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## **Men- and women-owned/led MSMEs and the COVID-19 policy responses in the Philippines**

Philippine Institute for Development Studies research team



**INVESTING IN WOMEN**  
SMART ECONOMICS  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

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## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
ACPC	Agricultural Credit Policy
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AGRIPINAY	Financial Assistance for Women in Agriculture
ANYO	AgriNegosyo Loan Program
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BSFI	Banking, financial services, and insurance
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
CAMP	COVID-19 Adjusted Measures Program
CARES	COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises
CBTO	Community-based tourism organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DA	Department of Agriculture
DBP	Development Bank of the Philippines
DBP RESPONSE	Development Bank of the Philippines-RESPONSE to accelerate MSME Recovery
DOF	Department of Finance
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOT	Department of Tourism
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GAD	Gender and Development
GSIS	Government Service Insurance System
ICT	Information, communication and technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
I-RESCUE	Interim Rehabilitation Support to Cushion Unfavorably-affected Enterprises by COVID-19 Lending Program
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
KII	Key Informant Interviews

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LE	List of Establishments
LGU	Local government units
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
MFIs	Microfinance institutions
MGCP	MSME Credit Guarantee Program
MMSME	Men-owned/led MSME
MSMEs	Micro, small, and medium enterprises
NEP	National Evaluation Policy
NEPF	National Evaluation Policy Framework
PCCI	Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PhilGuarantee	Philippine Guarantee Corporation
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
SBWS	Small Business Wage Subsidy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFF	Small farmers and fisherfolk
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SSS	Social Security System
STI	Science, technology and innovation
TUPAD	Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers
UIB	Unemployment Insurance Benefits
UN	United Nations
WBC	Women Business Council
WMSME	Women-Owned/Led MSME
WSMEs	Women-led or owned SMEs

## Executive Summary

Using a gender lens, this paper takes stock of economic relief measures that aim to foster the resilience of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to COVID-19. It does so by analyzing results from the data collected through an online survey of MSMEs and interviews/group discussions with stakeholders including government agencies, MSMEs, State-run banks, business communities, enterprises, and subject matter experts.

Synthesizing insights from the data analysis, the following initiatives are forwarded for the government's consideration:

1. ***Come up with an official definition of WMSME/MMSME that agencies can use in their data collection, monitoring, and evaluation efforts.*** This will result in a more cohesive interpretation of datapoints that can inform the gendered aspects of all policy responses. This will facilitate the interoperability of databases, which are necessary to capture, process, and interpret analytics for insights, reporting, and cyclical policy design. This will also help in the monitoring and evaluation of programs. Adopting the IWA 34 standard on women entrepreneurship across all dimensions of policy design can be considered.
2. ***Identify key gender-related MSMEs indicators that key agencies could regularly monitor.*** These indicators may provide a sharper and more integrated analysis of gendered outcomes of policies. Regular monitoring of such indicators will help to improve the design of programs, maximize learning opportunities, and identify emerging areas that require attention. This will also help in understanding emergent issues in entrepreneurship like new forms and arrangements. For example, the size of the workforce may no longer be reliable for use in policy design, monitoring and evaluation.
3. ***Pursue more aggressive promotion of government support programs for MSMEs to increase awareness in the MSME community.*** This can be done by utilizing government and private mass media channels, and social media accounts of relevant government agencies. Communicating programs to the network of business groups will also help raise awareness.
4. ***Nurture a culture of gender responsiveness in all dimensions.*** While agencies, business communities, and enterprises exhibit awareness of women's issues, there remains a need to cultivate a gender-responsive culture beyond compliance.

The following can be areas for collaboration among the government, private sector, and donors:

1. ***Further strengthen the adoption of digitization solutions through training/mentoring programs on financial and digital literacies, business networking, and product development in the digital age.*** This will equip MSMEs with the requisite knowledge about a quickly digitalizing economy, enhance competitiveness, and improve sector resilience amid an ongoing pandemic. Identifying measurable outcomes and monitoring of business needs can

help in improving the design and implementation of programs and in identifying emerging challenges that need to be addressed.

2. ***Make alternative financing models such as peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding better understood in the MSME community.*** WMSMEs stand to benefit from these alternatives as they navigate issues in working capital and challenges in digitization financing.
3. ***Prepare enterprises for future disruptions through innovations related to production planning and supply chain management.*** Both WMSMEs and MMSMEs have yet to use digital solutions in these areas, which are critical to the enterprises' operation and conduct of business.
4. ***Empower associations and business communities (including international women associations that work with local MSMEs) to ensure wider reach of information on government policy responses and capacity-building initiatives, and to help address gaps related to care work responsibilities.*** Stronger collaboration between these communities and government agencies can help in cascading critical information on access to market, finance, business networks, and supply chain. A closer interaction between business communities and government agencies will bring capacity-building efforts closer to MSME beneficiaries. Business communities can add value to the entrepreneurship ecosystem through ancillary support, community outreach, and specialized capacity building tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs.



# 1. Introduction

The contribution of micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSMEs) to generate jobs, income, and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth has long been acknowledged in policy circles. Equally recognized are the role of MSMEs in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets on women empowerment and gender equality by providing women economic opportunities (Pignatti 2020; ILO 2018, Menon and van der Meulen Rodgers 2017; Seno-Alday and Bourne 2017). MSMEs also offer work flexibility that allow women to perform care work (Loh and Dahesihari 2013, Hughes 2012).

In the Philippines, the recognition of the importance of MSMEs to the economy can be seen in several blueprints, such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) MSME Development Plan 2017-2022 and the Philippine Development Plan, and in various legislation related to MSMEs (see Table 1A in the appendix), such as the Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Barangay Micro Business Enterprises, Go Negosyo Act of 2014, and the Philippine Innovation Act.

With respect to women entrepreneurs, the first strategic goal under the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019-2025<sup>1</sup> of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) is the expanded economic opportunities for women. Chapter 1 of this plan outlines the different strategies to help achieve the overall outcomes, such as increasing the number of women who own sustainable and competitive businesses, who earn higher incomes from entrepreneurship, and who participate in high-growth industry sectors such as information, communication and technology (ICT) and science, technology and innovation (STI). Looking closely at the laws, some are providing for MSMEs in general while others have explicit support provisions for women entrepreneurs, like the Republic Act 7882 and the Go Negosyo Act of 2014. The former provides for skills development while the latter ensures the representation of women in different policymaking bodies. However, women's representation in these bodies does not guarantee that measures that are crafted will target women enterprises.

The classification of MSMEs in the Philippines is defined by using either total assets<sup>2</sup> or employment<sup>3</sup>. The former is based on the Magna Carta for MSMEs (RA 9501) while the latter is used by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in collecting establishment data. Based on the PSA's 2019 List of Establishments (LE), the MSMEs comprise 89%, 10%, and 0.05% of the total establishments, respectively. In terms of employment, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) account for 32.63% of the total employment covered in the 2019 LE. Disaggregated by region, the SMEs' employment is concentrated in the National Capital region (11.38%), and to some extent CALABARZON (4.53%), Central Luzon (3.17%), and Central Visayas (2.81%). Disaggregated by sector, the SMEs employment is concentrated in the wholesale and retail trade (8.8%), manufacturing (4.92%), and accommodation and food service activities (4.47%).

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\* This report is an integrated report based on 1) "Men- and women-owned/led MSMEs and the COVID-19 policy responses" by Connie Bayudan-Dacuycuy, Lora Kryz Baje, Francis Mark Quimba and Celia Reyes and 2) "COVID-19 MSME policy responses in the Philippines: How goes the gendered quest?" by Paul John Mendoza Peña and Connie Bayudan-Dacuycuy.

<sup>1</sup> See Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019-2025 Results and Matrices, <https://pcw.gov.ph/assets/files/2020/05/GEWE-Plan-2019-2025-Results-Matrices.pdf?x12374>.

<sup>2</sup> As indicated in the Magna Carta for MSME, RA 9501: Micro (up to PhP 3 000 000), Small (PhP 3 000 001 to PhP 15 000 000), Medium (PhP 15 000 001 to PhP 100 000 000)

<sup>3</sup> Micro (1-9), Small (10-99), Medium (100-199)

With respect to gender and enterprises, the DTI sex-disaggregated data indicate that around 62% of the total number of new businesses registered are women-owned (based on the name declared in the registry) in 2020. A higher proportion of female entrepreneurs have also participated in the DTI's training and enterprise development programs (62% of all entrepreneurs that participated, see Table 2A in the appendix). The total value of the loans of female entrepreneurs, availed through the small business finance, is also higher than those of male entrepreneurs. Similar observations are noted in program-related services.

In the context of the ongoing pandemic, the government was quick to roll out several policy responses for MSMEs including support programs for financing, employment, and businesses. These included regulatory relief measures, liquidity support and capital injection to financial institutions to enhance lending to MSMEs; deferral of loan repayments, loan payments and loan restructuring; and the set-up of new lending programs including low to interest-free loans under concessional terms<sup>4</sup>. The *Bayanihan 1* Act mandated relevant financial institutions to implement a minimum of thirty-day grace period for all loans (with principal and/or interest payments) falling within the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ). Institutions covered under this directive were banks, quasi-banks, financing companies, lending companies, other financial institutions both public and private, and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Social Security System (SSS) and Pag-IBIG Fund. The *Bayanihan 2* Act expanded the covered institutions to real estate developers, insurance companies providing life insurance policies, pre-need companies, entities providing in-house financing for goods and properties purchased, and assets and liabilities management companies.

Due to the nature of the emergency, these programs were quickly rolled out to ensure that businesses remain afloat during the lockdown period and to quickly recover from the lockdown measures as well. There are important questions that emerge, however. These include whether and how WMSMEs have benefitted from such policy responses, and whether there is a need for targeted interventions during a crisis and in recovery strategies. These concerns are valid given that there are long standing norms that influence the behavior and attitudes of men and women. Studies indicate that women entrepreneurs in developing countries are more likely to face greater challenges in entrepreneurship through unequal endowments and socio-cultural factors (Goyal and Yadav 2014). Moreover, women's entrepreneurship networks generally consist of family, friends and educators rather than business service providers or other entrepreneurs (Halabisky 2018, Minniti and Arenius 2003). In the Philippines, WMSMEs are smaller in employment and asset size (Daño-Luna and Caliso 2019). In addition, there is evidence that stakeholders consider COVID-19 to be a disaster that requires quick responses, and which need to be inclusive and gender-neutral. While agencies have a general understanding of the Gender and Development provided for by the Magna Carta of Women (MCW), some may lack the appreciation for the specific needs of WMSMEs (Peña and Bayudan-Dacuycuy 2022).

At the outset, an immediate challenge to the analysis is the absence of official definition, local or international, of a WMSME. At the international level, the differences in market and cultural contexts in different countries (Financial Alliance for Women 2015) and women losing control as the business evolves (Scott et al 2016) are various factors that impede the development of a definition. The

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<sup>4</sup> The succeeding discussion borrowed heavily from (BSP 2020).

International Trade Centre (ITC) (2020) has previously compiled definitions of women-owned/led businesses used by different institutions and organizations (Table 3A in the appendix). The basis of the definitions can be summarized into 5 categories: women in principal ownership, women in majority ownership and/or control, women in top management or board of directors, proportion of women workers/employees, own-account workers/self-employed, and sex of entrepreneur. Most definitions use the percentage of women ownership and control of business although the percentage ranges from 50% and above. The definition using the proportion of women workers, used in the World Bank Enterprise Survey, has no benchmark that will clearly categorize a business as women-owned/led business. Self-employment and own-account workers are also used as proxy indicators, although caution should be exercised here since not all self-employed are entrepreneurs.

Cognizant of the substantial contribution of MSMEs to the economy, the government has been quick to craft policy responses for MSMEs to help them stay afloat during the pandemic. However, it is not yet established whether and how these policies are responsive to the differentiated impact of COVID-19 on men and women entrepreneurs. The care economy, for example, is primarily a woman's responsibility, and this was greatly magnified during the pandemic given the shift to children's online learning. Given the different social norms that men and women face, implementing a gendered approach can help achieve the United Nations (UN) SDG targets on women empowerment and gender equality.

