision of job market information, improvement in working condition and promotion of business and investment inside and outside the country.”²⁵ The Plan also emphasizes preparation for the digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (I4.0). The project design also adequately captured perceived risks and identified mitigation measures. Furthermore, the project aspiration was also consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 8 which aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.”²⁶

47. The theory of change (TOC) captured approaches for addressing youth employment and gender mainstreaming and private sector partnerships received due recognition in the TOC. The TOC continues to be relevant in Cambodia at project completion as full employment decent jobs. The project design had an underlying assumption that the focus on supporting the government’s emerging digital economy and I4.0 agenda would lead to the project objective of full productive employment and decent work with adequate earnings. The project’s results framework laid out three outputs focused on policy-oriented research, a model certification programme, and tools for the youth and aspiring entrepreneurs to start

²³ United Nations. 2019. United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2019-2023 <https://cambodia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/CAMBODIA%20UNDAF-%202019-2023.pdf> (accessed on 28 September 2022)

²⁴ UNDP. 2019. Cambodia Country Programme Document 2019-2022, New York.

²⁵ Royal Government of Cambodia. 2019. National Strategic Development Plan 2019.2023, Phnom Penh.

²⁶ <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/employment-decent-work-all-and-social-protection> (accessed 18 September 2022).

their businesses primarily those responsive to I4.0 and the emerging digital economy. The evaluation found that (i) there was no direct link between the project's theory of change and the project's results framework and (ii) the three outputs envisaged appeared disjoint and not interconnected. Also, several key informants were of the view that at the time of project formulation, Cambodia did not have the required environment for I4.0 and some of the planned activities were premature. Some of the KIIs expressed concern at the lack of coordination among the development partners on the youth empowerment agenda, particularly concerning skills and entrepreneurship development.

48. ***Demonstrated adequate flexibility.*** The evaluation suggests that the project design provided flexibility for undertaking various activities. According to the project team and the implementing agencies, they were able to switch from face-to-face training and capacity development activities to online delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic while there were restrictions on movements and gatherings. While it took time to adjust to the new output delivery mechanism, initial adjustments took time but the transition was possible. Also, the project team in consultation with the implementing agencies and service providers was able to launch feasible activities due to design flexibility. However, this flexibility also meant that activities were planned and implemented with less consideration for the achievement of the outcomes.

49. In terms of the project delivery, the evaluation found that there was a one-to-one correspondence between inputs and outputs, but the results framework had non-binding and descriptive targets and not all targets were specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Refined specific targets would have contributed to maintaining project focus towards the outcome delivery. Furthermore, flexibility also implied that the project's focus on disability and LNOB was insufficient. The evaluation also found that the specific activities supported by the project had their respective merits in introducing and strengthening entrepreneurship skills for MSMEs, institutionalizing a skills certification scheme, and commissioning research. However, the research component was not clear on how UNDP was to influence the government's policy for decent youth employment. The project design would have also benefitted from an operational framework for addressing disability and leaving no one behind (LNOB) agenda.

50. ***Relied on in-house knowledge.*** The UNDP Cambodia staff relied on experience from previous youth employment-related projects supported by UNDP. The tight timeframe for preparing PRODOC limited consultation with the relevant stakeholders including youth. The consultation with relevant line ministries, private sector entities with employment potential, and other UN organizations was limited, and youth had no say in project design. Also, while the project was supposed to create decent jobs for the digital economy, some stakeholders considered that targeting I4.0 was premature. According to them, resources could have been deployed to create enabling environment including job-skill matching and actively pursuing partnerships with private sector entities. Also, the inadequate time for a consultation at the project design stage led to somewhat ambitious targets for the duration of the project as well as inadequate preparedness for responding to the I4.0 requirements. The partnerships with other agencies mostly emerged during the project implementation stage. The evaluation noted the active participation of relevant UNDP specialists in the project design, but it contends that the extra time for due diligence in identifying relevant partners and consultations with core beneficiaries, that is, youth groups would have strengthened the project design.

51. ***Overall, the entrepreneurship and technical skills training were relevant.*** The project design focussed on skills in both entrepreneurship and technical areas. It emphasized communication and presentation skills, basic business planning and financial management, and marketing where applicable.

The technical skills focused on incubators and accelerators, and these skills were complemented by training in basic entrepreneurship skills. The evaluation found that the selection process for identifying skills-training participants was satisfactory. However, it would have been desirable for training activities to be focussed on marketable skills in close consultation with relevant industries and service providers in the private sector. This would have required time for consultations with relevant stakeholders including youth at the design stage. In most cases, the outcome of the training was less clear in the design in terms of decent jobs leading to higher wages/incomes for the youth.

52. While the PRODOC did not explicitly define decent jobs, it could have adopted the ILO narrative “It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, 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.”²⁷ Furthermore, the 2015 UN General Assembly adopted decent work and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda - employment creation, social protection, rights to work, and social dialogue as integral elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.²⁸

53. ***Had a strong emphasis on gender equality but lacked direction for the inclusion of other disadvantaged groups.*** The analysis of the project document and feedback from the key stakeholders during evaluation confirmed that the project activities adequately targeted and ensured the equal participation of women. The project also supported youth with partial- or full-tuition scholarships, particularly those from weaker socioeconomic backgrounds. The evaluation considers that it would have been useful if the project design had envisaged training youth in non-conventional areas, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for female participants. It also noted that the project design had embraced the LNOB principle, and would have benefited from specifying strategic approaches to encourage persons with different sexual orientations and persons with disabilities in project activities. While not all skills were amenable to persons with disability, a clear emphasis on their inclusion modality would have ensured their participation in a meaningful way.

54. ***Lacked a framework for engagement with the private sector.*** The theory of change identified private sector partnership as the main conduit between activities and outputs, the project design would have benefitted from an operational strategic approach for engagement with the private sector. While many service providers were identified only during the project implementation, it would have helped to map out key partnerships with the private sector at the time of PRODOC preparation. It would have also helped to design project activities of mutual interest rather than taking a generic approach to training. The private sector has remained the primary engine of economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, and its role is equally important in supporting Cambodia's growth. Some private entities such as 3E-Fii had a different expectation of the project's trained individual, and it was expected that the graduates would have acquired advanced skills in demand, which did not adequately align with the project's approach.

55. ***Identified relevant risks but fell short of mitigation measures.*** The project design had appropriately identified six key risks: (i) limited cooperation and coordination from key partners, (ii) the private sector does not cooperate and coordinate activities effectively, (iii) no incentive system for the

²⁷ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang-en/index.htm> (accessed 30 September 2022).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

private sector to invest in human resources, (iv) lack of understanding and willingness from the part of the family to invest in youth's education and skills training, (v) programme inputs (funds, human resources, etc) are not mobilized in a timely fashion, and (vi) the project's major focus is testing of new approaches for scaling up. However, reflective and timely learning does not take place to effectively incorporate lessons from the pilot for successful risk mitigation measures. These risks continued throughout the project implementation.

56. The project's reliance on National Employment Agency was a good step in the right direction but it did not cover key potential partners for employment and job creation. The Agency's outreach capacity was limited. Also, cooperation and coordination with the UN Joint Programme on Youth Employment were inadequate. Two key private sector partners Phnom Penh SEZ and World Bridge Industrial Park could not take part because of delays in their commencement. While it was expected that the project would work with relevant ministries to advocate for an incentive system that encourages the private sector to invest in their staff capacity, especially in light of I4.0, it did not materialize. As of the project closing, there was no incentive system in place. Also, Cambodia Development Research Institute (CDRI) conducted a study on the economic return of investment in education, but there was no tangible evidence to suggest that community awareness had increased. Most of the procurement services, however, were generally efficient except for some delays caused by unavoidable pandemic-related delays. At the project completion, the project did not have an inventory of effective learning – what works and what does not work. The regular assessment was partly hampered by turnover in the project team and the COVID-19 pandemic. The project duration at the design stage was too short to conduct regular assessments, derive lessons from several activities, and improve design and implementation. As a result, there are no lessons learned per se for scaling up.

2. Coherence

Overall Performance	Moderately Satisfactory (3)
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57. Twenty-two KII respondents (73%) and 10 beneficiaries (33%) responded to the questions on the project's coherence during the interviews and FGDs. Overall, the coherence was deemed weak. There had been broad coherence, although the beneficiaries had limited knowledge about it. A discussion on evaluation assessment follows.

58. **Coherent with the government's development priorities.** The project was found to be coherent with the Rectangular Strategy - Phase 4 and the Cambodia Vision 2050, as well as the readiness to respond to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and tap the potentials of the digital transformation, the "Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2035" which was considered and prepared based on the actual needs, potentials, resources, and capabilities, both in the public and private sectors, for the development orientation and process of digital transformation in Cambodia.²⁹ The framework envisages that the digital sector will bring about opportunities for new sources of growth, increase economic productivity, promote economic diversification, and create jobs, aimed at contributing to poverty alleviation and social inequality. It also recognizes the economic and social potentials of digital transformation. The economic potentials identified include (i) linkage to production chains, and regional and global value chains; (ii) promotion of trade and business activities; (iii) job creation, skills, and

²⁹ The Royal Government of Cambodia. 2021. Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2035, Phnom Penh.

investment; and (iv) efficiency enhancement in public service delivery. Likewise, social potentials considered are (i) easier and wider access to social services through digital technology platforms; (ii) strengthening relationships and deepening social sharing; and (iii) access to entertainment and social information on demand. The policy framework looks to impact key economic benefits in terms of (i) job creation, (ii) skills development, (iii) improved investment climate, (iv) trade and business activity boost, (v) links in regional and global production and value chains, and (vi) more efficient public service delivery.³⁰

59. ***Coherent with the development priorities of other UN agencies.*** The project's objective of decent employment and skills development are captured in the work programmes of several UN agencies and ILO has been leading the policy agenda in this area. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has partnered with the UN in implementing the second phase of a joint programme to promote decent employment for youth and reduce inequalities in the country.³¹ The programme offers out-of-school and vulnerable youth learning packages driven by innovation.³² The programme is expected to directly benefit 170,900 youth (50% female) from the industry-driven skills and competencies development initiatives; basic education equivalency and literacy in factor programmes; entrepreneurship and enterprise development training and support initiatives; employment services; and youth rights at work awareness raising programmes. The programme is supported by SDC (USD4.8 million) and four UN agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNIDO and ILO) contributing \$4.8 million).

60. ***Coherent with UNDP's Youth Co: Lab programme.*** The project objectives are also coherent with UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub's Youth Co: Lab programme to establish a common agenda for countries in the region to empower and invest in youth, so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. The programme supports (i) directly empowering young aspiring or inspiring entrepreneurs; (ii) building the capacity of ecosystem partners to better support youth entrepreneurship; and (iii) working with governments to strengthen the enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship. Cambodia is one of the 28 countries participating in the programme in the region, and it is jointly supported by Citi Foundation and UNDP.

61. ***The programme-based approach has the potential to strengthen internal coherence.*** A review of the TOC and the results framework for the project did not demonstrate adequate synergies. The PRODOC was, however, reviewed by the UNDP Cambodia staff before its approval. The TOC focussed more on the employment agenda while the results framework concentrated on the digital economy and supporting the I4.0 agenda of the government. Furthermore, the evaluation did not find proper synergies within the UNDP Cambodia portfolio of projects, partly because the project design did not spell out the internal intra-project consistency. Even after the project's approval, there is no evidence to support coherence across the projects. For example, several projects approved during 2019-2021 had livelihood as one of the key outcomes, but the PDEYC did not have any direct link to the other projects.³³ The

³⁰ <https://www.b2b-cambodia.com/articles/cambodias-digital-economic-plans/> (accessed 2 October 2022).

³¹ <https://cambodia.un.org/en/47986-cambodia-and-un-step-efforts-promote-decent-employment-youth> (accessed 2 October 2022).

³² The packages include technical; entrepreneurial, soft, and on-the-job skills as well as demand-driven career guidance to ensure that out-of-school and vulnerable youth are better able to compete for quality employment in the labour market.

³³ Some examples of potential coherence could have been established during the implementation such as Programme to Promote Disability Inclusion, Regional Project on Business Integrity Toolkit, Integrating Natural Resource Management in Productive,

evaluation also notes that the young population base of Cambodia justified the inclusion of youth in almost every project supported by UNDP in the country.

62. **Support for decent employment is broadly coherent with SDG 8.** The meta-data for the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030)³⁴ suggests that the project was broadly coherent with SDG target 8.3, which states that Cambodia will promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services. The CSDGs framework document does not mention digital economy and I4.0. The target was to be measured in terms of the number of commercial companies registered in the Chamber of Commerce in the whole country up to the reporting year compared to the baseline year (Previous years membership). Furthermore, the framework document also mentions "youth" in the meta-data in the context of gross enrolment in tertiary education (age 18-21 years) by sex including in TVET institutions (15-24 years old) and universities (18-21 years old), and literacy (15 years old and above). While the PRODOC did not explicitly define "decent work", the framework document stated it to include the provision of maternity/paternity leave, family care leave, equal pay for equal work, onsite childcare facilities, family-friendly workplace policies, flexible working arrangements, etc.).