Given these, this report aims to:

- look into the MSME policy responses in 2020 in the Philippines and analyze whether and how women-led/owned enterprises have benefitted from these measures;
- look into the issues/barriers/challenges encountered by women-led/owned enterprises and compare these with the experiences of men entrepreneurs; and
- propose recommendations that strengthen gender-responsive MSME policies. To do these, the paper analyzed primary data collected through an online survey and conducted key informant interviews and focus group discussions with various stakeholders.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 *Policy infrastructures for women empowerment and entrepreneurship*

The gender policy framework of the Philippines is articulated in the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019-2025, which is integrated into the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 and the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025. These roadmaps and plans represent the main framework for the agencies' Gender and Development (GAD) plans and budgets (PCW 2018a).

RA 9710 or the MCW provides the overall framework and basis of institutional support for gender and development while promoting women's human rights and empowerment for all. This law recognizes the potential sources of gender inequality that could prevent or deter access to equal economic opportunities. The MCW fuels various gender-related laws and policies, ensuring that equal rights and opportunities and mechanisms to empower women are institutionalized. This includes giving equal employment opportunities in social work services, government positions, and other industries, with the ultimate goal of achieving a fifty-fifty gender balance. The MCW also provides guidelines on responding to the different needs of women, such as maternity leave privileges and other women's health issues such as those who need to undergo surgery for gynecological disorders. National government agencies and local government units (LGU) implement GAD programs, allocating at least 5% of their total budget appropriation.

Furthermore, the policy landscape for gender equality in the Philippines, including the MCW and the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2005, engenders gender responsiveness as a goal for policymakers to ensure that discrimination against women is eliminated and that substantive equality is achieved (PCW 2021a). The PCW's *How to Be a Gender-Responsive Legislator* (2021b), co-produced with the House of Representatives, and which serve as a handbook for legislators, lawyers, bill drafters, represent a clear framework to guide the legislative process. The enacted laws provide a foundation for related policies developed in the executive branch at various levels of jurisdiction.

Accordingly, the Handbook (PCW 2021b) identifies the central role that the legislature plays in gender mainstreaming, presenting key features and differences in the levels of gender mainstreaming in lawmaking: gender-discriminatory, gender-neutral, gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, and gender-transformative, all of which are consistent with the levels of gender responsiveness promoted by the PCW. The Handbook provides lawmakers guide questions in developing gender-responsive legislation, which can later be used as the basis for the formation of agency-level policies. More concretely, as in the case of general bills, guide questions ensure that underlying "assumptions about women and men in terms of their conditions, capacity, etc." and varying impact on people and, more specifically, women, are identified and part of the process of developing and assessing a legislative proposal.

The Gender-Responsive LGU Assessment Tool (PCW 2018b) provides the framework, measures, and indicators of gender responsiveness of LGU as an organization and the delivery of basic services and facilities. Working through the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the PCW facilitates policy and operating-level assessments of LGU and its alignment with gender and development goals. Also contributing as a potential source of guidance on gender responsiveness in government policies is the Gender Mainstreaming Resource Kit, a compendium that identifies guidelines and indicators on gender-responsive planning, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation, GAD advocacy and training, gender-responsive organization, and statistics in gender (Silva 2002).

On the other hand, MSMEs are one of the priorities of the government, as reflected in numerous policy frameworks grounded in legislation through the mid-term growth-focused Philippine Development Plan (PDP 2017-2022), along with laws specific to MSMEs. The sector's long-term transformation is included in the DTI Inclusive Innovation Industrial Strategy and the long-term vision for development enshrined in NEDA Ambisyon 2040.

Policymakers have recognized the importance of MSMEs early on and several laws were put in place. In fact, OECD (2017) identifies the Philippines as the only country in Southeast Asia with a specific law that promotes women entrepreneurship. These include the Magna Carta for MSME, which mandates agencies to submit to the MSME Development Council regular reports on gender responsiveness of MSME-oriented policies and programs. RA 7882 mandates support for women entrepreneurs in micro and small enterprises. Likewise, RA 106411 or the Go Negosyo Act stipulates that MSME support centers should encourage women entrepreneurship by providing access to information, support, training, and credit facilities. The same law requires the inclusion of a representative of the PCW in the MSME Development Council. Other MSME laws do not explicitly promote women entrepreneurship. These include the Barangay Micro Business Enterprise Act of 2002.

### ***Business associations***

Working closely with government agencies like the DTI and the PCW, business communities specializing in women entrepreneurship provide development and networking opportunities independently or in collaboration with government agency initiatives. Business associations, like the Women's Business Council Philippines, Inc., (WomenBizPH or WBC), represent women entrepreneurs' interests in consulting with government agencies. They also work with international coordinating agencies in the sharing of experiences from the ground and the transfer of knowledge, e.g., best practices, to participating members. WomenBizPH is composed of women business leaders recognized for their success in commerce and industry and responsible for representing women entrepreneurs in policy discussions with agencies. They are recognized as the primary private sector partner of the government, mainly through their partnership with the DTI and PCW. They also represent the Philippines in international coordinating agencies' events of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Among their regular initiatives are capacity-building workshops, participation in policy research fora, and networking activities for members and industry players.

On the other hand, women entrepreneurs in the Philippines can participate in the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), a business organization with a diverse membership base of small, medium-sized, and large enterprises, local chambers of commerce, interest groups, and other industry associations. PCCI is recognized as the premier representative of the private sector in the Philippines. Their initiatives include capacity-building workshops, policy discussions, policy research, and advocacy initiatives that promote competitiveness. They also provide training programs that develop local chambers of commerce that boost the support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to become globally competitive. Among their key programs is the PCCI Innovation Center, which provides startup founders with a venue and platform to incubate innovations in the high-tech sector. The Innovation Center provides regular training and certification programs to support its innovation agenda.

## **2.2 COVID -19 policy responses for MSMEs**

### **2.2.1 DEBT FINANCING**

#### **COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises (CARES)**

The DTI, in partnership with the Small Business Corporation (SB Corp.) launched the COVID-19 CARES<sup>5</sup> program, a loan program for MSMEs that were adversely affected by the pandemic. In the *Bayanihan 2*, PhP 10 billion additional funding had been allocated to the CARES program and other lending programs of the SB Corp. The *Bayanihan 2* also directed the SB Corp. to extend its existing loan programs, as well as to provide interest subsidies to MSMEs, cooperatives, hospitals, tourism, and affected overseas Filipino workers.

The SB Corp. collected sex-disaggregated data, although the extent of gender disaggregation allowed was limited to the sex of the authorized representative who applied on behalf of the juridical borrower. While this disaggregation is seemingly not informative on discussions involving MSMEs and gender, women signatories of the business' legal documents and financial accounts to be used in defining women-led businesses have been proposed elsewhere<sup>6</sup>.

For the first five months of 2021, the SB Corp. received a total of 9,086 loan applications under the *Bayanihan* CARES loan program (Table 4A in the appendix). The biggest chunk of applications came from microenterprises (76%). Within enterprises, a higher proportion of microenterprises loans had female signatories (64%) while a higher proportion of loans for SMEs had male signatories (53% and 64%, respectively). In terms of releases, more than PhP 2.1 billion loans were released and 25%, 39%, and 36% went to micro, small and medium enterprises, respectively. Within enterprises, female accounts in microenterprises got a bigger chunk of the loans (57%) while male accounts in SMEs had higher shares of the loans received (56% and 65%, respectively).

In 2020, out of the 17,825 loan applications, 89% were from microenterprises. Within enterprises, similar trends as in 2021 can be observed. A higher proportion of microenterprise loans had female signatories (65%) while a higher proportion of loans for small and medium enterprises had male signatories (52% and 60%, respectively). In terms of loan releases, more than PhP 1.5 billion loans were

<sup>5</sup> Pertinent details on the program can be found in the SB Corp's website: <https://www.sbgfc.org.ph/programs-and-services/bayanihan-COVID19-assistance-restart-enterprises-cares>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:iwa:34:ed-1:v1:en>

released. Within enterprises, female accounts in microenterprises got a bigger chunk of the loans (59%) while male accounts in SMEs had higher shares of the loans received (53% and 57%, respectively).

### **Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project (SURE COVID-19)**

The SURE COVID-19 was the loan program of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) intended for small farmers and fisherfolk (SFF) and agri-fishery-based micro and small enterprises that were affected by COVID-19. The program targeted 100,000 individual SFFs and 317 micro and small enterprises (Table 5A in the appendix). In the *Bayanihan 1*, actual individual beneficiaries exceeded the target individual beneficiaries while in the *Bayanihan 2*, SFF and micro and small enterprises who borrowed were 14.4% and 13.8% of the actual targets, respectively. More male SFF borrowed from the program in both *Bayanihan* provisions.

### **Financial Assistance for Women in Agriculture (AGRIPINAY)**

The AGRIPINAY program, under the AgriNegosyo (ANYO) loan program of the DA and ACPC, sought to rehabilitate women's agricultural livelihood during the pandemic. In addition, it aimed to intensify gender equality in agribusiness and promote the empowerment of women in the agriculture and fisheries sector. The 2020 General Appropriations Act allocated PhP 200 million for the program. Eligible beneficiaries for this program were female members of the SFF household or women in indigenous groups. Beneficiaries can loan up to PhP 100,000, with 0% interest rate and a one-time service fee of up to 3.5%, to finance capital requirements of their agri-fishery based income-generating activities.

### **MSME Credit Guarantee Program**

Aside from loan programs for MSMEs, the Philippine Guarantee Corporation (PhilGuarantee) established the MSME Credit Guarantee Program (MGCP), which provided a credit guarantee facility to MSMEs. The MGCP gave a 50% guarantee on working capital loans and up to 80% for seven years on term loans for capital expenditures. The *Bayanihan 2 Act* appropriated PhP 5 billion pesos for the credit program of the PhilGuarantee, of which PhP 2 billion was allocated for MSMEs<sup>7</sup>. The guarantee limit was 50% of the principal amount of loan and collateral may be required by the accredited lending bank or financial institution<sup>8</sup>.

The PhilGuarantee did not collect data on women- and men-owned/led enterprises although it had data on the gender of the person who filled out the application form. As of December 31, 2020, out of the 2,921 accounts approved for guarantee, 69.4% were female accounts (Table 6A in the appendix). In

<sup>7</sup> "PhilGuarantee hikes MSME guarantee portfolio by 360 percent to P952-M as of February 2021" (PhilGuarantee 2021) <https://philguarantee.gov.ph/2021/03/29/philguarantee-hikes-msme-guarantee-portfolio-by-360-percent-to-p952-m-as-of-february-2021/>

<sup>8</sup> More details on MSME Credit Guarantee Program found here: <https://philguarantee.gov.ph/programs/guarantee-programs/corporate-msme/msme-credit-guarantee-program-mcgp/>

the Php 318 million outstanding loans, 64.7% were female accounts and most of these came from the wholesale and retail trade industry. Data as of May 31, 2021, indicated similar patterns.

#### **Development Bank of the Philippines-RESPONSE to accelerate MSME Recovery (DBP RESPONSE)**

In compliance with the *Bayanihan 2 Act*, the DBP RESPONSE was established by the State-run Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) to accelerate MSME recovery. This program offered low interest rates and flexible terms and prioritized those engaged in agri-fishery and non-essential businesses, including start-ups and cooperatives<sup>9</sup>. It had two components, namely, retail lending and wholesale lending. Retail lending targeted beneficiaries that were MSMEs. Wholesale lending targeted financial institutions (e.g. rural banks, thrift banks, microfinance-oriented banks, or non-bank financial institutions like cooperatives and MFIs) that provided credit to MSMEs in agri-fishery and non-essential services.

The DBP's sex-disaggregated data on the program were based on two categories: actual beneficiaries of loans released and loan principal. Based on the data shared by the DBP, from December 2020 to June 2021, more applications filed by male borrowers had been approved. In addition, a wide disparity in the total approved loan amount was observed between male loan principals (more than Php 3.5 billion) and female loan principals (Php 169.4 million).

#### **Interim Rehabilitation Support to Cushion Unfavorably-affected Enterprises by COVID-19 Lending Program (I-RESCUE)**

In line with the *Bayanihan 1 Act*, the State-run Land Bank of the Philippines put up the I-RESCUE to support SMEs, cooperatives, and microfinance institutions (MFIs) through the provision of additional funds and loan restructuring under more flexible terms and conditions<sup>10</sup>. This lending program targeted SMEs, MFIs, and cooperatives. Target beneficiaries may borrow up to 85% of their actual needs for working capital, at 5% interest rate per annum, payable up to a maximum of 5 years, with a grace period on the principal payment. The program also offered loan restructuring mechanisms through additional loans, extension of repayments, or both.

As of June 30, 2021, Php 22.8 billion loans were released to 502 borrowers who availed credit from the program (Table 7A in the appendix). The majority of the borrowers were MSMEs, which accounted for 65.7% of the total borrowers. In terms of loans approved and released, however, large enterprises captured the largest share of loans released at 68.2%. Almost half of the MSME borrowers came from female accounts (based on the account name), while 24.2% of the MSME borrowers came from male accounts (Table 8A in the appendix). Around 50% of the loans were released to female accounts.

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.dbp.ph/developmental-banking/micro-small-and-medium-enterprises/sustainable-enterprises-for-economic-development-2021/dbp-response-to-accelerate-msme-recovery-dbp-response-msme-recovery/>

<sup>10</sup> Details on LBP I-RESCUE program is lifted at <https://www.landbank.com/i-rescue-lending-program>



### **BSP support programs for MSMEs**

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Memorandum Numbers M-2020-008 and M-2020-011<sup>11</sup>, aiming to provide the regulatory relief needed for banking, financial services, and insurance (BSFI) affected by the COVID-19, increased single-borrower limits to 30% of banks, non-banks and foreign banks<sup>12</sup> in the country to induce lending, and waived BSP documentary requirements for loan restructuring. The BSP implemented other monetary policies in relation to MSMEs' support including the reduction of reserve requirements of banks, inclusion of MSMEs loans in the accounting of bank's compliance with the required reserve ratio, a reduction of interest rates on the overnight reverse repurchase facility from 4% in the beginning of 2020 to 2% in November 2020<sup>13</sup>, and reduction in credit-risk weights of MSME loans from 75% to 50% (BSP 2020).

### **2.2.2 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT**

Employment support that was provided included wage subsidies, a temporary employment program for displaced informal sector workers, and unemployment benefits.

The Department of Finance (DOF), through the SSS, implemented the Small Business Wage Subsidy (SBWS) which provided affected employees in small businesses a wage subsidy from PhP 5,000 to PhP 8,000 per month for up to two months<sup>14</sup>. This program aimed to help small businesses retain their employees during the ECQ. As of August 2020, PhP 46 billion were distributed to 3.1 million employees of affected small businesses (DOF 2020).

Aside from wage subsidies, the SSS stepped in to provide Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) to eligible members who lost their jobs due to the pandemic, including OFWs and domestic workers. The amount to be granted to eligible members was equivalent to twice the half of the member's average monthly salary credit<sup>15</sup>. The SSS reported that in 2020, PhP 1.17 billion UIBs from 136,000 beneficiaries had been claimed, which was a ten-fold increase from PhP 178 million UIB claims in 2019 (PNA 2021).

Under *Bayanihan* 1 and 2, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) implemented the COVID-19 Adjusted Measures Program (CAMP)<sup>16</sup> and the *Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers* (TUPAD)<sup>17</sup>. The CAMP provided a one-time financial support of PhP 5,000 to affected workers or employees in the formal sector in private establishments regardless of employment status. On the other hand, the TUPAD program provided emergency employment for

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum No. M-2020-008 <https://rbap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-2020-008.pdf> and Memorandum No. M-2020-011 <https://rbap.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-2020-011.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> (Lucas, 2021) <https://business.inquirer.net/315080/bsp-allows-foreign-banks-to-exceed-single-borrower-loan-limits-to-boost-lending>

<sup>13</sup> BSP Monetary Board decisions can be in BSP's website: <https://www.bsp.gov.ph/SitePages/PriceStability/MonetaryPolicyDecision.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> See <https://sites.google.com/dof.gov.ph/small-business-wage-subsidy/#h.1jrpzxyzjwr-target-beneficiaries>

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.sss.gov.ph/sss/appmanager/viewArticle.jsp?page=unemployment>

<sup>16</sup> Department of Labor and Employment Department Order No. 218 Series of 2020. <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/department-order-218-20-guidelines-on-the-implementation-of-COVID-19-adjustment-measures-program-camp-under-the-bayanihan-to-recover-as-one-act/>

<sup>17</sup> Department of Labor and Employment Department Order No. 219 Series of 2020.: <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/department-order-219-20-guidelines-on-the-implementation-of-tulong-panghanapbuhay-para-sa-ating-disadvantaged-displaced-workers-tupad-under-the-bayanihan-to-recover-as-one-act/>

affected workers in the informal sector, particularly the unpaid family workers and self-employed workers with elementary occupations. Eligible beneficiaries were tasked to work for four hours/day for ten days, were paid minimum wages, and received personal accident insurance, cleaning kits, and brochures on health and safety.

### 2.2.3 BUSINESS SUPPORT<sup>18</sup>

Business support included the provisions on different payment moratorium, reduction of waiver of administrative and government fees and charges, reduction of compliance requirements, and focus group expenditure programs.

The *Bayanihan 2* provided a 30-day grace period extended to MSMEs' payments on rental and utilities during the ECQ and MECQ, without incurring any charges. In addition to the CARES program for MSMEs, the Cares for Travel program<sup>19</sup> offered loan assistance to MSMEs from the tourism sector, in which the government allotted PhP 6 billion for this program. The Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project, a loan program of the DA and ACPC, was intended for small farmers and fisherfolk and agri-fishery-based MSMEs. PhP 2.5 billion was allocated for this program from the *Bayanihan 2*.

DOLE's CAMP also provided a one-time financial assistance of PhP 5,000 to displaced workers in Department of Tourism (DOT)-accredited tourism enterprises, qualified community-based tourism organizations (CBTO) and tour guides. In addition, the BSP strongly encouraged BSFI to waive fees on the use of online banking platforms and electronic money during the onset of the pandemic. The BSP also waived the fees for fund transfers made through the Philippine Payment and Settlement System (*PhilPaSS*)<sup>20</sup>. To further improve digital financial services, the BSP relaxed the Know-Your-Customer (KYC) requirements that led to more convenient digital onboarding of clients. It also waived applicable license fees for BSFI who wanted to offer electronic payment and financial services (BSP 2020, p.104).

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<sup>18</sup> The discussion in this section borrowed heavily from the Implementing Guidelines of Republic Act 11494 <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2020/10oct/20201102-IRR-RA-11494-RRD.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Details on Cares for Travel Program lifted here: <https://www.sbgfc.org.ph/programs-and-services/cares-tourism-rehabilitation-and-vitalization-enterprises-and-livelihood-cares>

<sup>20</sup> "The *PhilPass* is a fully automated facility that enables the payment of high value and retail transactions and settlement in Philippine pesos through the demand deposit accounts (DDAs) of the system participants." (BSP 2020, p. 84)

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

#### 3.1 Quantitative data: Online survey

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies-Monash University Online Survey of MSMEs was rolled out from August 26 to October 08, 2021, in partnership with the DTI-BSMED, PCCI and WBC. Although the survey tapped into the vast network of these three agencies, the team had no control on the respondents' uptake of the survey. Thus, the analysis that follows only holds true for the sample at hand and is not representative of MSMEs in general.

The questionnaire used for the survey consisted of the following modules:

- a. **Basic Data:** Collected information on the firm or enterprise's name, location, main industry, ownership structure, women ownership, number of employees, annual revenues, operations pre-, during and post- COVID-19 lockdown, business network affiliations, export and import activities, and overview in changes on price of main product/service, average production costs and sales between pre-pandemic and during pandemic.
- b. **Issues and Challenges due to the Pandemic:** Gathered data on the firm's different financial costs, key challenges, and barriers in accessing finance.
- c. **Support Sought for the Business due to the Pandemic: Private Sector:** Collected data on the types of financial support a business applied for in the private sector (i.e. family, friends, financial institutions) during the pandemic.
- d. **Support Sought for the Business due to the Pandemic: Government Sector:** Collected information on the government initiatives/programs firms applied for, and the extent on how these initiatives were useful for them.
- e. **Strategies during the Pandemic:** Gathered information on the strategies of the firms used to operate during the pandemic, and the most needed policies to continue to support them during the crisis.
- f. **Views of Senior Management on Policies:** Gathered data on the views of the firm's senior management.
- g. **Digitization:** Collected data on the firm's engagement in online selling, use of internet, investment in connectivity, digitization strategies in response to COVID-19, and digital solutions used in their business functions.

#### 3.2 Qualitative data: Key informant interviews and focus group discussions

##### 3.2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN, AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study seeks to assess the impact of policies on men and women entrepreneurs. Thus, it adopts a narrative-critical design approach, following Edmonds and Kennedy (2017, Figure 1). In the policy ecosystem for MSME, stories taken as critical tales from different actors (e.g., government agencies, male and female entrepreneurs, business communities and industry organizations, and subject matter

experts) are gathered and processed. Data generated through dialogic interviews are structured and processed using a critical framework to maintain the necessary level of scientific inquiry.

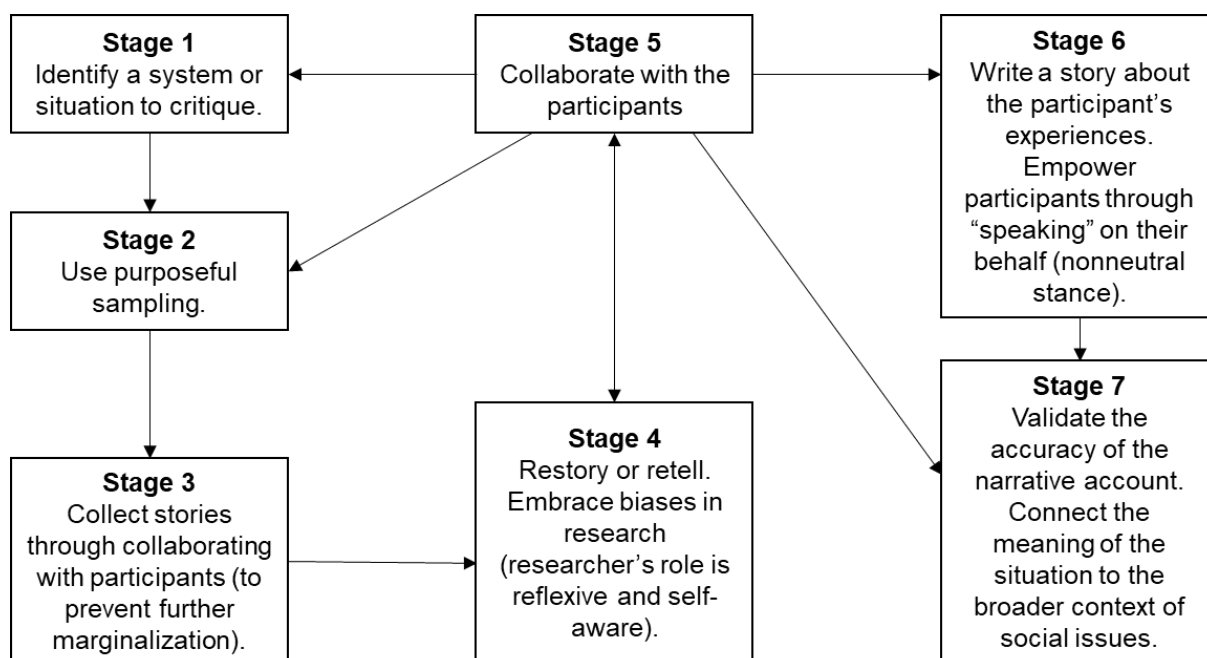
Policy responses to support MSMEs in 2020 are used as the baseline reference for analysis and dialogic interviews with respondents that represent the main actors and beneficiaries in the entrepreneurial ecosystem chosen via purposeful sampling. Throughout the interview process, common themes emerged and are subsequently verified in succeeding interviews, especially where commonalities or controversial points are raised, providing respondents with the opportunity to support or dispute based on their experience or expertise. Finally, insights and observations are synthesized for analysis and the development of policy recommendations.