3. Effectiveness

Overall Performance	Satisfactory (2)
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63. Overall, based on 60 respondents, the project is deemed to be effective. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents (73%) felt that the support from the project was effective. A discussion follows. **Not all indicators in the results framework had quantitative targets.** Based on the progress reported by the project, all but one target appeared to have been achieved as summarized in Appendix 6. The skills certification programme for the SME cluster park could not progress due to the delay in establishing the park. The evaluation also found that the I4.0 agenda still requires substantial policy support before the actual contribution of policy-related knowledge work could be put to test by integrating into the relevant agency's work programme supported by required funding. Nevertheless, the project contributed to raising awareness about the importance of I4.0 technologies based on the digital economy. Furthermore, there would be a need for periodic updating of ICT skills profiles prepared under the project with the advancement of digital technologies and market demand for the skilled workforce.

64. **The project board's guidance has been effective.** The project board met seven times during the life of the project; the last one was held on 13 October 2022. The review of minutes of the board meetings suggests that these meetings discussed progress and challenges, and offered guidance for implementation by the project team. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the board met virtually and remained effective in guiding the project. The board remained supportive of project management throughout the implementation period. It carefully reviewed the progress at each meeting and approved

National and Forested Landscape of Northern Region of Cambodia, Cross-Border E-Commerce for MSMEs, Combating Marine Plastic Waste in Cambodia, etc.

³⁴ The Royal Government of Cambodia. 2018. Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030). https://data.opendevlopmentmekong.net/dataset/3aacd312-3b1e-429c-ac1e-33b90949607d/resource/d340c835-e705-40a4-8fb3-66f957670072/download/csdg_framework_2016-2030_english_last_final-1.pdf, Phnom Penh (accessed 4 October 2022).

needful amendments to the work plan and budget. Some of the key decisions included (i) dropping of planned midterm evaluation due to the short project implementation period (1st meeting); (ii) discontinuation of outputs associated with the SME Cluster (3rd meeting); inclusion of additional activities (development of ICT skills framework/profile, implementation of digital skills programme, and the development of the mentoring ecosystem for youth startups) and acceptance of USD 520,000 additional funds in the project resources (4th meeting); and inclusion of additional activities, recruitment of a Partnership and Knowledge Management Specialist, and a no-cost extension of the project for additional six months (5th meeting). The 6th meeting approved the allocation of the project balance to three activities: (i) support ICT equipment to equip ATQ examination labs established under KICPAA; (ii) support the dissemination campaign of ICT Occupational Profiles in 3 provinces, and (iii) support the ICT equipment for Techno Incubation Center. The final board meeting held on 13 October 2022 approved the project completion report.

65. ***The ATQ programme has demonstrated positive results with strong demand for accountancy skills training and certification of the training expected.*** It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum in participating universities' academic programme. However, anecdotal evidence based on interviews with ATQ beneficiaries suggests that students can prepare for and appear in the certification tests organized by KICPAA. Also, there is an expectation among the beneficiaries that they would be able to get higher salaries with the new qualification, which is yet to be established. The beneficiaries are also of the view that the curriculum based on ATQ is of superior quality and supported by relevant content suitable for employment in the private as well as public sectors. The premium of ATQ in terms of employability and higher salaries/wages is yet to materialize.

66. ***The career fair reportedly was popular among the youth and many were able to attend virtually in 2021 even from different parts of the country.*** The fair brought employers, aspiring youth job seekers, development partners, and government agencies under one roof. It is, however, not as effective as in-person attendance. The evaluation notes the regionalized approach to career fairs is a step in the right direction as not all potentially qualified youth can travel to a central workplace like Phnom Penh due to prohibitive costs of attendance or other commitments. The future success of this initiative hinges on YEA's proactive role in seeking sponsorships, particularly from private sector entities.

67. ***The project's support for the entrepreneurship ecosystem through mentorship and startup incubator and accelerator programme has been moderately effective.*** The mentorship guidebooks for ESOs, mentors, and mentees are of high quality and useful for established as well as aspiring entrepreneurs. The demand for mentorship remains strong and fully supported by collaborators or employers. Funding and capacity to implement the mentorship programme remains limited for scaling up. Similarly, based on the interviews with SHE Investment beneficiaries, support for women-led startups, has been well received because the programme has enhanced confidence to run their businesses. Most of the members have been able to increase their incomes to varying degrees ranging from a minimum of 10% to over 1,000% in one case. The entrepreneurship business skills have covered group organization and cohesion, bookkeeping, marketing, and financial management. The project has observed positive results from its partnership with Khmer Enterprise and Techno Startups but benefits are yet to be quantified. The support for the entrepreneurship ecosystem requires sustained commitment and partnerships with private sector entities. It is expected that not all startups and incubators are likely to

succeed without continued support in terms of access to technology and finance, and market linkages, particularly for scaling up and eventually becoming successful enterprises.

68. ***The project had a strong focus on gender mainstreaming.*** The project team ensured that some of the key activities involved nearly equal participation of female and male youth. The JEP had an equal number of male and female participants, while SHE Investment and ATQ initiatives had stronger participation of female youth. On the other hand, male participants dominated high-tech initiatives such as robotics at ITC and other I4.0-related activities, including Techno startups. The evaluation sought evidence of increasing enrolment of female participants in non-conventional activities in STEM. It learned that while efforts were ongoing by several institutions, their enrolment lagged behind males. The FGD respondents related low enrolment of female students in STEM subjects in schools, but the trend was positive largely based on scholarships for female students undertaking STEM studies.

69. ***The short project implementation period and the prolonged COVID-19 adversely affected project effectiveness.*** The evaluation assessed that the implementation period for the project was too short given that UNDP's support aimed to pilot several initiatives that emerged during the implementation period. There was little time to reflect on the lessons and integrated these lessons into improving project implementation. Based on key informants interviewed, the project's effort focussed on identifying activities of relevance to the digital economy and I4.0 in particular. It took about six months to mobilize the project coordinator since he was engaged by UNDP on another project. Once COVID-19 hit Cambodia, the work plan had to be revised and new delivery modalities had to be programmed for online or hybrid support to the intended beneficiaries. The project had to introduce new activities that could be conducted remotely and delivered online. The team was unable to focus on the outcome, that is, decent employment for the Cambodian youth. Also, conveniently most of the activities were concentrated in and around Phnom Penh. The project's intended focus on vulnerable youth, persons with disability, and persons with different sexual orientations became no longer a priority. According to the selected key informants, the project could not actively address the needs of persons with a disability because it would have required additional investments in equipment and facilities, not provisioned in the project budget. The project could have benefitted from the initial discussion on the design and operational linkages with UNDP's Programme to Promote Disability Inclusion. Discussions with key informants also revealed that the project partially addressed the SDGs agenda of "leaving no one behind" (LNOB), mainly focussing on gender mainstreaming and involvement of the youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

70. ***The project's partnerships evolved, particularly during implementation.*** The project partnered with governmental and private organizations to implement approved project activities. The governmental organizations included the Ministry of Economy and Finance; the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Education and Training; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; and the National Employment Agency for the dissemination of ICT skills profiles and career pathways. The government-sponsored agencies included Khmer Enterprise (Bluetribe Programme), Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology, the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (for the selection of training equipment), and the Techno Startup Centre. Likewise, the project also partnered with private entities such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) and KICPAA for the ATQ curriculum development and examination set-up; Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology (for the preparation of Demand for and Supply of Digital Skills report); STEP IT Academy (for the PowerUP Digital Skills Capacity Building Programme and Work Placement Model); Entrepreneurship and Innovation Impact Hub (for the execution

of the National Dialogue and producing the mentorship guidebooks and certification programme); SHE Investments (for the execution of an incubator and accelerator programme); Wintech Software Development (Cambodia) Company Limited (for the preparation of 75 ICT Occupational Profiles and career pathway); and the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (for the execution of the Junior Entrepreneurship program and Global Entrepreneurship Week). The project also collaborated with UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub Project on the National Dialogue, Springboard Programme, and Movers Programme, and onboarding mentors to their regional mentorship platform and entrepreneurs participating in UNDP-supported programmes to gain access to these mentors on the regional mentorship platform. The project also availed services of individual consultants based on needs and it partnered with the Cambodia Development Research Institute (CDRI) for the Demand for and Supply of Digital Skills report. All semi-government and private sector partnerships involved contract arrangements with UNDP Cambodia. Only Khmer Enterprise and two private sector entities made direct financial contributions towards the project costs.

71. ***The project's contribution to skills development in entrepreneurship and the youth employment ecosystem is evolving.*** The semi-government agencies and the private sector partners played an important role in supporting skills development in the entrepreneurship and youth employment ecosystem through training, mentoring, and internship arrangements. At project completion, the number of sustainable jobs created remains unknown as the emphasis has been on skills development. It is assumed that the individuals acquiring capacity-building support will be able to establish and/or grow their businesses. However, it is too early to ascertain it as most of the activities have just ended and businesses are in the early stages of operations. There is, however, one positive development. A group of six beneficiaries of SHE Investments revealed that they were able to employ additional workers in their businesses. The general perception is that entrepreneurship skills have boosted the participants' morale and strengthened their confidence in undertaking income-generating activities with a "Yes I can do" attitude. Also, ITC's DCLAB is well-equipped with robotic equipment with UNDP support and enabled the Institute in delivering high-end technical training to aspiring start-ups. According to the project beneficiaries, the mentorship programme has also helped them to seriously consider their startups more systematically and sustainably.

4. Efficiency

Overall Performance	Satisfactory (2)
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72. The KII and GDG respondents' perception of the project's efficiency in delivering expected capacity development support from the project to the beneficiaries. Suggested that the project was efficiently implemented barring challenges imposed by COVID-19. The responses also reflect the views of key informants and the beneficiaries of the project. The overall reflection is that the project has been efficient even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Half of the respondents in both groups felt that the project did its best in remaining engaged with the beneficiaries and supporting the creation enabling environment including a basic entrepreneurial ecosystem. The evaluator's assessment follows.

73. ***The project activities were completed within the budget available and extended the implementation period.*** At completion, the project received resources from six sources (Table 2). Parallel funding of USD180,000 from World Bridge was envisaged in the PRODOC, but it did not materialize due

to the delay associated with the establishment of the SME Cluster Park. The project resources at completion amounted to 27.3% higher than originally envisaged in the PRODOC. Additional resource mobilization primarily came from UNDP core funds. The project board approved an extension of the project completion from 31 December 2021 to 30 June 2022 in light of the pandemic obstructions and the need for the completion of some of the ongoing activities.

Table 2: Funding Sources for the Project at Completion (USD)

Funding Source	UNDP			Donor	Government	Private Sector Entities		Total
	TRAC-1	TRAC-2	Total			3E-Fii	Smart Axiata	
Direct (USD and %)				Russian Federation Trust Fund	MEF (through Khmer Enterprise)			
	456,823.43	430,000.00	886,823.43	800,000.00	15,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	1,721,823.43
%	51.50%			46.46%	0.87%	0.58%	0.58%	100.00
Parallel funding from SDC for the UN Joint Project on decent employment.								208,515.39
Total								1,930,338.83

Source: Draft project completion report, August 2022.

74. **The project resources were reasonably distributed across the three outputs.** At project completion, available funds were fully utilized (Table 3) in implementing approved project activities. The research/studies associated with Output 1 accounted for about 14% of the project’s resources and the certification programme (Output 2) absorbed 26%. Likewise, entrepreneurship support and readiness support (Objective 3) received 27% of the fund allocations. All three outputs collectively used two-thirds (67%) of resources. The “project management and technical support” received 29% of the project budget. In the absolute term, this category of expenditure is considered high. However, the evaluation notes that the project duration was extended at no cost for another six months. Furthermore, additional costs were incurred in delivering capacity development support using online or blended modality.

Table 3: Financial Resource Utilization (2019-2022)

Purpose	Direct Funding	Parallel Funding	Total	Share (%)
Output 1: Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus around Industry 4.0 (I4.0)	266,623.37	0.00	266,623.37	13.9%
Output 2: A scalable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated growth and comparative advantage for the Cambodia youth	398,592.49	100,442.50	499,034.99	26.1%
Output 3: Youth (and young aspired entrepreneurs) are ready to start their businesses through entrepreneurship training	458,359.80	58,794.37	517,154.17	27.0%
Outputs (1-3)	1,123,575.66	159,236.87	1,282,812.53	67.0%
Project management and technical support	519,837.18	35,637.33	555,474.51	29.0%
General management support (GSM)	61,455.02	13,641.19	75,096.21	3.9%
Project management and technical support, and GSM	581,292.20	49,278.52	630,570.72	33.0%
Total	1,704,867.86	208,515.39	1,913,383.25	100.0%

Source: Draft Project Completion Report, August 2022.

75. **Broadly, the quality of capacity development support under the project was considered high.** The project beneficiaries expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the learning materials and delivery from the experts. They spoke highly of mentors and access to them even after the training sessions had concluded. The guidebooks were user-friendly and adaptable. The evaluator reviewed the guidebooks produced by the Impact Hub and resource materials from the STEP Academy. These are deemed useful resources for both aspiring and established entrepreneurs. Similarly, the beneficiaries also reiterated the importance of the step-by-step guidance they received for startups and incubators.