Following Howlett (2014), the following policy processes are explored. The first three processes are collapsed under the broader theme of “policy design”:

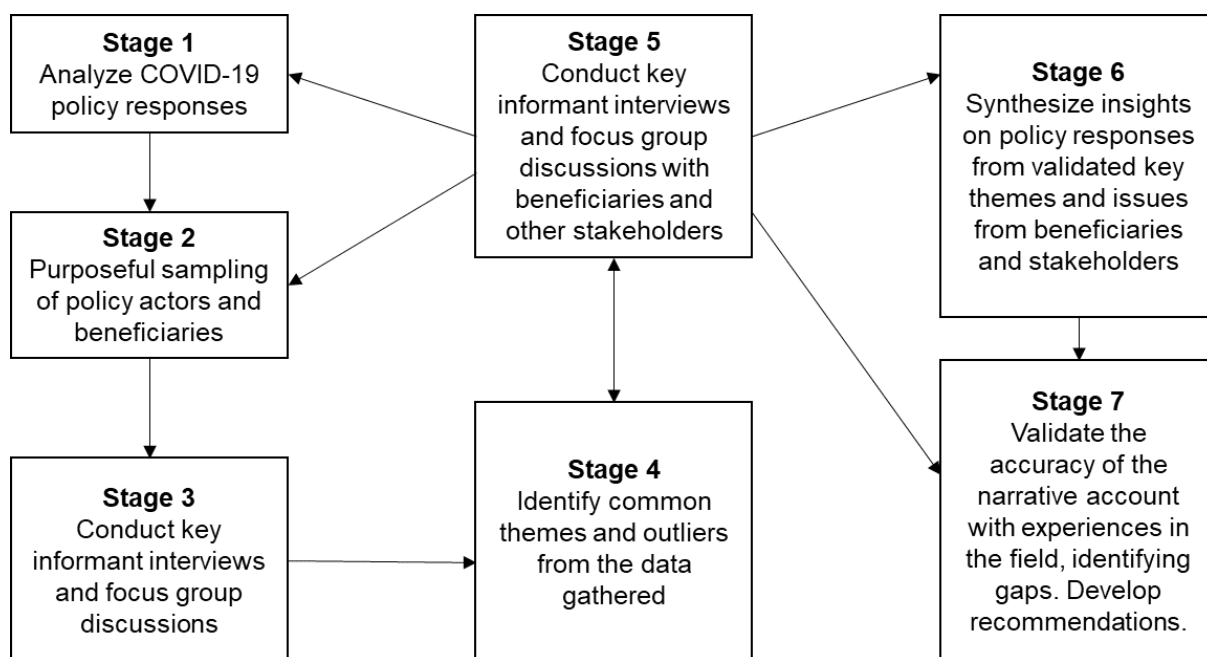
1. **Agenda setting:** Who sets the agenda for the policy? How are the beneficiaries identified? How is gender considered in setting the agenda? What accounts for the priorities and types of SME policy responses?
2. **Policy formulation:** Who leads the design of the policy responses? What gender considerations are integrated with the design of policy responses, and to what extent? Whom do policymakers consult in the formulation of policy responses? What are the key performance indicators identified in designing policy responses?
3. **Decision-making:** Who decides on the implementation of proposed policy responses? What are the strategic considerations for deciding which policy responses to implement and how?
4. **Policy implementation:** Who leads the implementation of policy responses? How do government agencies, entrepreneurs, and business communities collaborate in implementing programs?
5. **Policy evaluation:** How are programs delivered? What are the feedback mechanisms from the ground? How does feedback inform or guide the agency’s future actions and amendments? What are the lessons learned and best practices so far?

FIGURE 1: THE NARRATIVE-CRITICAL DESIGN APPROACH

Panel A: Edmonds and Kennedy (2017)



Panel B: Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) adapted for the study



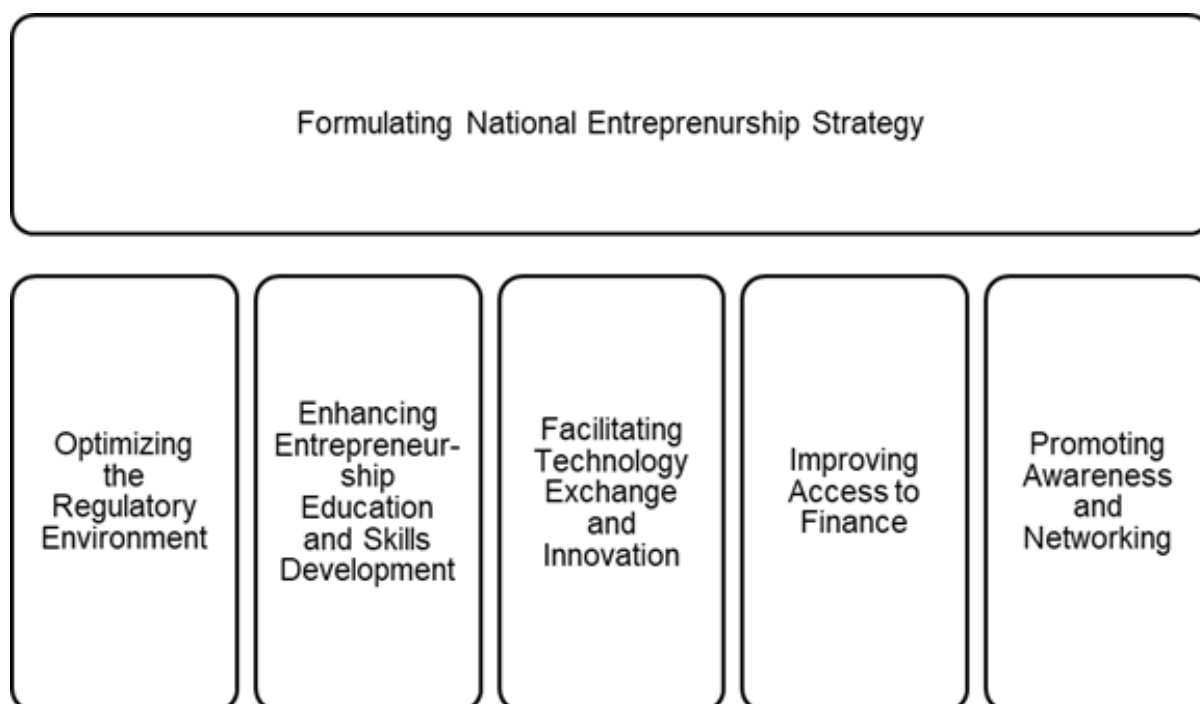
Source: Edmonds and Kennedy (2017).

In addition, narratives about issues, challenges, and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 experience will be gathered to add more nuances and context to the assessment of policy responses:

1. What unique difficulties did entrepreneurs experience at the onset of the pandemic? Did these improve over time? How?
2. What opportunities, if any, did entrepreneurs capitalize on during the pandemic? What coping mechanisms did entrepreneurs employ to survive evolving challenges?
3. What are the entrepreneurs’ priorities in the “new normal” environment?

Insights and the policy infrastructure analysis are guided by the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework (UNCTAD, n.d., Figure 2) to assess whether SME policy responses to COVID-19 correspond to a common framework that promotes entrepreneurship and which components of the framework can be reinforced in future amendments and new programs. Note that each framework component suggests policy objectives, guide questions, and leading indicators to measure effectiveness. The framework can also be used to establish primary actors in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. For this study, particularly in assessing policy responses to COVID-19, the focus is on access to finance, entrepreneurship education and skills development, technology and innovation, and networking, particularly in how these areas were reinforced to benefit entrepreneurs in 2020.

**FIGURE 2: ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY FRAMEWORK**



Source: UNCTAD (n.d.).

### 3.2.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This paper uses a qualitative approach involving Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to gather qualitative feedback and insights from respondents on whether and how women-led or owned SMEs (WSMEs) benefitted from policy responses to COVID-19. PIDS conducted virtual KIIs and FGDs with key government agencies, banks, business communities, enterprises, and subject experts from July 5 to September 15, 2021 (see Table 1). Respondents shared their experiences, including challenges faced and opportunities taken advantage of during a pandemic. Recurring ideas and issues were explored in succeeding similar KIIs and FGDs for validation.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF KII AND FGD RESPONDENTS**

KII		FGD (number of participants)
Government agencies	Bureau of SME Development	Small Business Corp. (4)
		PhilGuarantee Corporation (2) Philippine Commission on Women (3)
Banks		Land Bank of the Philippines (2) Development Bank of the Philippines (2)
Business Communities	WomenBizPH	Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (3)
Enterprises	Nurture Wellness Village	Callawan Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative (3)
	Sophia Jewellery Inc.	Marinduque Maagang Pagbubunga Coop (1)
	Happy Helpers	Langucupang Farmers (1)
	Bebu Daycare	Cebu Organic Agri Coop (1)
Subject Matter Experts	Gobi Partners	Kickstart Ventures (2)
	WeSolve PH	

The FGDs focused on the challenges encountered by these enterprises, whether and how they were able to secure assistance from the measures rolled out by the government to help SMEs, and on the strategies and best practices that can be replicated and upscaled to help the SMEs recover from the pandemic and become resilient in any crisis. Men-led/owned SMEs were also interviewed to analyze differences in access, practices/strategies, and challenges, and to compare and contrast these with the experiences of women entrepreneurs. The interview with representatives from government agencies responsible for the design and implementation of policy responses provided information on how policy decisions were arrived at and whether and how gender analyses was integrated into all the aspects of programs and initiatives. Business communities, industry organizations, and related interest groups provided insights on gender and development-related issues, policy responses, and their observations on the experience of men and women entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 4. Synthesis of results of the online survey

### 4.1 Definition of Women-Owned/Led MSME (WMSME)

To facilitate the discussion in a gendered context, a definition is needed. Thus, we leverage the data collected from the following questions: 1) *How much of the business is owned by one or more women in 2019 (in percent)?* and 2) *Was the top manager or most senior person in the business a woman?*

Using these questions, an enterprise is considered a WMSME if either 1) at least 51% of the business is owned by at least one woman, or 2) the top manager/most senior person in the business is a woman. Otherwise, the enterprise is considered a men-owned/led MSME (MMSME).

Based on employment size (Table 2), around 71% of the respondents are WMSMEs. In 2019, around 80% and 19% of the women-owned/led enterprises are micro and small enterprises, respectively. In 2020, the proportion in the sample which are classified as women-owned/led microenterprises increased slightly, possibly reflecting a reduction in size in some small enterprises due to the pandemic. The percentage of MMSMEs in the sample is lower in both 2019 and 2020 (about 67%). In addition, the percentage of men-owned/led small (large) enterprises has increased (decreased) in 2020.

**TABLE 2: MEN- AND WOMEN-OWNED/LED ENTERPRISES, BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

	2019			2020		
	MMSMEs	WMSMEs	Total	MMSMEs	WMSMEs	Total
Micro enterprise in 2019 (1-9 employees)	67.44	79.65	76.28	67.39	83.76	79.14
Small enterprise in 2019 (10-99 employees)	23.26	18.58	19.87	26.09	15.38	18.40
Medium enterprise in 2019 (100-199 employees)	2.33	0.88	1.28	2.17	0.85	1.23
Large enterprise in 2019 (200 and above employees)	6.98	0.88	2.56	4.35	0.00	1.23

Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

Note: 167 respondents.



**TABLE 3: MEN- AND WOMEN-OWNED/LED ENTERPRISES, BY INDUSTRY**

	MMSMEs	WMSMEs	Total
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	12.77	13.33	13.17
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	10.64	7.50	8.38
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0.00	2.50	1.80
Construction	2.13	0.00	0.60
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	0.00	0.83	0.60
Financial and insurance activities	0.00	0.83	0.60
Human Health and Social Work Activities	0.00	0.83	0.60
Information and communication	0.00	1.67	1.20
Manufacturing	27.66	37.50	34.73
Mining and quarrying	2.13	0.00	0.60
Other service activities	19.15	12.50	14.37
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2.13	0.83	1.20
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	23.40	21.67	22.16

Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

Note: 167 respondents.

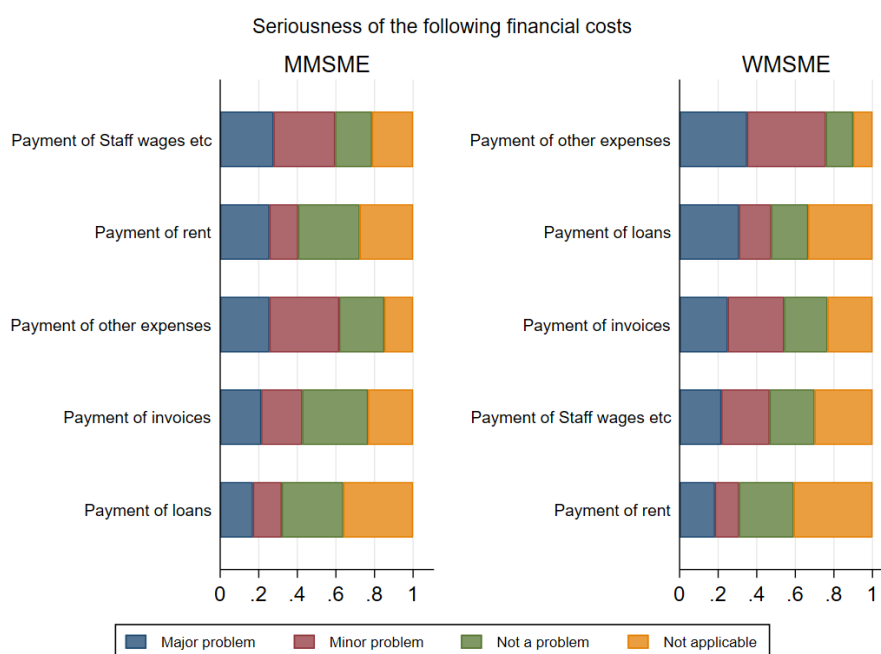
Looking at the breakdown by industry (Table 3), the majority of the enterprises are engaged in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, other service activities, and accommodation and food services. Around 4% of MMSMEs and WMSMEs export their products/services. However, the percentage of the WMSMEs importing materials/services is higher (13% versus 6%).

## 4.2 Discussion of results

### Obstacles and Challenges Faced Due to the Pandemic

In terms of financial challenges (Figure 3), a large percentage of MMSMEs (62%) and WMSMEs (76%) consider payments of other expenses either to be either a minor or major problem. However, a larger percentage of MMSMEs than WMSMEs (60% versus 46%) consider the payment of staff wages and entitlements to be a problem. The opposite is true for the payment of loans where a bigger percentage of WMSMEs than MMSMEs regard it to be an issue.

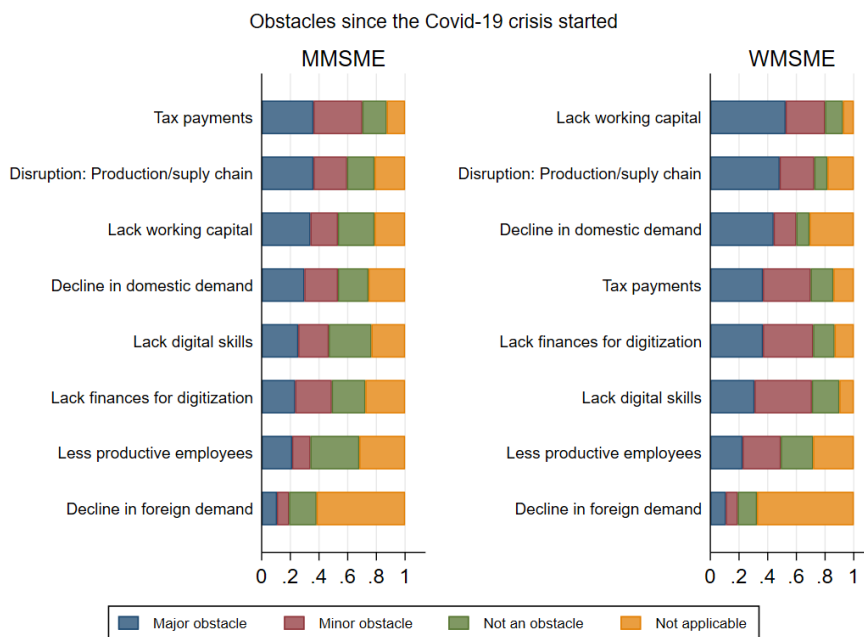
FIGURE 3: SERIOUSNESS OF FINANCIAL COSTS



Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

In terms of the obstacles faced by enterprises since the pandemic started (Figure 4), a larger percentage of WMSMEs find almost all the obstacles listed in the questionnaire to be major obstacles. For example, the lack of working capital, which is top on the WMSMEs' list, is deemed to be a major obstacle by 52% of WMSMEs. In contrast, only 34% of MMSMEs consider this to be a major obstacle. This result supports the literature that highlights the challenges for women entrepreneurs' access to working capital, which has been observed even before the pandemic. Disruptions in the production, supply chain, and business networks are major obstacles for 49% of WMSMEs, whereas only 37% of MMSMEs consider these to be major challenges. In addition, the decline in domestic demand and the lack of finances for digitization are each major obstacles for 44% of WMSMEs. Only 30% and 23% of MMSMEs, respectively, consider these to be major challenges. However, the percentage of WMSMEs and MMSMEs that find the following as major obstacles are not substantially different: the lack of digital skills (31% vs. 26%), difficulties in tax payments (37% vs. 36%), and less productive employees (23% vs. 21%). Owing to the small percentage of enterprises that are engaged in exports, the majority of the enterprises indicate the decline in foreign demand is not applicable.

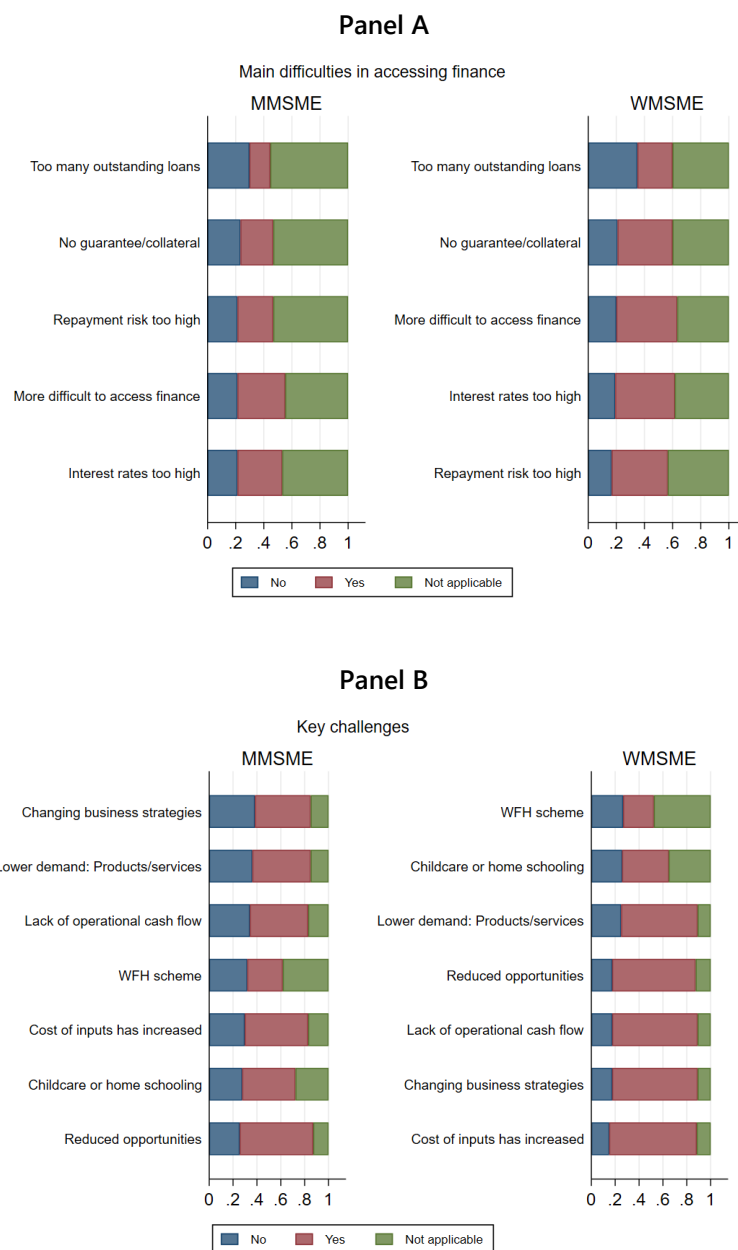
**FIGURE 4: OBSTACLES FACED BY THE BUSINESS SINCE THE COVID-19 CRISIS STARTED**



Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

A larger percentage of WMSMEs find the difficulties listed in the questionnaire to be key challenges in the establishments’ access to finance (Figure 5, Panel A). The lack of collateral/guarantee, difficulties in accessing trade finance or supplier credit, high interest rates, and high repayment risks due to market uncertainties are difficulties shared by 39% of WMSMEs. With respect to MSMEs, 34% have indicated difficulties in accessing trade finance or supplier credit, 32% have pointed out high interest rates as a main difficulty in accessing finance, 24% have indicated challenges due to the absence of collateral/guarantee, and 26% due to high repayment risks.

**FIGURE 5: DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING FINANCE AND KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY ESTABLISHMENTS**



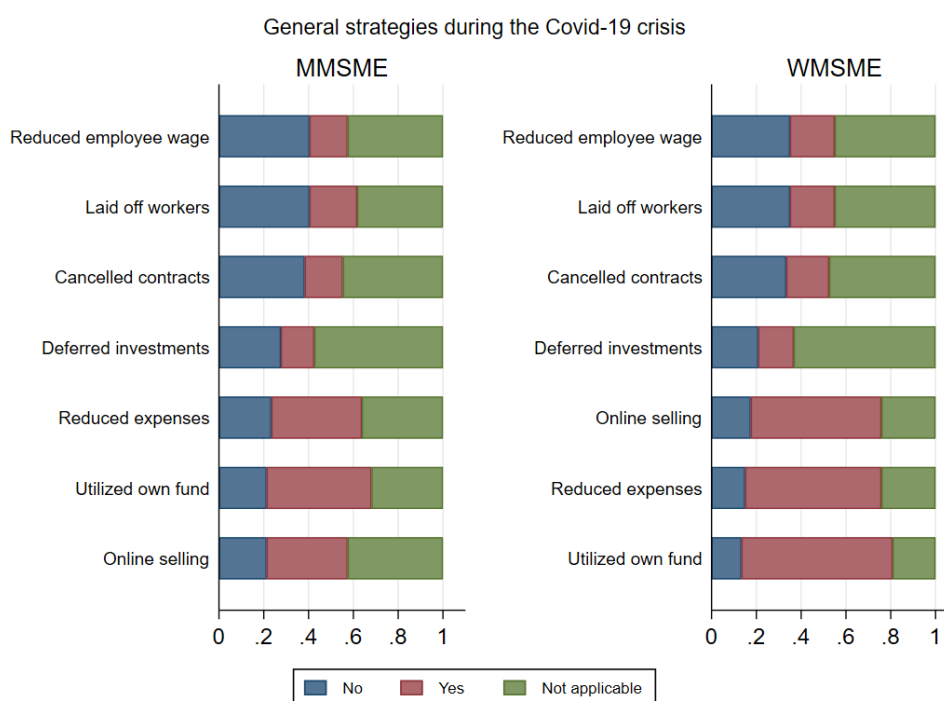
Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

A larger percentage of WMSMEs find almost all challenges listed in the questionnaire to be critical (Figure 5, Panel B). WMSMEs have indicated the increasing cost of inputs (73%), changing business strategies to offer alternative products and services (72%), and reduced opportunities to meet new clients (70%) as key challenges. The percentages of MMSMEs that find the increase in cost of inputs, changing business strategies, and reduced opportunities to meet new clients to be vital, are lower at 53%, 47%, and 63%, respectively.