76. **Online learning was not always convenient.** About 40% of the beneficiaries reported that they encountered “online fatigue” and lacked adequate concentration. Also, learning scheduled over the weekends was convenient, but it took a whole chunk of their time away from social activities. Some of the beneficiaries also encountered poor internet access, particularly in rural areas and had limited access to computers or laptops. Reliance on mobile for lessons was not convenient. Likewise, some participants turned on their digital devices but they engaged in other activities.

77. The project could have benefitted from in-house expertise and a stable project team with UNDP Cambodia in the digital economy and I4.0 to steer the project more efficiently. There was a need for guidance to steer the project sequentially and technical expertise could have ensured the non-fragmentation of different ad hoc activities introduced during project implementation. While the three outputs were relevant to the Cambodian economy, the project would have benefitted from consistency and linkages across these outputs. Furthermore, some of the key informants had noticed that the high turnover of project team members in a relatively short-duration project also contributed to the slowdown in the momentum of project efficiency. The project activities had to be organized only after new team members came on board. Government officials had to deal with new team members. A couple of officials questioned UNDP’s reliance on consultants instead of having their core competency within the organization. There should have been a stable project team empowered with a strategic approach to project implementation.

78. **The project was able to leverage limited resources from governmental and private sources.** The resource contribution to the project substantially reflects the ownership of the project. The MEF contributed USD15,000 through the Khmer Enterprise and two private sector entities contributed USD10,000 each. Other private sector entities were engaged at a cost to the project. One private sector key informant stated that the expectation was that the project will create a high-end skilled workforce, which had not happened. The future contribution from that source was not likely to come unless the private sector sees direct and tangible benefits to private enterprises. The evaluation is of the view that additional time for due diligence and mapping partnership space at the time of project formulation would have created tangible buy-ins through resource contributions. Also, synergies with other development partners in common areas of interest could have brought in additional resources.

5. Sustainability

Overall Performance	Moderately Satisfactory (3)
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79. The participants in KIIs and FGDs were asked about their perception of the sustainability of project benefits beyond the project completion date. The evaluation findings indicate that the project benefits

were generally likely to be sustainable, but depended on continued financial and technical support with required resources. In some cases, the scope of coverage would have to be reduced.

80. ***Digital and ICT skills profiles and career pathways have the potential to contribute to the country's digital human resource planning.*** The project has contributed to raising awareness about the digital skills in demand partly arising from project-sponsored activities such as job fairs and rolling out the skills profiles for a greater probability of better jobs with higher income opportunities. The awareness, however, differs across geographical locations and educational attainment of the youth in Cambodia. Urban youth, as well as youth with a higher level of educational attainment, reportedly possess increased awareness. At present, most of the jobs in digital and ICT areas are concentrated in Phnom Penh and a handful of larger towns. Some of the KIIs were of the view that (i) there is a need to identify skills gaps by industry and employers' locations, (ii) strengthen the delivery of skills-based training supported by trained instructors and facilities with hardware and software provisions, and (iii) an active platform for matching trained individuals with firms seeking trained men and women who can support and drive business growth. Efforts are also needed to ensure that the skill profiles are periodically updated at least every 4-5 years so that these remain relevant. The evaluation is of the view that the long list of 75 skill profiles can be separated into generic and specialized skills. Also, it is equally important to monitor the uptake of these skill profiles by employers. While having ICT skill profiles is a good start, the challenge lies ahead to keep this market relevant. The government may need to consider a strategic approach to building human resources in partnership with the private sector and training institutions.

81. ***Accountancy Technical Qualification (ATQ) is likely sustainable.*** The ATQ programme under the project was managed by KICPAA, a private entity. The learning modules have been or are being integrated into the curriculum of seven universities (five in the private sector). During the interview for the evaluation, a senior KICPAA representative was of the view that the programme was expected to continue, albeit in selected concentrated locations such as provincial towns with established accountancy-taught universities. The management team of KICPAA serves voluntarily and revenue generated from administering ATQ examinations goes towards meeting the operating expenses of the programme. Over the last three years, KICPAA has strengthened its capacity and has established its credibility in managing ATQ successfully. Going forward, it is critical that the organization continues to receive the required support from the relevant government agencies so that it can continue to operate with additional efficiency.

82. ***The mentorship programme introduced by the project in the entrepreneurship landscape is likely sustainable.*** The mentorship programme and practical training have been well received by the participants and entrepreneurs alike. The user-friendly nature of the guidebooks produced by the Impact Hub Phnom Penh has already been adopted by the Techno Startup Centre (an agency under the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)) throughout the country. Also, Khmer Enterprise (also under MEF) plans to support mentoring start-ups in 2023. Furthermore, Youth Co: Lab, a regional partnership between UNDP and Citi Foundation, plans to use resource materials from the project's mentorship programme in their regional programme in 2023.

83. ***Equipment support for the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC) for the DCLAB has benefitted Cambodian youth with training in drone applications and robotics but it requires a sustainable funding mechanism.*** With the rapid pace of technological progress, there is always a constant demand for regular upgrading of equipment and procurement of new equipment. These requirements

involve high capital costs. The government alone is not likely to continue to support heavy investment unless credible private sector entities join in partnership with ITC. This is possible if ITC can make a strong win-win business case. One-off support from development partners like UNDP is helpful but it is not sustainable unless there is a medium to a long-term partnership with the private sector.

84. ***The partnership of the private sector in creating enabling entrepreneurship ecosystem is critical for the sustainability of project achievements.*** The role of the private sector in the project had been limited primarily to serving as service providers. The project received a financial contribution from Smart Axiata and 3E-Fii, but moving forward their continued involvement in supporting project-created opportunities is not certain. There is a need to create confidence in private sector entities for providing opportunities for internships and employment based on true partnerships with adequate commitment over a defined period such as three to five years. Such partnerships can lead to a sustainable entrepreneurship environment. More work is required to (i) map out key private-sector players, (ii) identify any policy bottlenecks, (iii) need for incentives for participation, (iv) review of training curriculum and revisions, and (iv) quality assurances.

85. ***Access to finance for MSMEs and startups is critical to scale-up proven new concepts and ideas including growing business.*** The project implementation period had been short to pinpoint challenges associated with scaling up micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and promoting incubators into accelerators. The evaluation involved interviews with six women participants in the SHE Investments programme. All women had access to seed capital to convert ideas into business. While all women's enterprises are sustaining and were able to survive during the pandemic, they face access to finance as a major challenge to scale up. Access to institutional credit is limited in Cambodia and not many entrepreneurs can access finance unless they have adequate equity for collateral. Some of the women in the group were able to scale up their businesses because they were able to use family assets as collaterals. For the majority of poor and vulnerable groups, it has been prohibitive.

86. ***The junior entrepreneurship programme (JEP) is likely to sustain if fully integrated into the government's regular employment generation programme by creating synergies between employers and job seekers.*** The JEP has been a vehicle for disseminating job information at key centres of economic activities. The participants enrolled in JEP revealed that they had gained confidence in communication and basic entrepreneurship skills. However, only one in three participants had been successful in landing an internship or some kind of job. The evaluation learned that not all employers had signed up for the programme. At present, JEP is not linked with any other programme for youth.

87. ***A relatively short effective project implementation period amid COVID-19 did not provide an adequate timeframe for meaningful engagement with the policymakers on decent employment or programmatic support for the digital economy and preparedness for I4.0.*** A lack of a clear exit strategy for UNDP from the project left an impression on some of the beneficiaries and key informants that there would be another phase of the project. At project completion, there is no defined "home" for the project to carry forward initiatives to sustain achievements. The division had been along the activities without a unifying agency leading the overall responsibility. A number of beneficiaries felt that they would have received further capacity-building training through face-to-face contact with the resource persons. While the project responded to the changing operational constraints in the face of the pandemic, there was little opportunity for face-to-face interaction between youth and their peers and resource persons.

88. ***The sustainability/exit strategy document prepared by the project team requires refinement and a holistic approach supported by an operational plan with responsibility and resources.*** A set of key actions needed to ensure sustainability include (i) ensuring horizontal and vertical linkages across and between outputs; (ii) UNDP’s continued engagement with relevant agencies to influence policy aimed at the economic empowerment of youth based on evidence supporting what works; (iii) engaging with learning institutions (both public and private) to streamline market-driven career pathways for youth, particularly those located in disadvantaged communities and locations and supported by an effective marketing strategy to attract and retain youth in these programmes; (iv) ensuring NEA to be more responsive and effective in bridging the gap between youth job seekers and employers, particularly in the private sector ensuring that the job centres are results-based; (v) further strengthening agencies like KICPAA in administering ATQ like examinations with a focus on quality assurance and transparency; (vi) building and strengthening linkages between TVET institutions and digital learning institutions in both public and private sectors through harmonized curricula; (vii) developing youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in a holistic manner with focus on access to technology, mentorship, business management practices, and finance. Efforts are needed to consolidate the fragmented approach to the economic empowerment of youth in Cambodia.

6. Likely Impact

Overall Performance	Somewhat Satisfactory (4)
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89. ***The project had an impressive outreach.*** The project completion report (PCR) indicates that since its inception, the project estimated that it directly benefitted 827,415 individuals (43% women) and indirectly benefitted 1,564,721 individuals.³⁵ The number of beneficiaries included youth and other individuals from a wide array of backgrounds with some interest in skills and employment-related information, knowledge, and opportunities from both online and offline sources.³⁶

90. ***Women participants in the SHE Incubator and Accelerator programme had acquired entrepreneurial skills and benefitted from increased income and creating employment opportunities for other women in the communities.*** In an FGD with the evaluator, a group of beneficiaries receiving assistance from SHE Investments highlighted that they had increased their income from microenterprises ranging from 10% to 60%. In one case, women’s income had increased tenfold. Similarly, these women had created jobs for 2 to 10 individuals. An excerpt from the final evaluation report of the SHE “SHE Incubator & Accelerator Program” supported by the project is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 : Achievements of SHE Incubator and Accelerator Programme

Attributes of Achievements	Evidence (n=27)
Graduation from the programme during the pandemic	27 of 30 women
Women starting to pay themselves a salary for the first time	79.5%
Women entrepreneurs on track to achieve their vision for success after participating in the programme	92.5%
Women creating positive contributions to the local community	63%
The business survived the downturn from the pandemic and adopted business strategies and planning to resilience	100%
Women feel increased confidence, feeling empowered after participation in the programme	29%

³⁵ PDYEC. 2022. Project Completion Report based on Statistical Survey on TFD Projects Results, 20.04.2022 for the PDYEC, Cambodia

³⁶ The PCR outlines a long list of beneficiaries and participants in project-related activities.

Attributes of Achievements	Evidence (n=27)
Women reporting improved skills in financial management	74.5%
Women entrepreneurs able to pay fair salaries and provide healthcare and improved working conditions to their staff	39%
No. of employees retained during the COVID-19 pandemic	154
Women entrepreneurs have increased their revenue by 25% or more at the end of the project-supported programme	34%
Women entrepreneurs demonstrating behaviour change in leading to positive environmental impact by reducing plastic bags in their businesses	47.5

Note: Data in the table reflects the combined performance of incubators and accelerators.

Source: "SHE Incubator & Accelerator Program" Final Evaluation Report prepared by SHE Investments supported by the PDYEC Project, February 2021.

91. **By design, the Bluetribe Incubation Programme needed relatively a longer time horizon to generate tangible impact, but it has taken much longer than planned.** The programme incorporated one business (HomeApp) against a target of five businesses and three businesses (not yet incorporated) received USD 70,000 grant funding after the programme (50% of the funding is external to the programme as a seed grant. Khmer Enterprise had set up a grant allocation of USD15,000 for Bluetribe startups eligible to meet certain criteria, from which MeetDoctor received US\$6,000, Klembox was awarded USD5,000 and HomeApp received USD4,000. An incubation guidebook was planned for completion but remains under preparation.³⁷ The programme under the project support also supported seven (7) startups. And these are at an early stage of operations. Their business performance and the impact of the PDYEC project on business performance and employment creation are yet to be determined.

- Klembox (<https://www.facebook.com/klembox>). It is an educational programme that brings real-world applications into the classroom. It is considered the first affordable and innovative experiential learning provider, aligned with the national curriculum, in Cambodia.
- MeetDoctor (<https://meetdoctor.co/>): It covers healthcare, the pharmaceutical marketplace, and telemedicine and it is considered to revolutionize Cambodia's healthcare by leveraging telemedicine with options of Ask anonymously to a trusted doctor or find nearby good doctors.
- HomeApp Asia (:<https://www.homeappasia.com/>). It covers Construction, marketplace, e-commerce, and workforce development. It is an online platform that allows professionals to connect to stakeholders (professionals, architects, designers) and controls the project cost.
- WheelCiti ([Facebook](#)): It serves marketplace and automotive services. It is the first online platform in Cambodia that connects car owners with automotive service providers.
- S&C ([Babysitter | Facebook](#)): It covers Childcare services and workforce development. It is a babysitter company service that provides a quality babysitter to look after the customer's child in their house.
- Fly Beautiful (<https://flybeautiful.azurewebsites.net/>): It is an online marketplace. It is an online book market, where one can find books more easily by sending messages to our AI Chatbot's page.
- Puthy Academy (<https://puthiacademy.com/>). It serves education, tourism, and hospitality services. It offers enriched and experiential learning journeys by using the world as a classroom. They want to be part of creating an inclusive knowledge-based society, supported by a strong

³⁷ Completion Report of the UNDP Cambodia Bluetribe Incubation Programme implemented in collaboration with Khmer Enterprise, Smart Axiata, and 3E-Fi

network of community partners to integrate skills-based service and hands-on learning and courses as an enlightening pathway to create positive change.