**Business Survival Strategy During the Pandemic**

In terms of strategies used to operate the business in 2020 (Figure 6), online selling, utilization of their own funds, and reduction in the business’ expenses are among the commonly used strategies. WMSMEs (around 58%-68%) mainly resorted to the utilization of their own funds, reduction of firm’s expenses, and online selling. These are also strategies used by MMSMEs although the percentages of adapters are lower (36%-47%). Making reductions in employees’ wages, laying off workers, and cancellation of contracts are among the strategies that both enterprises utilized the least.

**FIGURE 6: STRATEGIES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS**



Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

**Support from the Private and Government Sector**

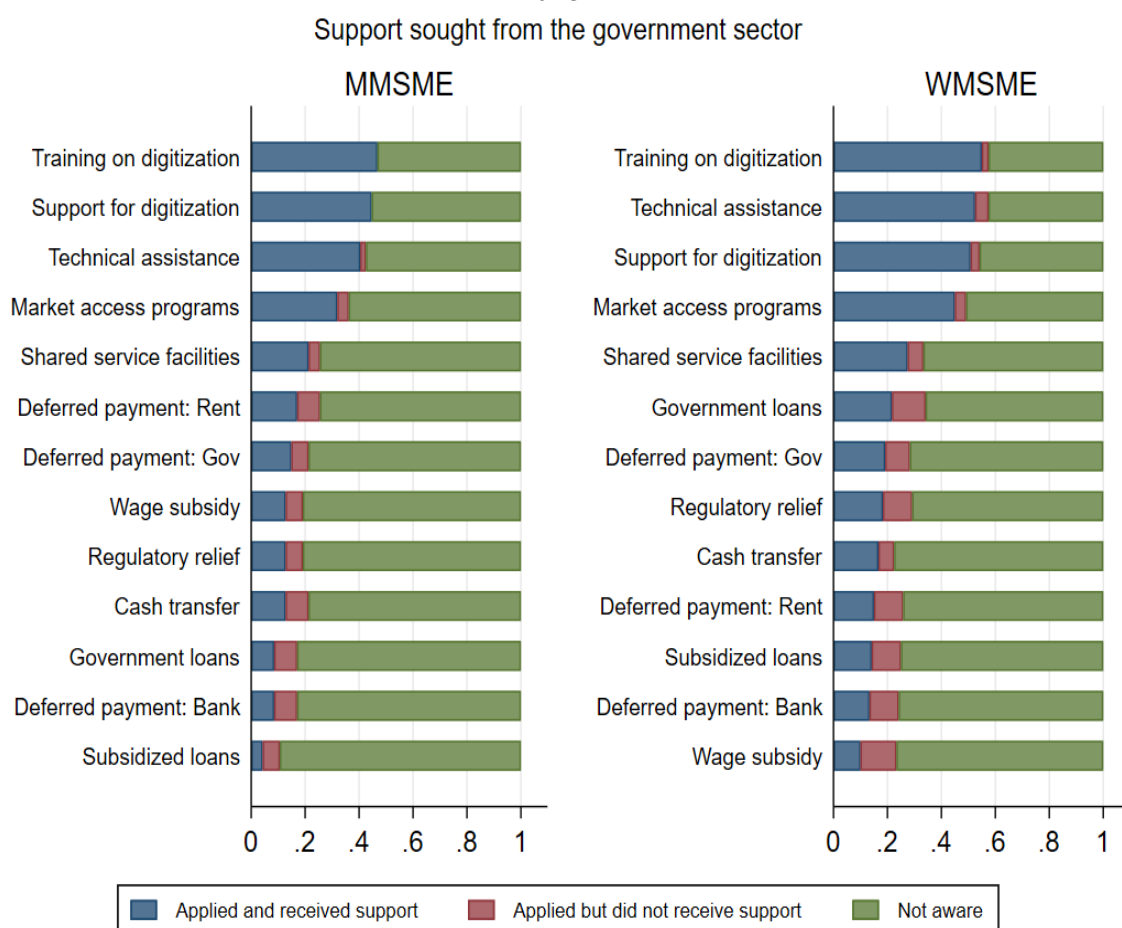
With respect to the support sought from the government sector (Figure 7, Panel A), the lack of awareness on most government support programs, like programs on subsidized wage and loans, postponement of payments to debtors, and the shared service facilities<sup>21</sup>, is glaring for both male and female enterprises. Around 45%-54% of WMSMEs applied for and received support for the following: 1) training on digitization and online selling, 2) programs related to business advisory, business/product development, marketing, financial literacy training, and mentoring/coaching programs (technical assistance), 3) support to adopt digital technologies, and 4) market access

<sup>21</sup> DTI’s MSME Development Program and aims to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs by providing them with machinery, equipment, tools, systems, skills and knowledge under a shared system.

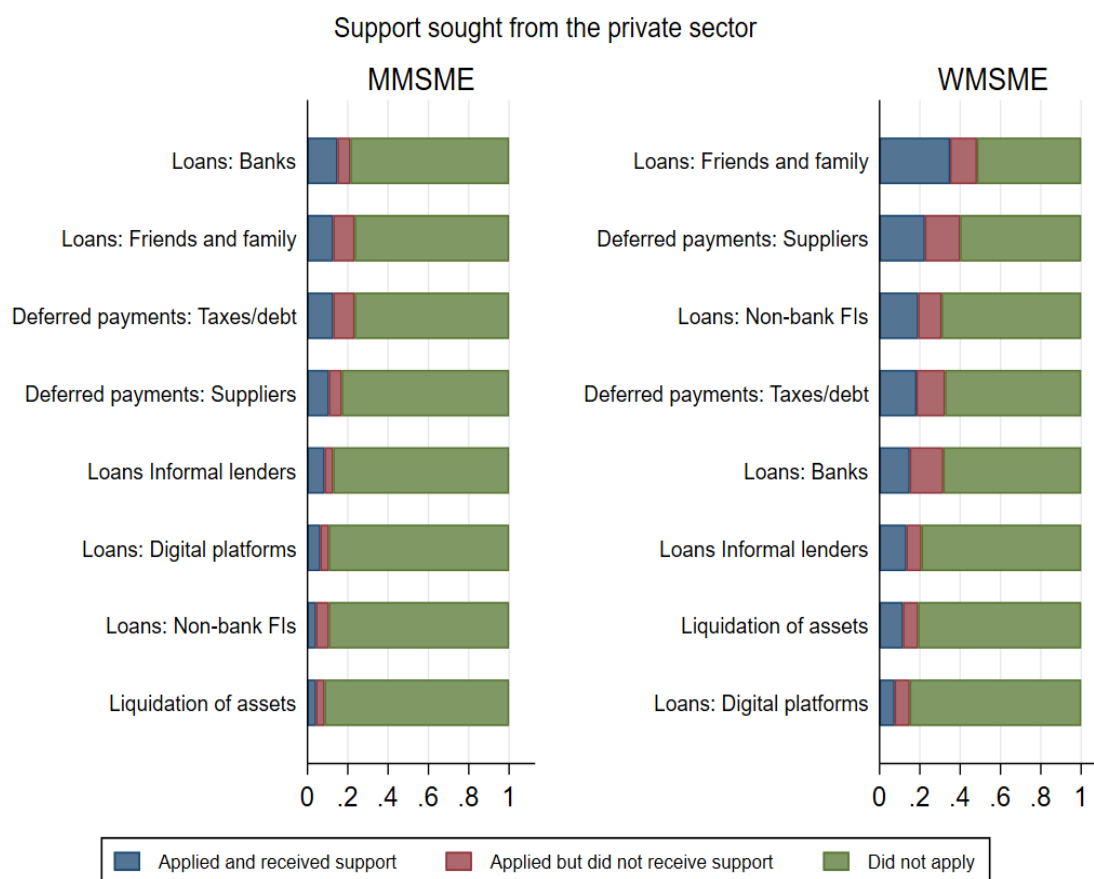
programs. The percentage of MMSMEs that applied for and received support from these programs is slightly lower (32%-47%).

In terms of the support sought by enterprises from the private sector (Figure 7, Panel B), the majority of WMSMEs have indicated they did not apply for loans from banks, informal lenders, non-bank financial institutions, and digital lending platforms. However, around 13% of the WMSMEs requested and obtained loans from family and friends, and around 18% have availed of payment deferrals. Meanwhile, the majority of MMSMEs have indicated they did not apply for almost all of the choices listed in the questionnaire. However, around 15% applied for loans and received support from banks. Another 12% applied for and received loans from friends and family, 12% for the postponement taxes/debt payment, and 11% for the deferral of payments to suppliers.

**FIGURE 7: SUPPORT SOUGHT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR**  
**Panel A**



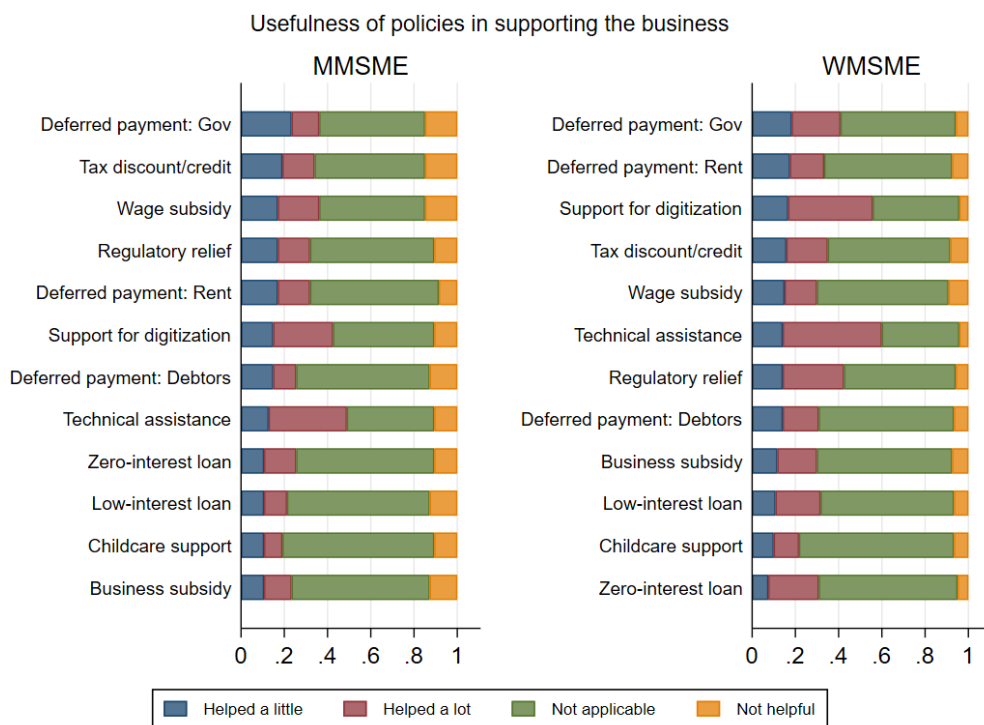
Panel B



Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

Businesses find some of the government policies were helpful during the pandemic (Figure 8). Around 39% of WMSMEs find the support for digitization and the technical assistance to be substantially helpful. The following percentages of WMSMEs find the following policies substantially helpful as well: regulatory relief (19%), deferment of payments to debtors (16%)/government (22%)/rent (16%), and zero (23%) or no interest loans (20%). Meanwhile, around 30% and 23% of MMSMEs find the technical assistance and digitization support to be substantially useful.