92. ***The business mentoring programme contributed to an improved entrepreneurship ecosystem for SMEs and startups.*** With the project's support, 28 certified mentors (50% women, 86% Khmer speakers, and 42% entrepreneurs) are available to assist startups in Cambodia. They have acquired training in mentorship principles, supported by venture stage and coaching fundamentals. Also, 50 startup mentors have acquired general training in mentorship. The PCR suggests that 175 SMEs are supported by the incubation programme and innovation challenge jointly funded by UNDP, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Ministry of Commerce. The project has increased the number of available local startup mentors in collaboration with Techno Startup Centre and Impact Hub Phnom Penh. A start-up mentorship platform was launched in December 2021. Three guidebooks (a startup mentor, startup mentee, and ecosystem support organization (ESO) prepared by the Impact Hub Phnom Penh and used in the training. These resource materials are being used widely by other agencies.³⁸

93. ***The delivery of digital skills training and successful placement of graduates in internship opportunities have the potential to generate employment and higher income opportunities.*** The final report of the UNDP Cambodia: Provision of Designing and Implementing a Customized Digital Skills Training and Work Placement Model for Youths³⁹ noted that 48 of the 60 students (80%) enrolled in the Pathways to Digital Career Programme. A total of 32 students had enrolled in the Advanced Digital Skills programme, of which 25 had completed (78%) representing 75% and 81% successful completion in the Digital Marketing and Data Science Analytics and Fundamentals programme, respectively. Three graduates from the Digital Marketing and six from the Data Science Analytics and Fundamentals programmes have been successful in finding internships with the support of IT STEP Academy. The status of other graduates is not known at the time of evaluation. There is little evidence to support the project's impact without tracking graduates for a fixed period post-completion of training programmes.

94. ***The project has had a focus on input-output delivery rather than the achievement of outcomes and impact based on a good monitoring and evaluation system.*** Interviews with the project team revealed that the focus during implementation had been on seeking partners to deliver certain outputs associated with digital services and potentially on I4.0, although it is less clear what exactly the project delivered about I4.0. The pandemic also contributed to focus away from the outcome and impact focus. The project was about productive employment and decent work with adequate earnings. To start with the project document did not explicitly define productive employment and decent work, and hence missed out on the appropriate metric to measure associated results. Likewise, it would have required tracking the number of decent jobs created and income earned by the beneficiaries. Also, the measurement of improved skills, decent employment, sufficiently employed, and engagement in the community to co-create initiatives to address pressing issues remain unquantified and hence not reflected in the work programme of the project. As a result of design shortcomings, the proper impact measures

³⁸ The development of the three guidebooks involved consultation with 21 participants (50% male and 50% female) from ESOs, mentors, and mentees.

³⁹ IT Academy STEP Cambodia. 2022. Final Report of the UNDP Cambodia: Provision of Designing and Implementing a Customized Digital Skills Training and Work Placement Model for Youth, Phnom Penh.

did not have operational indicators and baselines that could have been monitored during implementation and needful corrective actions taken.

95. Very little baseline information on project participants was available at the time of evaluation. It was difficult to properly ascertain the impact, particularly on vulnerable groups such as the poor, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+, and individuals and households located in geographically disadvantaged areas without baseline data. The general perception of the beneficiaries was that the project had enabled them to confidently speak in public, interact with new groups of people, make them aware of the employment landscape, particularly in the digital space, and expose them to entrepreneurship skills and new opportunities. According to some of the beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation process, their confidence in handling finance had also improved, particularly among the women undertaking MSMEs.

96. ***The start-up delays, staffing turnover, and the COVID-19 pandemic collectively masked the project's impact.*** The evaluation concurs with the PCR that (i) start-up delay in recruiting and fielding the project coordinator by six months, (ii) the turnover of key project staff (including the project coordinator), start-up delays in recruiting and mobilizing the project coordinator), and (iii) COVID-19 pandemic led to deferment of some key activities and reprogramming project deliveries which resulted in outputs not ready to deliver and demonstrate visible impact on the ground, particularly in generating decent employment and income growth.

97. ***No adverse environmental impact was reported.*** The evaluator did not come across any reported cases of adverse environmental impact as a result of project-supported activities during the entire implementation period.

7. Crosscutting issues

Overall Performance	Moderately Satisfactory (3)
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98. ***The project activities had been gender-responsive.*** The project data shows that altogether 2,373 persons directly participated (identified as beneficiaries in the project database) in the project activities, largely dominated by the participants in the national dialogue which accounted for 90.3% of the participants, followed by the Movers programme (3.6%) and JEP (3.5%). The Bluetribe, SHE Investments, and Spring Board programmes together accounted for about 2.6% of the participants. All activities had a reasonable near-equal gender split (Table 5). The project implementation followed the project design emphasis on gender equity. Gender disaggregated data of the participants are summarized in Table 8. All 29 participants in the SHE Investment Programme were women. At the project level, women accounted for 45% of participants, men 38%, and others/not disclosed group 17%. The Bluetribe programme had proportionately more men participants (63%) than women (38%) which is not surprising that men tend to opt for technology-dominant careers compared to women, although FGDs with beneficiaries reiterated that more women are entering traditionally male-dominated STEM careers. It is interesting that when the number of national dialogue participants is excluded, the distribution of direct beneficiaries improved in favour of women, that is, up from 45% to 55% in contrast to 43% for men. The project, according to some women beneficiaries, should have included them in designing and implementing the relevant activities, rather than treating them as participants in given programmes.

Table 5: Gender Distribution of Direct Project Beneficiaries

Project Activity	Number and Percentage of Participants in Project Activities							
	Male	%	Female	%	N/A	%	Total	%
National Dialogue	802	37%	952	44%	389	18%	2143	100%
Movers The World We Want	31	48%	30	46%	4	6%	65	100%
Movers - SDGs	7	58%	5	42%	0	0%	12	100%
Movers - Volunteers	4	44%	5	56%	0	0%	9	100%
Movers (All)	42	49%	40	47%	4	5%	86	100%
Spring Board (2021)	3	50%	3	50%	0	0%	6	100%
Spring Board (2020)	6	60%	4	40%	0	0%	10	100%
All Spring Board	9	56%	7	44%	0	0%	16	100%
SHE Incubation and Accelerator Programme	0	0%	29	100%	0	0%	29	100%
JEP (2021)								
Phnom Penh	10	40%	15	60%	0	0%	25	100%
Siem Reap	7	35%	13	65%	0	0%	20	100%
Kampong Cham	5	45%	6	55%	0	0%	11	100%
JEP (2020) _ Phnom Penh	16	59%	11	41%	0	0%	27	100%
All JEP	38	46%	45	54%	0	0%	83	100%
Bluetribe	10	63%	6	38%	0	0%	16	100%
Total	901	38%	1079	45%	393	17%	2373	100%
All Except National Dialogue	99	43%	127	55%	4	2%	230	100%

Note: NA = data not available.

99. **The persons with a disability (PWD) did not feature in the project beneficiaries.** The evaluator’s interview with selected key informants and project beneficiaries revealed that they were not aware of the project could also support persons with a disability. The PCR of the project cited a lesson stating “Access of youth with disabilities in digital training requires highly customized and dedicated programmes”. However, the project had a target of training programmes under the project to reach a minimum of 20% of youth with disabilities. The PCR argued that the programme did not receive a single application. It, however, did not elaborate on the efforts made to reach out with the required information to the youth with disabilities. The evaluator also noted that the training venues and facilities had no preparation or provision for the inclusion of PWDs. While the inclusion of PWDs was expected in the project, there was no budget line item identified for proactively providing a conducive environment.

100. **Social inclusion of other groups of beneficiaries was addressed in the project but the evidence is limited.** Data limitation did not permit proper assessment of the social inclusion of other groups of beneficiaries such as youth from ethnic communities and LGBTQI+. According to some of the key informants, access to digital equipment and Internet bandwidth was limited in rural ethnic communities. In several areas, the youth had to share one set of equipment among 2-4 persons. The problem was partly addressed by the IT STEP Academy loaning laptops to those not having access. However, the support was limited to the urban youth who were attending the training programme.

101. **Overall, the project is assessed moderately satisfactory** based on the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, likely sustainability, and emerging impact. The performance was affected by less clarity in the indicators proposed in the PRODOC results framework.

The project tried to address this issue by redefining some of the indicators. However, the outcome level progress could not be ascertained, partly due to focus on activity-driven rather than results-oriented approach. The results framework contained overall outcome and three outputs and in the design as well as during implementation, there had been confusion and mix-up in treating outputs and activities distinctly. Furthermore, “decent employment” and prevailing I4.0 context was not clearly defined . While the project’s aim was to promote and expand decent employment among youth, its delivery was had been overlooked. The knowledge and policy work under the project had limited influence or leverage in terms of improvement of sector on national policies. With the efforts invested in skills development, the number of decent jobs created remains unknown.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

102. UNDP Cambodia designed the project intending to address youth unemployment by creating productive employment and decent work with adequate earnings. The project strategized to respond to the government's drive for a digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (I4.0). The project design aligned with UNDAF and UNDP CPD for Cambodia as well as SDG 8. It was based on reasonable assumptions about potential risks during implementation. It embodied sufficient flexibility to allow the undertaking of different activities. The project enjoyed support from relevant government ministries.

103. The project was implemented in a challenging environment amid a prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. The flexibility in the design permitted evolving nature of the annual work programme for implementation. It was also successful in raising additional financial resources from UNDP's core funds along with one government and two private sector entities which became convenient in extending the project duration by six months at no additional costs so that pending activities could be completed. The project successfully engaged with government agencies and private sector service and training providers. The extension was necessitated by six-month start-up delays in recruiting and mobilizing the full project team and repackaging deliverables using the online delivery model instead of face-to-face/contact-based capacity building and learning particularly for intended youth with limited absorptive capacity. Some of the key achievements of the project included the institutionalization of ATQ through seven (five private) universities, the uptake of mentorship programmes by other agencies, and an improved entrepreneurial landscape supported by structured learning.

104. The project implementation approach followed an input-output model based on subproject deliverables with limited considerations to achieving intended outcomes and likely impact. It meant that the implementation deviated from meeting the original objectives of creating decent jobs with higher income potential for the disadvantaged Cambodian youth. The problem was also complicated by an inadequate number of appropriate indicators and measurements built into a robust project monitoring and evaluation system. Also, UNDP needed an in-house technical capacity in the digital economy and I4.0 to steer the project on track to achieving results. While the project implemented several activities under three pre-defined outputs, these activities appeared disconnected across the outputs and from the logical framework. The support from the UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub was helpful for some project activities and this support could have been programmed in a logical sequence keeping in mind at least a medium-term perspective in helping Cambodian youth gain entry into quality employment and livelihood opportunities.

105. Given the young population base of Cambodia, there is a tremendous opportunity to capitalize on the country's demographic dividend. It calls for continued engagement of UNDP Cambodia intending to strengthen the entrepreneurship landscape in partnership with the public and private sectors that is conducive to creating quality jobs with higher wages, particularly for youth from underprivileged backgrounds including those disadvantaged based on geographical location, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The support for women entrepreneurs through SHE Investment for example and to youth in general through the expansion of the mentorship programme has demonstrated that within a short period, entrepreneurial potential can lead to higher income opportunities. Going forward, in the post-pandemic environment, skills for entrepreneurship through demand-driven technical skills and business management training supported by collateral-free access to finance can contribute to the sustained economic prosperity of Cambodia. UNDP can play its part by leveraging entrepreneurship for youth and favourable policy actions based on robust research.

VIII. LESSONS

106. The evaluation draws on project design and implementation findings, and it offers the following lessons:

107. ***A project design based on robust consultations with relevant stakeholders and beneficiary groups and mapping key actors can strengthen project design ownership and commitments towards sustainable solutions to the employment and income challenges faced by the Cambodian youth.*** Combining the technical knowledge of UNDP staff and experts with relevant representatives of local youths, civil societies, and private sector entities including entrepreneurs and potential employers can further strengthen the relevance of the project. The evaluation noted from KIIs and FGDs that the project preparation time did not permit the required consultations. The engagement with the private sector mostly resulted in the firms acting as service providers rather than real partners with investment commitments.