FIGURE 8: USEFULNESS OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN SUPPORTING THE BUSINESS



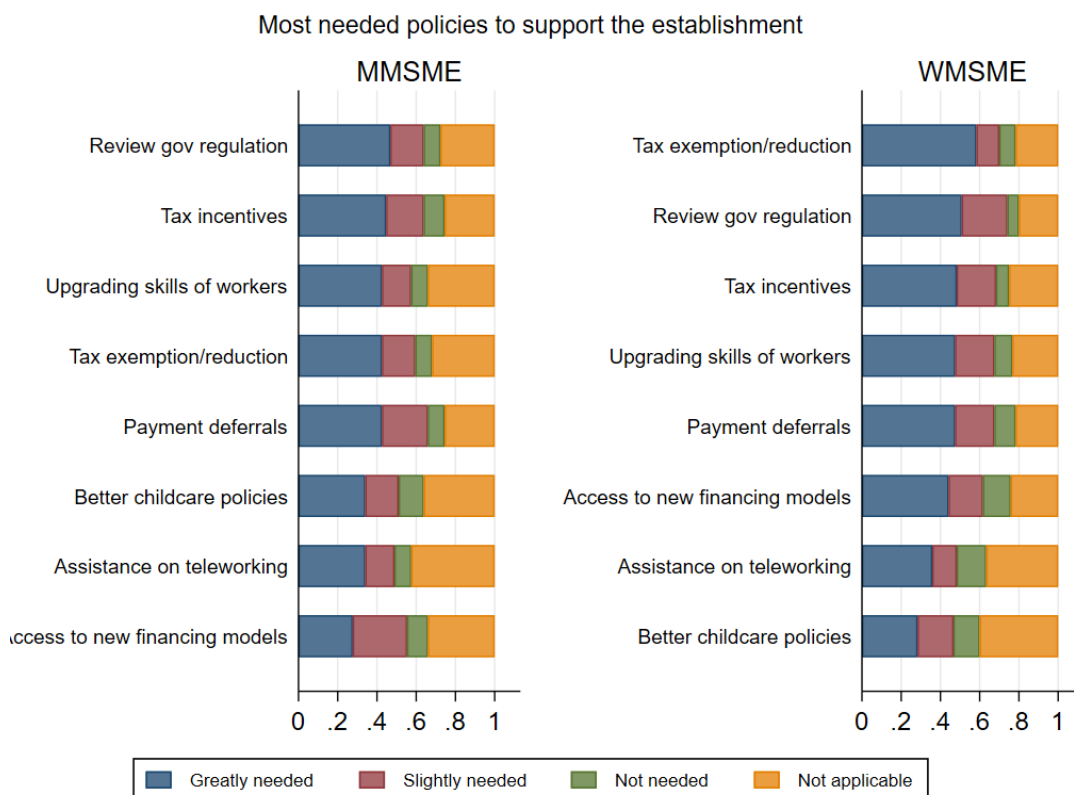
Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs

**Policies Needed to Support the Business**

Among the policies that enterprises consider they need the most (Figure 9), obtaining tax exemptions is on the top of the list of WMSMEs (58%). WMSMEs also consider a review of government regulations (51%), tax incentives (48%), skills upgrading (47%), and payment deferrals (47%) as key policies to support the business. The corresponding percentages for MMSMEs are as follows: tax exemption (42%), review of government regulation (46%), tax incentives (44%), skills upgrading (42%), and payment deferrals (42%).



FIGURE 9: MOST NEED POLICIES TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT

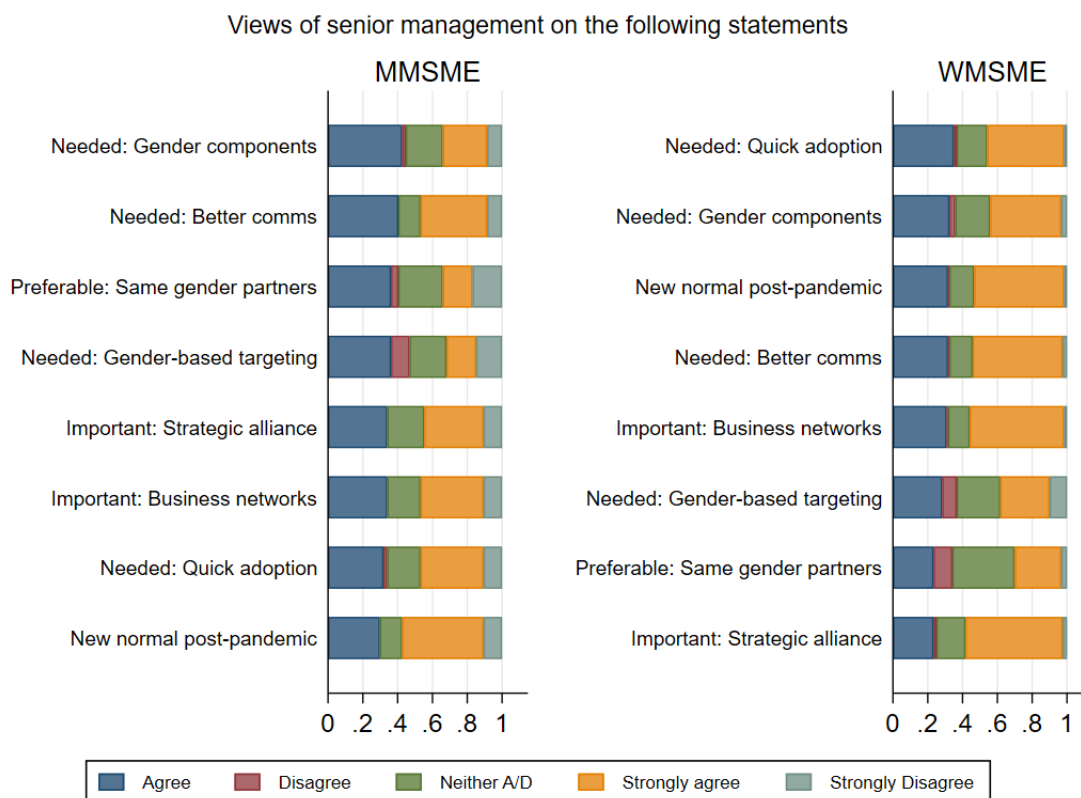


Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs

**Views of Senior Management on Policies**

Views of senior management indicate a general agreement (agree and strongly agree) with the list of statements in the questionnaire (Figure 10). This means that senior management in both male and female enterprises believe that 1) businesses should be able to quickly adopt their focus and strategies, 2) there is going to be a new normal in the conduct of business, 3) better communications will enhance the effectiveness of policies, and 4) business networks are important for firm survival during a crisis.

**FIGURE 10: VIEWS OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT**



Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

It is worth noting, however, that around 14% and 21% of WMSMEs and MMSMEs, respectively, do not agree<sup>22</sup> with the statement that business partners of the same gender are preferable. In addition, while the senior management of both types of enterprises agree<sup>23</sup> that integrating gender components into the existing government programs is important, around 19% of WMSMEs and 26% of MMSMEs do not agree that policies should target firms based on the gender of the owner/leader of the business.

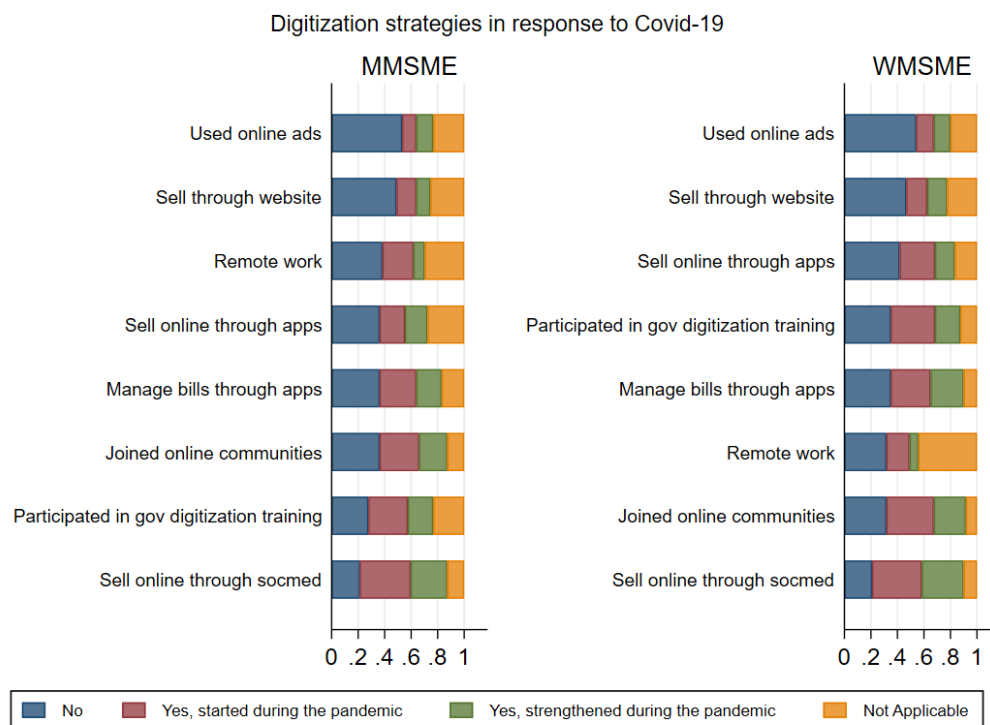
### Digitization Strategy in Response to the Pandemic

With respect to digitization strategies in response to the pandemic (Figure 11), online selling through social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp) is the most preferred strategy implemented by WMSMEs and MMSMEs (around 70% each). Bills management through banking apps, joining of online communities to reach new clients, and participation in government-sponsored digitization training have also been implemented by both WMSMEs and MMSMEs. On the other hand, a large percentage of WMSMEs and MMSMEs have indicated that paying for online advertisements (53% and 54%) and selling through a specific website (47% and 49%) are not part of their digitization strategies.