108. ***The results framework of a project with appropriate indicators and realistic targets must be fully aligned with the theory of change so that interventions can be designed and implemented effectively.*** The choice of relevant indicators also helps in regular monitoring and evaluating progress and supports timely corrective actions. The evolving nature of the project led to a significant focus on input-output relationships, rather than on the outcomes such as decent employment and income growth. The short-term engagement of agencies for defined services (e. g. training deliveries) did not permit them to integrate learning for better performance in the future, although some agencies such as Impact Hub Phnom Penh sought suggestions on areas of improvement. Furthermore, the implementation period also needs to be realistic, particularly for new areas of support such as digital training. A project with at least six-months cushion time for completion of planned activities can avoid the need for extension(s) of the implementation period. The extensions at or near completion of the project tend to incur high overhead costs. Also, no new activities should be planned within six months preceding the project closing date because it provides a need to focus on already approved activities.

109. ***Cost-effectiveness analysis can help the selection of efficient and sustainable choice of interventions delivering value for money and high social and economic impact.*** The evaluation did not find evidence to support that the planned activities were tested for cost-effectiveness. A cost-effective

analysis of potential alternatives would have been helpful. Future UNDP project designs can benefit from such an exercise and contribute to scaling up proven activities in the future.

110. ***It is important to have an appropriate title for the project based on the comparative advantage of the supporting lead agency.*** UNDP can capitalize on its core strength and focus on Cambodian youth's economic empowerment through inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem development. UNDP has longstanding experience in several countries in supporting entrepreneurship development, while other agencies such as ILO concentrate their efforts on decent jobs and employment conditions. The project's work largely focussed on different elements of the improved entrepreneurship ecosystem. Even the physical targets for job creation and income did not feature in the project's result framework. Some of the stakeholders in their interviews for the evaluation questioned why ILO was not leading the project as the title suited them better. The focus on ecosystem support needs to take a multi-pronged approach encompassing access to technology, finance, and markets; in-house technical expertise; and partnerships/collaborations with both private and public agencies. The short experience from the project shows that several start-ups are not able to take off because of a lack of collateral-free access to finance. Also, the project needed technical expertise in the digital economy and I4.0 to lead various initiatives and ensure research/knowledge products can leverage policy actions by relevant government agencies.

111. ***UNDP projects can benefit from a clear roadmap for localizing the "leaving no one behind" (LNOB) agenda.*** UNDP projects can benefit from clarity in implementation modality and pragmatic indicators and targets in PRODOC for ensuring the active participation of disadvantaged and vulnerable youth groups including the poor, rural youth, women, PWD, and LGBTQI+. This is an area UNDP can potentially mainstream these intended target groups and bring meaningful change. In the project, there was insufficient guidance on this issue and no specific indicators/targets that could be operationalized.

112. ***Often project resources tend to be limited and the payoffs are greater if resources are devoted to fewer activities more deeply to realize tangible results. At the same time, wider partnerships can attract additional resources.*** The UNDP resources have a dual role – direct funding and leveraging resources from other sources. It is desirable that UNDP pilot projects (such as this one) would benefit from supporting interventions with a greater likelihood of success. The projects without funding from other external sources benefit from focussing deeper on fewer initiatives. Resource mobilization and coordination across different partners can be challenging, particularly in terms of the time required to agree. Despite this, if the project has elements demarked with tagged responsibility, the results are concrete and tangible. It applies to agencies in the private and public sectors as well.

113. ***Flexibility in project design can deliver positive results.*** The flexibility in the project allowed the delivery of lessons using online platforms instead of face-to-face engagements with the students and intended beneficiaries, although some missed out on the full benefit because of geographical locations. Also, the online delivery of project activities had wider outreach through social media and conferences.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

114. The evaluation offers a set of six key recommendations:

A. *Prioritise youth economic empowerment as one of the key pillars in the next CPD for Cambodia with a focus on improving and strengthening Cambodia's youth entrepreneurship ecosystem, particularly by prioritizing the disadvantaged youth population and localities. Key actions recommended are:*

- (i) Adopt a programmatic approach to youth economic empowerment in the country supported by market-driven entrepreneurship development;
- (ii) Design a holistic approach to youth's economic empowerment based on higher income opportunities. The approach should create a conducive policy environment for the public and private sector entities' active participation and support access to technology, finance, market, and institutions;
- (iii) Support the institutionalizing of a blended approach to capacity development, context-specific curriculum development guided by local capacity, strengthening and scaling up of a mentorship programme, and selecting appropriate service providers and participants for capacity development. The action needs to be back up by a sound monitoring system to support any course corrections;
- (iv) Prioritize current and potential women entrepreneurs and those from other disadvantaged groups and provide scholarship support.

B. *Keep the project design flexible for greater adaptability with a clear focus on achieving intended outcomes as long as:*

- (i) The project design is a result of a robust consultation process including direct beneficiaries, potential private and public sector agencies;
- (ii) The project results framework is fully aligned with the theory of change, UNDAF and CPD for Cambodia, and the government's development priorities;
- (iii) Qualitative and quantitative project indicators are simple, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) and baselines can be established;
- (iv) There are vertical and horizontal linkages among the activities, outputs, and outcomes; and activities should be impact-driven;
- (v) Implementation capacity exists in public and private agencies or can be supported within a reasonable timeframe at an early stage of project implementation;
- (vi) Local implementation partners are identified through an appropriate due diligence process including their capacity assessment.

C. *Support mainstreaming ATQ and business mentorship in the national and provincial curricula of selected universities and educational institutes. Key actions recommended are:*

- (i) Promote a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ministries and key pre-identified universities and training institutes for curriculum reform in courses associated with ATQ and

- mentorship programmes to mainstream good accounting practices and business mentorship skills in enterprises;
- (ii) Promote a third-party entity to monitor and report progress in mainstreaming.

D. Strengthen UNDP Cambodia's management of youth-related projects further. Key actions recommended are:

- (i) Promote cross-project collaboration culture and strengthen the internal collaboration among the UNDP Cambodia projects further since youth are key players across all sectors;
- (ii) Deepen technical collaboration with Bangkok Regional Bureau's initiatives on youth economic empowerment;
- (iii) Minimize project start-up delays through communication with the relevant agencies and recruit and mobilize qualified staff on longer-term contracts for the project duration (performance reviewed every six months) in the interest of having a stable project team that ideally serves through the project implementation period.

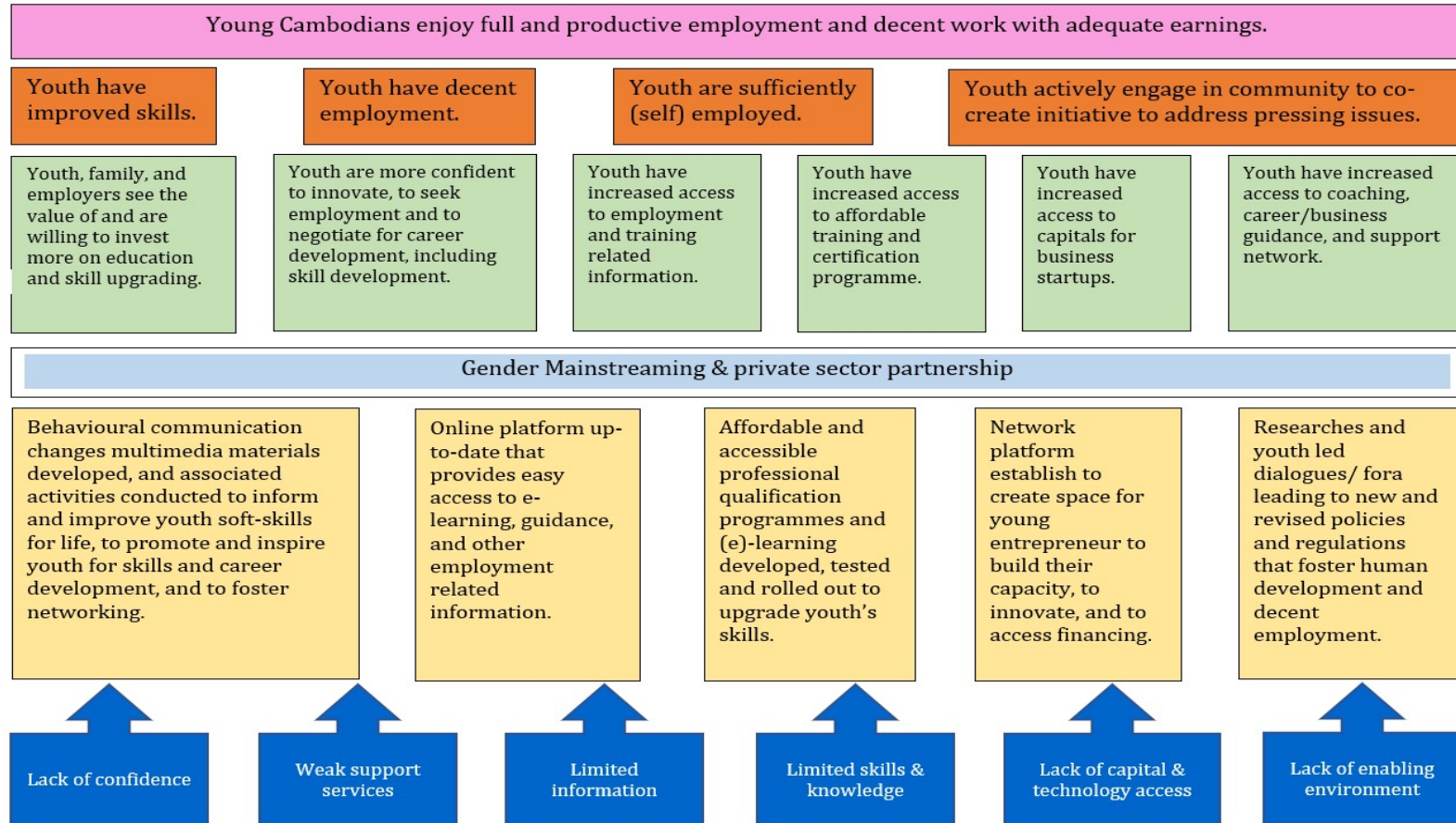
E. Strengthen the project monitoring and evaluation system. Key actions recommended are:

- (i) Identify a dedicated project team staff for the monitoring and evaluation function;
- (ii) Focus on indicators and targets to monitor and report well beyond the input-output relationship and towards outcomes and impacts on the population and environment (activities should be impact-driven);
- (iii) Plan to capture quantitative progress against targets, as well as quality and units, costs keeping in mind value for money;
- (iv) Ensure a feedback mechanism for needful corrective actions during project implementation.

F. Continue to pursue collaboration and partnerships with other agencies active in the youth economic empowerment landscape. The other agencies ideally should be a manageable set and could include the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, UN Specialized Agencies, bilateral agencies, and reputable private sector entities. While partnerships are time-consuming and at times frustrating, but common agenda and agreed *modus operandi* with clear lines of responsibilities are likely to deliver a greater impact to the people and communities at large.

Appendix 1: Strategic Intervention and Theory of Change

Theory of Change



Source: PRODOC

Appendix 1.1: Project Activities Planned Under Envisaged Outputs (Results Framework)

Output	Activities
<p>8. Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus on Industry 4.0 (I4.0).</p>	<p>8.1. Review and gauge the impact of employment of I4.0 technologies/automation with a focus on youth;</p> <p>8.2. Outreach and sensitization to examine methods to connect youth entrepreneurs to I4.0 technologies, and pilot some of these tools;</p> <p>8.3. Study on skills projections in response to the emerging digital economy.</p>
<p>9. A variable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated growth and comparative advantage for Cambodian youth in the context of the emerging digital economy and industry 4.0.</p>	<p>9.1. Develop and implement career pathways for industrial park workers;</p> <p>9.2. Develop a new training programme with an innovative delivery mechanism; (2.3)</p> <p>9.3. Develop “Accountancy” Technician Qualifications; (2.4)</p> <p>9.4. Explore financial and other incentives to encourage employers to invest in training.</p>
<p>10. Youth (and young aspiring entrepreneurs) have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy, as a result of entrepreneurship training (identified by Output 1 analysis).</p>	<p>10.1. Review and advance the entrepreneurship training package to enable reaching out to Industry 4.0 level;</p> <p>10.2. Establish partnerships with training service providers (public and/or private) for business incubation;</p> <p>10.3. Enrol and train young (and young aspiring) entrepreneurs</p>

Source: PRODOC, 2019.

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference

Individual Contractor

1. Assignment Information

Assignment Title:	Final Evaluation for the Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia Project, 2019-2021 (Open for both National and International Consultant)
Cluster/Project:	Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia
Post Level:	Senior Specialist
Contract Type:	Individual Contractor
Duty Station:	Home-based, Phnom Penh and/or field visit when possible
Duty Station:	Home-based with possible travel to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and other provinces including Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, and Battambang (max.10 working days).
Contract Duration:	35 working days (09 Aug 2022 – 30 September 2022)

2. Background and Context

Cambodia remains a young and growing nation; people under the age of 30 represent two-thirds of its population, which continues to grow at around 1.6% per year. Youth also constitute about 43% of the total working-age population. Moreover, Cambodia is undergoing a rapid demographic transition, with birth rates falling, and the proportion of elderly dependents remaining relatively low. This demographic dividend can be used to further boost economic growth and bring about positive social transformation. Whether the country can realize these benefits in the future, however, is dependent on youth's access to decent and higher value jobs and their ability to start and sustain their enterprises, as well as to successfully respond to rapid technological change driven by the advent of Industry 4.0.

In joining the country effort to address youth employment issue, the **Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia (YEC)** project was designed with the aim to support Cambodia to promote and expand decent employment among youth (15-30 years old) and identify and test avenues for youth to maximize returns on their jobs and income opportunities in the context of Industry 4.0. The project focuses on identifying and testing avenues for Cambodian youth, especially the poor and vulnerable, to prepare for the arrival of Industry 4.0 and to maximize their incomes through skills upgrading, improving linkages between job seekers and employers, and promoting youth entrepreneurship.

In line with the above overarching objective, the project specifically implements the following expected deliverables:

- 1) Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research and advocacy with a specific focus on Industry 4.0 (I4.0)
- 2) A scalable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated growth and comparative advantage for Cambodian youth in the context of the emerging digital economy and Industry 4.0:
- 3) Youth (and young aspiring entrepreneurs) have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy, as a result of entrepreneurship training

Project brief information

Project title	Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia (YEC)	
Atlas ID	00109996	
UNDAF/CPD outcome and CPD output	Output 1.4: Young women & men have opportunities to progress through access to information, skills development, and improved employment policies.	
Country	Cambodia	
Region	Asia Pacific	
Date project document signed		
Project dates	Start dates: 01 April 2019	End Dates: 30 June 2022
Project Budget	US 1,516,080	
Funding Source(s)	UNDP and Russia	
Implementing Partner	UNDP Cambodia	

YEC Project was designed in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, and was put in implementation in April 2019. The project was fully staffed and ready to implement in August 2019, a few months before the Covid 19 Pandemic spread globally and particularly marked the 1st community outbreak in Cambodia. Due to this, the government put in place many measures locally in relation to travel restriction, restriction of events/gathering that involved number of people, and the lockdown of the cities and provinces, etc. This caused challenges to the project both directly and indirectly. Indirectly, due to the need to ban events/gathering and closing of institutions including skill-training/academic institutions, distance learning approach was gradually rolled out amid the foreseen challenges namely limited digital infrastructure (Wi-Fi), limited digital literacy of both students and teachers, and high cost in shifting to digital distance learning, etc. Directly, in the context of the Pandemic, many of the project activities and partners' work plans had to be organized through online formats, project-related travels had to be reduced or cancelled. The fact that the project's target groups (which include youths, young entrepreneurs, micro enterprises, startups, and job centers) are in provincial areas made it more difficult to effectively reach the same level of expectation while the context imposed the application of digital/distance approach.

In the face of the Pandemic, the project also refocused part of its resources to support the development of online learning materials and platform for accounting programme, online platform for National Career Fair and improved online access for youth groups

In implementing the activities plan, the project worked closely with the relevant stakeholders including government partners, local partners, experts in the field, and private service providers. Through the collaboration, the project reached out to intended target groups and youths in the target cities and provinces. For instance, the National Employment Agency and the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia have their provincial offices all over the country. Some partners, such as Government partners and private companies also contributed from their expertise and resources – both financially and intangible advantage such as networking, institutional supports, and other in-kind assistance – to support project implementation.

Amid the challenges and with strong engagement with relevant stakeholders, as of August 2021, the project has executed most of the planned activities and made key progress in relation to the development of the Accounting Qualification Programme, designing and piloting incubation programmes for young entrepreneurs, working with partners to improve entrepreneurship ecosystem, and improving public employment services for youth job seekers. Despite the above progress, the project also faced challenges leading to the drop of some projects planned activities/outputs. For instance, due to the Covid-19, the

learning of students in one of skill certification programme (ATQ) was interrupted and the development of skill training programme for SMEs cluster's workers had to be put off because of the lack of progress of SME cluster development.

3. Evaluation purpose, scope, and objective

Since the project is at the final stage of its implementation, the Terminal Evaluation exercise is commissioned to provide independent assessment on the project's progress and results, key lessons learned, and potential future initiatives toward increasing employability for young people in Cambodia, considering changes (as threats and opportunities) resulting from the global pandemic. The direct target audience of this final evaluation are UNDP Management and the representatives from Embassy of Russian Federation in Phnom Penh. The report will also be shared with other relevant entities namely the RBH Youth Co:Lab, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the National Employment Agency, the Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training, National Accounting Council, and Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors. The report will also be shared in public.

Below are the objectives of this exercise:

- To review and assess the overall achievements (outputs, outcomes, and impacts levels) of the YEC Project (in comparison with the latest approved result framework) and its contribution to UNDP's Country Programme and national priorities,
- To undertake an assessment of indicator progress vis-à-vis the targets for both outputs and outcome, and proposed budget
- To assess the relevance and strategic positioning of the project to respond to the needs and challenges faced by youth in accessing skill development and decent employment.
- To document good practices, key lessons learned, and recommendations for the potential for replicating and scaling up successful models and interventions and for future programming,
- To assess how the YEC project synergizes or complements initiatives being implemented by others (development partners and relevant responsible government ministries (Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports)) to promote skills development and employment opportunities,
- To assess whether and how the project enhanced the application of a rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment, and participation of other socially vulnerable groups such as youth from provinces or youth with disabilities, and
- To assess the project's adaptability and resiliency in the context of the Covid-19 in realizing the intended results.

4. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

In addressing the above-mentioned objectives, the final review will be conducted in such a way to ensure that the key principles of UNDP Evaluation are fully respected and guided by the United Nations Development Group's Norms and Standards for Evaluation and the Organization of the Economic Cooperation Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)'s Evaluation Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance. The review will be independent, impartial, transparent, ethical, and credible. She/he is expected to adhere to the following evaluation criteria:

- ▣ **Relevance/Coherence:** to assess the relevance of the YEC project's strategies, design, and implementation arrangements for skills development and employment opportunity in the context of the digital economy.
 - To what extent were the YEC's interventions in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcome related to promoting youth employment opportunities in the context of the digital economy agenda and I4.0?

- To what extent is the project contributing to the theory of change for the country programme outputs and outcomes and relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in Cambodia?
- To what extent were the methods, activities and outputs aligned with the overall objectives and goals of the project?
- To what extent has the project contributed to improving skills development, youth employment ecosystem, poverty reduction, or reduction of vulnerability among youth?
- To what extent are the objectives, activities, and approaches of the project addressing gender equality, disability inclusion and leaving no one behind (LNOB) strategy?

▣ **Effectiveness:** to assess how effective was the YEC project in achieving the objectives (outputs and outcomes) using the project's result framework as a basis.

- To what extent were the YEC governance structures, in particular the project support board, effective in facilitating smooth implementation?
- To what extent were the objectives achieved /are likely to be achieved by the end of the project?
- To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust project implementation?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- To what extent has the project been effective in managing partnerships to enhance optimal results?
- To what extent has the project's intervention forged new or strengthened partnerships among different stakeholders (government agencies, private sectors, development partners, civil societies, academia, regional initiatives (youth co: lab) and other relevant practitioners, etc.)?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievement? Why and what were the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- To what extent have the project beneficiaries been engaged in the project implementation?
- To what extent have the project's interventions addressed gender equality issues in its implementations?
- Based on Gender and LNOB principles – how gender and other vulnerable groups were catered for in the project and how did the project ensure that these groups were not sidelined/the pre-existing vulnerabilities were not exuberated by the project implementation?
- How were the voices and opinions of the beneficiaries gathered and used during the course of the project?

▣ **Efficiency:** to the extent possible, the evaluation will compare the benefits of the YEC with the budget to assess the overall efficiency of the project. The evaluation will provide practical recommendations regarding how to improve efficiencies in future youth-related projects.

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- Have resources (funds, human resources, times, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes
- Assess Value for Money against the budget and comparison to the increased incomes or livelihoods of the youth;

- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supported the strategies been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds, activities, and outputs been delivered promptly?
- To what extent have YEC project interventions fostered financial or technical leverage from other stakeholders (Government institutions, development partners, private sector, civil society/academia)?
- To what extent were resources dedicated to the most marginalized and vulnerable of the target group in terms of gender, age and disability

Sustainability: The evaluation will assess how the project achievements contribute to sustainability by engaging appropriate Government, non-Government, and other relevant stakeholders.

To what extent has the YEC project contributed to promoting Government ownership and leadership in the implementation of skill development interventions, public employment services, the building of the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem?

What were the institutional or policy changes resulting from the YEC interventions?

What were the changes in ecosystem/approaches/quality of support system for youths and entrepreneurs in their realizing their skills, employment, and entrepreneurship objectives? To what extent are the benefits of the YEC project likely to continue after its completion and at what level?

What were the major factors which influenced the sustainability of the project?

To what extent do the mechanism and procedures exist to allow the primary project stakeholders to carry forward the project results attained on youth employability and employment opportunities?

To what extent do the project stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?

To what extent are the lesson learning and best practices being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

Human Rights, Gender Issues, and Disability

- To what extent have indigenous and physically challenged youth and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project?
- To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
- Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?
- Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation?
- To what extent the Covid-19 crisis has prevented or enabled project interventions to address marginalization, inequalities and gender equality?

5. Methodology

The methodology should be participatory, inclusive and gender responsive. Evaluation should employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments. The methodology should include sampling methods for selecting stakeholders and methods for assessing results stated in the results frameworks. Some data collection would need to be done virtually putting in the context of the current Covid 19 Pandemic.

The methods shall include:

- **Desk reviews:** At the beginning of the assignment, the consultant will need to review the key documents namely the project document, project progress reports, workplans, project quality assurance reports, key project outputs, communication products and stories about the project.
- Complete list of documents to be provided will be shared once the consultant is on board.

Data collection: data collection will be done in the form of:

- Online surveys conducted to assess changes in lives of youth benefitting from projects or change in their livelihood or professional status.
 - Interviews with YEC team physically or virtually Interviews with key informants from UNDP project team, National Employment Agency, Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training, Khmer Enterprise, National Accounting Council, Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors, the Embassy of Russia, Cambodia Academy of Digital Technologies, Impact Hub Phnom Penh, SHE Investment, and Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia and partnering universities under ATQ programme.
 - Interviews with project board and other strategic partners supporting YEC implementation.
 - Key informant interviews/consultation with beneficiaries and service providers or virtual consultation meetings depending on the situation of the COVID-19
- For the above interviews, the consultant will need to design the set of questions aimed for specific interviewee category.
 - For each of the target interviewees categories, the consultant will need to propose the approach/tool, e.g., semi-structure interview, focus group discussion, etc.
 - Possible Field visits depending on the Covid-19 situation
 - Gender and human right lens: All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human right issues. Hence, the consultant will need to design the tool allowing the collection of the data to provide the evaluation from those lenses.
 - The consultant can propose other approach and multiple ways of engaging , including beneficiaries disaggregated by gender, age categories, disability, urban and rural.

6. All conclusions, judgments and opinions must be qualified by evidence and not be based on opinions.

Once on board, the consultant will propose the methodology in close consultation with UNDP. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, key stakeholders, and the evaluators.

7. Evaluation Deliverables

- **Evaluation Inception Report (7-10 pages):** The inception report should be carried out following the desk review and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP and national partners as relevant. It should detail the evaluator's understanding of what is being evaluated and why? showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of proposed methods, sources of data, and data collection procedures. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables and provides. Inception report must include the detailed data collection tools and line of questions to be asked of the different stakeholders

- **Debrief of preliminary evaluation result:** immediately following the completion of fieldwork and data collection, the consultant is expected to provide a preliminary debriefing and findings to UNDP and key stakeholders via debriefing meeting.
- **Draft Evaluation Report (35-40 pages):** The content of the Evaluation Report should consist of the following: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations, Executive Summary, Introduction, Evaluation Scope and Objective, Evaluation Approach and Methods, Data Analysis, Evaluation Findings and Conclusion, Recommendations, Lessons Learned and Annexes. Must include a table of progress against indicators. UNDP will coordinate with key stakeholders to review the draft evaluation report and provide comments to the evaluator within an agreed period (within two weeks after receiving the document), addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.
- **Evaluation report audit trail.** Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments in this Audit Trail Report.
- **Final Evaluation Report:** The consultant will revise the draft based on inputs provided and submit the final report within two weeks after receiving the comments. The evaluator is expected to develop a brief power point presentation and present the evaluation results (max two times) to UNDP, project board or relevant stakeholders as suggested by the project team.

#	Deliverables	Estimated Duration to complete	Target due date (Approximately)	Review and Approval Requires
1	Output 1: Submission of satisfactory Inception Report covering proposed methodology, timelines, etc. to deliver the assignment	5 days	15 August 2022	UNDP Evaluation Manager (RBM unit)
2	Output 2: Completion of field work exercise and provision of presentation of preliminary findings (Evaluation Debriefing Meeting) to key stakeholders of the YEC Project	15 days	2 September 2022	
3	Output 3: Completion of the draft version of the evaluation report.	10 days	14 September 2022	
5	Output 4: Submission of satisfactory final evaluation report produced and PowerPoint of evaluation result at the quality required in compliance with the required Evaluation Report Outline and attached with Audit Trail Report	5 days	28 September 2022	
	Total number of days	35 days		

*Multiple reiterations may be required of the reports until the report is considered approved.

**Inception and final Report must meet IEO's Quality criteria (link below)

8. Evaluation Ethics

This evaluation will be conducted following the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information

providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing the collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure the security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses, with the expressed authorization of UNDP and partners.

Evaluator is responsible for ensuring the report is readable and reads well, and factoring the aspect of Gender and LNOB.

9. Institutional Arrangements

The consultant will be working under overall coordination of the Evaluation Manager – whose function is performed by UNDP's Cambodia's Head of Result-Based Management (RBM) unit. The deliverables will be reviewed by the Evaluation Manager who also facilitates inputs from the Youth Employment Coordinator, Programme Analyst, ARR-Programme, project's donor, project key national partners, and other relevant stakeholders. Inputs will be consolidated by the Evaluation Manager before sharing them back with the Evaluator. The deliverables are to be cleared by the Evaluation Manager to ensure evaluation objectives are met, reports are at acceptable quality standards and that relevant stakeholder are duly consulted.

Payment release will be approved by ARR-Programme upon confirmation of the deliverables by the Evaluation Manager.

UNDP Cambodia reserves the right to maintain regular communication with the consultant and to engage/visit/monitor the implementing activities where needed. The YEC project team will work closely with the evaluator to facilitate the process (if needed), including providing relevant documents related to the YEC for desk review, identifying stakeholders and sources of information, and assisting to resolve any issues arising during the assignment period to the extent possible.

Duty Station: the duty station for this assignment is home-based with possible travel to Cambodia and target provinces. The evaluator is expected to virtually collect data and conduct interviews with key informants. Due to the current context of Covid 19 Pandemic in Cambodia, the travel restriction measure is still maintained by the government. Hence, the consultant needs to factor in the possibility that the physical field mission is not possible in her/his methodology. Considering this, once on board, the plans for the field mission is subject to further discussions between the consultant and the UNDP team. In the event that travel is required and approved by UNDP, the daily substantive allowance (DSA) and the transportation to the province will be arranged and covered by the UNDP project.

Duration of the Assignment: This final evaluation shall be carried out between 09 August 2022 and 30 September 2022. The consultant is expected to produce deliverables based on the time frame set in section 6 of this terms of reference (expected outputs and deliverables).

10. Timeframe for the evaluation process

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (project manager, programme analyst, and project staff as needed)	-	9 August 2022	Remote/zoom	Evaluation manager, Project Manager, Project staff

Sharing of the relevant documentation with the consultant	-	9 August 2022	Email	YEC Project Manager - UNDP
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	5 days	9 to 15 August 2022	Home-based	Consultant
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	-	15 August 2022	Email	Consultant
Comments and approval of inception report	-	17 August 2022	UNDP	Evaluation manager - UNDP
Phase Two: Data-collection				
Consultations and meetings, in-depth interviews, and focus groups including online or in person surveys for feedback	15 days	15 August to 2 September 2022	Home-based/ remote with possibility of travel	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, service providers, beneficiaries.
Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders	-	1 and 2 September 2022	Remote/ UN DP office	Consultant
Phase Three: Drafting and Finalization of the Evaluation report				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (40 pages maximum excluding annexes, executive summary)	10 days	14 September 2022	Home-based	Consultant
Draft report submission	-	14 September 2022		Consultant
Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	15 to 21 September 2022	UNDP	Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group
Final Debriefing after receiving comments from UNDP (TBC)	-	23 September 2022	Remote	Evaluation team and consultant
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office and Power Point Presentation of key evaluation finding, and Audit Trail report	5 days	22 to 28 September 2022	Home-based	Consultant

Submission of the final evaluation report, Audit Trail Report, and power point presentation to UNDP country office (40 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	-	28 September 2022	Home-based	Consultant
Estimated total days	35 days			

Appendix 3: Revised Evaluation Questions

Relevance: The evaluation will assess the relevance of the project design and analyse underlying strategies and theory of change, implementation arrangements, and identification of risks and risk mitigation measures for skills development and employment opportunity in the context of the digital economy. Specific questions are:

- (i) To what extent were the project's objectives and outputs aligned with Cambodia's national development priorities in promoting youth employment opportunities in the context of the digital economy agenda and I4.0?
- (ii) To what extent are the objectives, activities, and approaches of the project addressing gender equality, disability inclusion, and leaving no one behind (LNOB) strategy?
- (iii) To what extent are the project outcomes and outputs aligned with Cambodia's commitment to achieving SDGs by promoting youth employment opportunities in the digital economy agenda and I4.0?
- (iv) To what extent are the project outcomes and outputs consistent with the project's theory of change in addressing youth employment challenges?
- (v) To what extent were the methods, activities, and outputs aligned with the overall objectives and goals of the project?
- (vi) To what extent are the project outcomes and outputs aligned with UNDAF and Country Programme Document (CPD) for Cambodia in addressing youth employment?
- (vii) To what extent is the project implementation arrangement capture relevant players in addressing youth employment opportunities in the context of the digital economy agenda and I4.0?
- (viii) Did the project design capture relevant risks and make provisions for mitigating foreseen risks?

Coherence: The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project design is externally coherent with the activities of other agencies as well as internally coherent with UNDP Cambodia's other projects/programmes. Specific questions are:

- (i) To what extent are the project interventions, outputs, and outcomes coherent with programmes or projects of other agencies including development partners and private sector entities? Is there evidence of complementarity or harmonization across agencies?
- (ii) To what extent is the project contributing to the theory of change for the country programme outputs and outcomes and relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in Cambodia?

- (iii) To what extent the project outputs and outcomes are synergized with the outcomes and outputs of other projects in UNDP locally, regionally, and globally?

Effectiveness: The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project achieved intended outcomes and outputs as outlined in the results framework. Specific questions are:

- (i) How effective had been the project board in steering and facilitating project implementation?
- (ii) To what extent have the project beneficiaries been engaged in the project implementation?
- (iii) To what extent were the objectives achieved at the end of the project?
- (iv) In which areas does the project have the greatest achievement? Why and what were the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- (v) What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- (vi) To what extent have the project's interventions addressed gender equality issues in its implementations? What have been the challenges, if any?
- (vii) Based on Gender and LNOB principles – how gender and other vulnerable groups were catered for in the project, and how did the project ensure that these groups were not sidelined the pre-existing vulnerabilities were not exuberated by the project implementation?
- (viii) To what extent has the project contributed to improving skills development, youth employment ecosystem, poverty reduction, or reduction of vulnerability among youth?
- (ix) To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust project implementation?
- (x) To what extent has the project been effective in managing partnerships to enhance optimal results?
- (xi) To what extent has the project's intervention forged new or strengthened partnerships among different stakeholders (government agencies, private sectors, development partners, civil societies, academia, regional initiatives (youth co: lab), and other relevant practitioners, etc.)?
- (xii) How were the voices and opinions of the beneficiaries gathered and used during the project?

Efficiency: The evaluation plans will compare the benefits of the project with the budget to assess the overall efficiency of the project. The evaluation intends to provide practical recommendations regarding how to improve efficiencies in future youth-related projects. Specific questions are:

- (i) Did the project deliver results (outcomes and output) on time?
- (ii) Did the project deliver results (outcomes and outputs) within the budget?
- (iii) Did the project allocate resources (funds, human resources, expertise, etc.) strategically to achieve intended outcomes?
- (iv) Have activities supported the strategies been cost-effective?
- (v) To what extent was the project budget about to support youth to increase their incomes and livelihoods?
- (vi) To what extent were resources dedicated to the most marginalized and vulnerable of the target group in terms of gender, age, and disability?
- (vii) To what extent have YEC project interventions fostered financial or technical leverage from other stakeholders (Government institutions, development partners, private sector, civil society/academia)?

Sustainability: The evaluation plans to assess how project benefits can be sustained over time after project completion. Specific questions are:

- (i) What were the institutional or policy changes resulting from the YEC interventions? Can these achievements be sustained?
- (ii) To what extent has the project contributed to promoting government ownership and leadership in the implementation of skill development interventions, public employment services, and the building of the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem?
- (iii) To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue after its completion and at what level?
- (iv) What were the major factors which influenced the sustainability of the project?
- (v) To what extent do the project stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?
- (vi) What were the changes in ecosystem/approaches/quality of support system for youths and entrepreneurs in their realizing their skills, employment, and entrepreneurship objectives?
- (vii) To what extent do the mechanism and procedures exist to allow the primary project stakeholders to carry forward the project results attained on youth employability and employment opportunities?
- (viii) What have been the project's contributions to the capacity development of local beneficiaries?
- (ix) To what extent are the lesson learning and best practices being documented by the project team continually and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

Likely Impact: The evaluation plans to assess evidence supporting the project's impact in terms of employment or livelihood opportunities created for youth. While the terms of reference for the evaluation do not require an assessment of impact, it is customary in the final evaluation to document any emerging likely impact(s) of the project. Specific questions are:

- (i) How many "decent" jobs did the project create for youth?
- (ii) To what extent have the youth supported under the project had been able to increase their income?
- (iii) Are the increased number of jobs or incomes sustainable over time?
- (iv) Has there been any documented environmental impact arising from project activities, either positive or negative?

Crosscutting Issues: The evaluation plans to cover three cross-cutting issues identified in the terms of evaluation – human rights, gender issues, and disability. Specific questions are:

- (i) To what extent did indigenous youth benefit from the project activities?
- (ii) To what extent did physically-challenged youth benefit from the project?
- (iii) To what extent did the youth from other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefit from the project?
- (iv) How effective has the project been in addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?
- (v) Does the gender marker assigned to the project represent reality in Cambodia?
- (vi) To what extent were disadvantaged groups including young women, youths with disabilities, and others) consulted in the project design and implementation processes?

- (vii) To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic prevent or enabled project interventions to address marginalization, inequalities, and gender equalities?

Appendix 1: List of Documents Reviewed

Name	Description	Status
Project Document		Added
Donor agreements		
LPAC minute		LPAC folder
Delegation of National Project Director (as relevant)		
Document on project extension (as relevant)		Project Extension Folder
Minutes of project board meetings	For all meetings till the time of evaluation	Project board meeting folder
Annual Progress Report (UNDP) – APR (As relevant) Quarterly Progress Report	For all the years, till the evaluation time For the quarter covered by the evaluation	Annual Report - inputted, waiting for quarterly report
Project AWP	For the whole period of the project till the latest year	
Other relevant strategic documents (as relevant): - E.g. if project has big turn of event, strategic adjustment, strategic review, etc.		
Field mission reports (as relevant)		
Mid Term Review report (as relevant)		
Service Provider Final Reports - including feedback from beneficiaries	i.e., SHE Incubator & Accelerator Programme - will include case studies i.e., National Dialogue & Mentorship Programme i.e., Bluetribe	
Other relevant evaluations and assessment (as relevant)		
Spot-check/audit report (as relevant)		
Compendium of project outputs		
Project communication material (as relevant)	Stories from the field or videos produced	
List of project target areas		

Name	Description	Status
List and contact details for project staff, key stakeholders, including Project Boards, and other partners to be consulted		
Any other documents, relevant to particular project context, that can provide input info to the evaluator on the following criterion against the project achievement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance; - Effectiveness; - Efficiency; - Sustainability. 		

Appendix 5: List of Persons Met for the Final Evaluation Consultation

Name	Position	e-mail
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Cambodia		
1. Ms. Alissar Charker	Resident Representative	alissar.chaker@undp.org
2. Ms. Sonali Dayaratne	Deputy Resident Representative	sonali.dayaratne@undp.org
3. Ms. Rany Pen	Assistant Resident Representative	rany.pen@undp.org
4. Ms. Amara Bau	Programme Analyst, Promoting Decent Youth Employment in Cambodia Project (PDYEC)	amara.bou@undp.org
5. Mr. Mi Nac	Project Manager, PDYEC	nac.mi@undp.org
6. Ms. Cheryl Ng	Partnership and Knowledge Management Specialist, PDYEC	cheryl.ng@undp.org
7. Ms. Solyrth Malai	Cambodia Young Graduate Finance and Administration, PDYEC	solyroth.malai@undp.org
8. Ms. Waddhna In	Youth Community Engagement Volunteer	Waddhna.in@undp.org
Project Board		
1. Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov	Member, 2nd Secretary, Russian Federation Embassy	russemba@gmail.com chenbun85@gmail.com
2. H.E. Thorng Samon	Member, Deputy Director General, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	thorng_samon@yahoo.com
3. H.E. Ms. Dy Changkolney	Deputy Director General, National Employment Agency/ Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), Member (informally delegated Board Member)	kolney_dy@yahoo.com
4. Mr. Socheat Kanharith	Advisor (Media and Public Relation)	socheat_kanbarith@yahoo.com
5. Ms. Keo Rattana	Deputy Director, Planning & Cooperation Unit	
6. Ms San Thean	MoLTV Technical Manager, MoLVT	
7. Mr. Soth Peosamnang	Youth Advisory Panel of United Nations Country Team	samnanglovepursat@gmail.com
Partners		
8. Ms. Veng Molika	Program Manager, Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia	manager@yeaccambodia.org
9. Mr. Jon Hooper	Senior ICB Manager, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).	jon.hooper@icaew.com
Letter of Agreement (LoA)		
10. Ms. Dy Chankolney	Deputy Director General, National Employment Agency/MoLVT	kolney_dy@yahoo.com
11. (repeat of Project Board)		
12. Mr. Chea Thourn	Education Director, Kampuchea Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Auditors (KICPAA)	thourn@kicpaa.org
Consultants		
13. Dr. Abbas Maroof	Digital Transformation Specialist	aimaaroof@gmail.com
14. (virtual)		
15. Ms. Nayheak Khun	Consultancy to support youth engagement in I4.0 technology and expansion of startup prototype services of the Institute of Technology of Cambodia's Center (ITC) of Excellence (ITC equipment)	nayheak.khun@gmail.com
Service Provider		
16. Ms. Nataly Rodionova	Managing Director of STEP IT Academy, PowerUp Cambodia	rodionova_n@itstep.org
17. Ms. Melanie Mossard	Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Impact Hub Phnom Penh	melanie.mossard@impacthub.net
18. Ms. Keisha Gani	Acting Country Manager, SHE Investments	leakhena@sheinvestments.com
19. Mr. LONG Nipaul	Wintech Software Development (Cambodia) Co., Ltd.	long.nipaul@gmail.com

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Partners		
20. Dr. Sarot Srang	Head of Dynamic and Control Laboratory (DCLab), Institute of Technology of Cambodia on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (I4.0)	srangsarot@itc.edu.kh
21. Mr. Oum Vantharith	Startup Development Specialist, Techo Startup Center Onboarding network of mentors on Startup Cambodia Platform	vantharith.oum@techostartup.center
22. Mr. Chea Sunsatya	Manager, Khmer Enterprise Oversaw the partnership with Bluetribe programme	sunsatya.chea@khmerenterprise.info
Youth Co:Lab/UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub		
23. Mr. Beniam Gebrezghi	Program Specialist Civil Society & Youth, Bangkok Regional Hub	beniam.gebrezghi@undp.org
24. Mr. Din Long Pham	Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Specialist	dinh-long.pham@undp.org
International Labour Organization (ILO)		
25. Mr. Virak Nuon	Former Project Coordinator/PDYEC	virak@ilo.org
Private Sector Partner/Sponsor		
26. Mr. Chakara Sisowath	Managing Partner, 3E:Fii Capital	Chakara.sisowath@3e-fii.com
27. Mr. Kaing Chantha	Deputy Director, Build Bright University (BBU), Siem Reap	kaingchantha@gmail.com
Beneficiaries – Junior Entrepreneurship Program (JEP), Kampong Cham		
28. Ms. Meng Keopichvimean	Customer Service Staff at the Prince Bank	
29. Mr. Voeurn Veacha	Student participant	
30. Mr. Chhon Minea	Buddhism for Social Development Action	
Beneficiaries – Build Bright University (BBU) Accountancy Technical Qualification (ATQ) Participants		
31. Ms. Im Sophim	BBU Student, ATQ participant	
32. Ms. Hon Phaleap	BBU Student, ATQ participant	
33. Ms. Chan Vicheka	BBU Student, ATQ participant	
34. Ms. Aob Phkar	BBU Student, ATQ participant	
35. Ms. Samet Sey Moeung	BBU Student, ATQ participant	
36. Ms. Lvan Vita	BBU Student, ATQ participant	
Beneficiaries – Junior Entrepreneurship Program (JEP), Siem Reap		
37. Ms. Him Srey Ny	BBU student	
38. Mr. Oeun Rany	Vanda Accounting Siem Reap	
39. Ms. Chin Sreyni	BBU student	
40. Ms. Seayha Tithya Chhoravy	University of Southeast Asia	
Beneficiaries – Movers Program, Kampong Thom		
41. Mr. Chhim Chhauden	Phum Asia, Facilitator	
42. Mr. Meas Sok	Affiliation not identified.	
43. Mr. Thorn Thu	Phum Asia	
44. Mr. Chhi Chharin	Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) student	
Beneficiaries – ATQ Program, Phnom Penh		
45. Ms. Hong Minea	Affiliation not identified.	
46. Ms. Idav Chanthorn	Affiliation not identified.	
47. Ms. Seom Rathanak	Affiliation not identified.	
48. Ms. Seamg Senghor	Affiliation not identified.	
Beneficiaries - SHE Investment Incubator and Accelerator Program		
49. Ms. NY Theavly	Micro, small and medium entrepreneur (MSME)	
50. Ms. Lim Sokin	MSME	
51. Ms. Vann Sina	MSME	
52. Ms. Hok Sreymom	MSME	
53. Ms. Lang Suykeang	MSME	
54. Ms. Sotheary Sim	MSME	




Beneficiaries – Bluetribe Program		
55. Ms Rithya Cheng	Based in Japan (interviewed remotely)	
56. Ms. Sokuntheary May	Affiliation not identified.	
57. Ms. Nisa Chan	Affiliation not identified.	
58. Mr. Hongleang Kong	Affiliation not identified.	
59. Mr. Sothea Rot	Affiliation not identified.	
60. Mr. Buntongui Nit	Affiliation not identified.	

Appendix 6: Project Targets and Achievements (2019-2022)

UNDAF Outcome: By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular the marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from expanded opportunities for decent work and technological innovations; and participate in a growing, more productive and competitive economy, that is also fairer and environmentally sustainable".				
CPD Output 1.4: Young women and men have opportunities to progress through access to information, skills development, and improved employment policies.				
Output 1: Improvement of sectoral and national policies related to youth skills development and employment through policy-oriented research & advocacy with a specific focus on Industry 4.0 (I4.0).				
Sub-Output	Activity Target	Project Achievement	Remark	Status
1.1 (PRODOC): I4.0 Survey to gauge employment impact of automation (focussing on youth) finalized and produced.	Garment automation Report produced.	657 participants attended and their inputs were used by the University of Cambridge experts to serve I4.0 scoping analyses for Cambodia.	The report benefits MEF, and development partners in shaping relevant policies to address the skills gap. Note: Partly achieved. Impact on employment of I4.0 is not reported.	
1.1 (PCR): Reviews & gauge the impact on employment of I4.0 technologies and automation with a focus on youth				
1.2 (PRODOC): No. of model/tools identified and piloted for enabling youth entrepreneurs to access I4.0 technologies	Supported in providing awareness and training for promoting Industry 4.0 and involved to support and give access to digital equipment for the Centre of Excellence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raised of 250 youth (30% women) about I4.0 technologies. ITC Video produced to raise awareness about I4.0 	Useful to sensitize the nature of jobs. Note: Partly achieved. Participation in the event does not necessarily suggest awareness raised.	
1.2 (PCR): Outreach and sensitization to examine methods to connect youth entrepreneurs to I4.0 Technologies and pilot some of these tools.				
1.3 (PRODOC): The study on skills perception in response to emerging digital economy finalized and published.	Two reports produced on: (i) Digital Literacy Assessment Report and (ii) Demand for and supply of digital skills report	Produced a Digital Literacy Assessment Report and circulated to key stakeholders including MEF, MPTC, MoEYS, and key persons leading the National digital literacy framework Launched a demand for and supply of digital skills report attended by 300 persons (31% women) representing development partners, government agencies, students, universities, employers and employees. Prepared a Policy Brief.	It is expected that the two reports will be used by key stakeholders to develop a national digital literacy framework. The report called for and recommended a response from the multi-stakeholders to address the digital skills gap The policy brief informed improvement for policy assessment on the digital skills framework. Note: Achieved.	
1.3 (PR): Study on skills projection in response to emerging digital economy.				
Output 2: A variable model of Skills Training and Certification that builds on existing career/job pathways in different economic sectors that offer higher value-added employment in the areas of anticipated growth and comparative advantage for Cambodian youth in the context of the emerging digital economy and industry 4.0.				
2.1 (PRODOC): No. of SME Clusters of Industry Park adopted career pathways for workers	A certification programme is developed.	-	Not accomplished because the Cluster Park was ready. Note: Not achieved.	

2.1 (PCR): Skills Certification Programme for SME Cluster Park				
2.2 (PRODOC): SME Clusters skills requirement fulfilment rate	75 ICT Occupational Profiles and career pathways developed for NEA	Developed 75 ICT skills profiles and career pathways for dissemination to human resource departments in the private sector, government agencies, civil society organizations	The career profiles and career pathways are expected to be used by career counsellors to advise students requirements.	
2.2 (PCR): ICT Occupational Profiles and career pathways			Through the development of the Profiles (including skills bank), and career pathways in ICT Sector, this information will be used by career counsellors to inform students on various skills needed to be developed for their employment in their desired ICT career pathway. Note: Partly achieved. There was significant deviation from the original sub output narrative.	
2.3 PRODOC): No. of Vocational Skills Certification scheme established.	NEA organized a career fair supported by a career development campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The campaign reached 687,000 youth - 104,066 individuals received information on 22,000 job opportunities - 95 employers joined the career fair in 2021 - 657 persons participated in the technology recovery event. 	The 2021 Online career fair was organized by NEA Input from the career fair is expected to contribute to relevant policies and interventions to address the skills gap in the workforce. Note: Partly achieved. There was significant deviation from the original sub output narrative. Expectation was to cover vocational skills.	
2.3 (PCR): Vocational Skills Certification				
2.4 (PRODOC): No. of Industrial Park workers enrolled in the vocational skills certification programme	Pathway to Digital Skills training on basic and advanced digital skills involving placement model for trained students matched with employers.	Trained 80 students in digital skills	The KPIs include -Wage increase and job promotion for those already employed; - Job placement for those unemployed. Note: Partially achieved due to noncompletion of the Industry Park and the narrative for sub output also changed	
2.4 (PCR): Training Programme with innovative mechanism				
2.5 (PRODOC): No. of students enrolled in Accountancy Technical Training Qualification programme	Enrol students who did not complete or pursue university qualifications to become certified accountants and registered with KICPAA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All learning materials are published and distributed to partner universities in Khmer and English languages (Rolled out courses at 3 universities) - 20 Qualified ATQ Examiners, 25 trainers selected & trained, and enrolled 300 students (51% female) - Online learning platform with 4 lecture videos developed for access to learning beyond Phnom Penh in-person lectures. 	There is an expectation that the certified accountants who pass KICPAA examinations will receive premium wages/salaries in the job market. Note: Achieved.	
2.5 (PCR): Accountancy Technical Qualification (ATQ)				
Output 3: Youth entrepreneurs have the tools needed to start their businesses, particularly in areas responsive to Industry 4.0 and the emerging digital economy.				
3.1 (ORODOC): Entrepreneurship training package reviewed, revised and finalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incubation and Accelerator Programme Guidebook produced - Mentorship Resources (ESO Guidebook, Mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Startup Mentorship guidelines were produced for ESOs, mentors, and mentees - 50 mentors trained and 	All these resources were disseminated to the ecosystem which enhanced the quality of mentorship and learning for young entrepreneurs in the ecosystem	

3.1 (PCR): Review & Advance Entrepreneur training package I4.0	and Mentee guidebook produced)	certified to help better support entrepreneurs	Note: Achieved.	
3.2 (PRODOC): Business Incubation anfor young entrepreneurs established	- SHE Investment Incubator and Accelerator Programme - Bluetribe Incubation Programme - Growing network of entrepreneurs on Startup Cambodia platform (Techo Startup Center of MEF)	- SHE Investments: 30 women micro-entrepreneurs were trained in basic business and financial management and organizing and using particular social tools to promote their businesses - Bluetribe: 16 young entrepreneurs received intensive training to upskill their business acumen and utilized the network within the programme to sustain their business (investment, mentorship. etc) Startup Cambodia: 46 mentors onboarded to platform	- All Bluetribe entrepreneurs gained access to a network of global mentors and capacity-building resources for their businesses; - Startup Cambodia young entrepreneurs accessed resources and mentors to help with their startups, including information about various programmes including investors. Note: 29 women microentrepreneurs received training	
3.2 (PCR): Partnership with training SP on increasing young entrepreneurs' capabilities				
3.3 (PRODO): No. of young (and young aspiring) entrepreneurs who received entrepreneurship training		A total of 7,668 Youth (43% women) received entrepreneurship training, entrepreneurship support, and career support skills training throughout the project cycle	Note: Achieved, although the fate of many youth receiving training is not clearly known due to the lack of any tracer study.	
3.3 (PCR): Enrol and train young (and young aspiring) entrepreneurs.				
3.4 (PRODOC) not defined				
4.4 (PCR): Develop and strengthen mentoring platform (platform) developed and support youth entrepreneurs Build mentors' mentoring capacity and methods		46 mentors were onboarded to a digital platform called Startup Cambodia platform, under the Ministry of Economy and Finance to remove the barrier in accessing mentorship for all entrepreneurs who may not have the network or access to mentors. A set of start-up mentoring guidelines, toolkits and training modules were developed and tested by Impact Hub Phnom Penh and Techno Startup Center. 50 local startup/business mentors were also trained and certified to help better support entrepreneurs.	Achieved.	

Note:    indicate full, partial and non-achievement of target indicators at project completion, respectively.

Also, the statement used to define sub-outputs (also referred in PCR as activities) are somewhat different and in some cases not directly reconcilable with the PRODOC statements.

Source: UNDP, Cambodia and stakeholder interviews.