<sup>22</sup> Both disagree and strongly disagree

<sup>23</sup> Both agree and strongly agree

**FIGURE 11: DIGITIZATION STRATEGIES OF ESTABLISHMENTS**



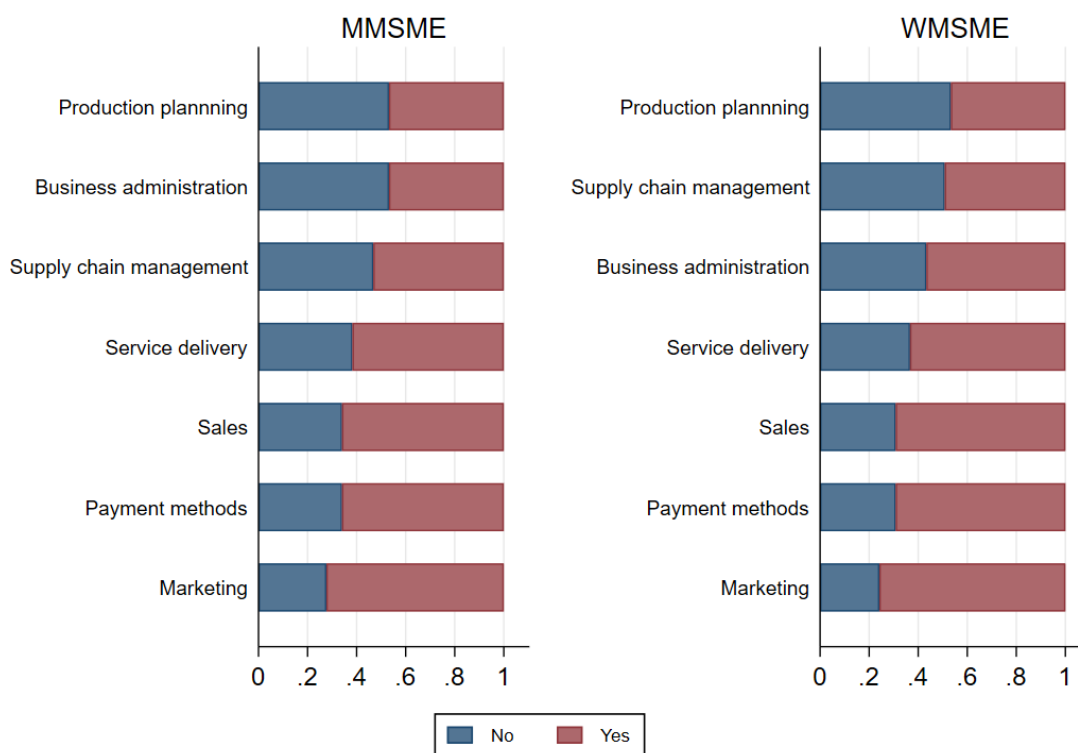
Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

Both types of enterprises have used digital solutions in their marketing, payment methods, sales, and services delivery (Figure 12, Panel A). However, around 53% of WMSMEs and MMSMEs have not used digital solutions in production planning. In addition, around 51% and 43% of WMSMEs have not used digital solutions in supply chain management and business administration (versus 47% and 53% of MMSMEs, respectively). In terms of changes in products/services in response to the COVID-19 crisis (Figure 12, Panel B), adding products/services is a strategy implemented by most enterprises.

**FIGURE 12: USE OF DIGITAL SOLUTIONS AND CHANGES TO PRODUCTS/SERVICES**

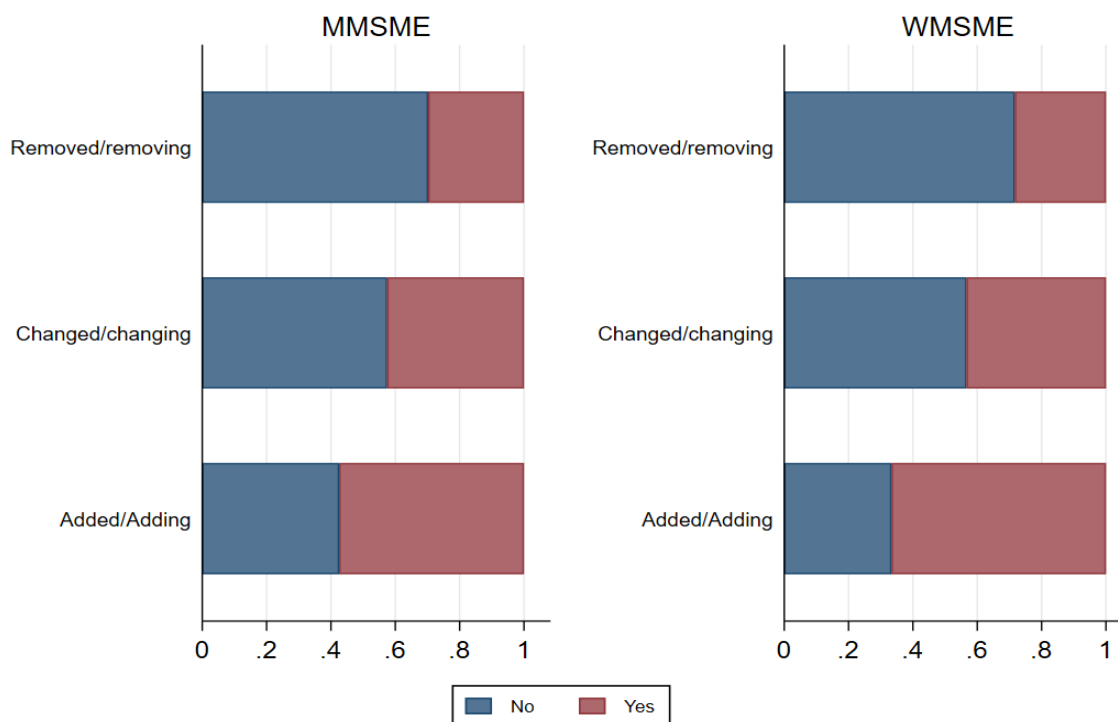
**Panel A**

Use of digital solutions in the following business functions



**Panel B**

Changes to products or services in response to Covid-19

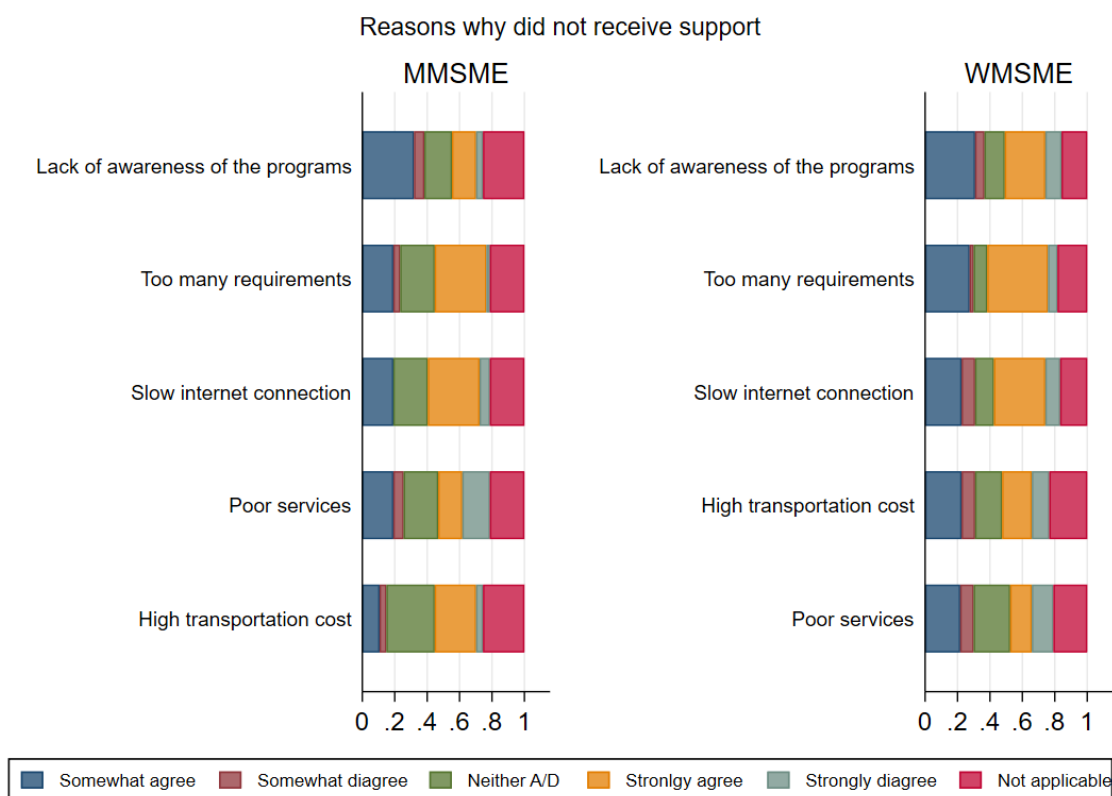


Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

**Others**

For those who did not receive any government support (Figure 13), around 38%, 32%, and 24% of WMSMEs strongly agree that too many requirements, slow internet connection, and lack of awareness, respectively, are key factors. Around 32%, 31%, and 15% respectively are applicable to MMSMEs, respectively.

**FIGURE 13: REASONS WHY THE BUSINESS DID NOT RECEIVE SUPPORT**



Source: PIDS-Monash University 2021 Online Survey of MSMEs.

## 5. Synthesis of the KIIs and FGDs

### 5.1 Learnings from agencies and business communities

#### 5.1.1 POLICY DESIGN

*There is a general appreciation that COVID-19 is a disaster that affects all sectors. Thus, it requires quick policy responses that are inclusive and universal (e.g. gender-neutral).* Policy design mainly responds to the top-down agenda set by the government and laws passed on COVID-19, both of which did not identify priorities based on gender differences. All agencies and enterprises interviewed agree that the immediate effect of COVID-19 is universal and disruptive, which requires expedient solutions to support MSMEs to stay afloat amid community quarantines or lockdowns. Universal needs at the time of an emergency or disaster result in universal responses throughout the design and implementation process. While agencies recognize the provisions of GAD requiring inclusive approaches that cater to the needs of both men and women in every step of the design and implementation of policy responses, almost all believe that emergency policy responses need to be inclusive. This partly explains why gender considerations were not integrated into the COVID-19 policy response. All agencies report that gender was not a primary consideration in designing policies in response to COVID-19 due to the need to roll out support initiatives to keep businesses afloat quickly.

A development bank executive shares that their policy responses cater to “priority sectors that have been broken down into the mandated sectors like agri-reform beneficiaries, small farmers and fishers, cooperatives...we [also] have loans supporting other government programs providing loans for communications, utilities, transport, education, healthcare and everything else that supports the various programs of the national government.” They also add that given their mandate, “SMEs policies in response to COVID-19 [are in place] as mandated by *Bayanihan Act 1 and 2.*”

Some agencies express the desirability of making programs more universal, especially in a disaster. One respondent describes that “as a result of the situation, it is not automatic that all agencies will come up with developing programs for which you need resources. Instead, [we had] to tweak [already] existing programs and projects with the appropriate resources. For women, that is not much our focus. For us, we consider the universe. So, if we are considering the universe of MSMEs, we have no bias on whatever sector [one belongs to], as long as [a business] is classified as MSME, it [gender] does not matter.” Another agency respondent shares that customer-centricity meant considering their most significant share of customers, which comprises women in developing financial solutions. Thus, a separate program for women was not deemed necessary.

*Some agency representatives believe that policy designs are no longer gender-blind when women are already involved at all levels of agenda-setting, policy formulation, and decision-making.* Some agency respondents believe that a policy response must be gender-responsive if the designers and decision-makers involved are women. For example, asked whether the development of a particular policy response was gender-blind or whether differences between men and women were considered in the design of the policy, a bank executive describes the process to be facilitated and led primarily by women. Accordingly, they report having an organizational perception that because women are involved in the design process, then it must be the case that policy responses are inherently gender-responsive. They note that the design process is not necessarily “gender-blind because our president

is a woman, and she's the one that penned the guidelines together with the inputs of all the departments under her." The PCW, however, asserts that it does not make a policy more gender-responsive merely because of who is involved in policymaking. According to the PCW, their proposed framework has a way of putting where agencies and their policies are in terms of gender responsiveness and gender mainstreaming, and thus policy designs are not arbitrarily based on the gender of the persons involved.

A representative of a business community advocating for women entrepreneurship supports the notion that government agencies like the DTI are already "doing baby steps", citing the agency's undersecretaries and assistant secretaries being primarily women. A representative of another business community held a similar position stating examples of industry associations and sectors where women now occupy leadership roles. According to them, gender equality is an encouraging indicator in the Philippines' business landscape while keeping programs open and accessible to all regardless of gender.

***Stakeholders have conflicting views on the application of a gender lens to MSME policy responses.***

Some respondents believe that support mechanisms must cater to the development of MSMEs without gender priorities. Furthermore, as most beneficiaries are women entrepreneurs, some agencies believe that policies are already inherently gender-inclusive, given that their primary design principle is to cater to the needs of their predominantly women customers. Others believe that a gender lens already exists in their programs and thus does not need to be explicitly amended for gender considerations.

Meanwhile, some bank executives, the PCW, and business communities agree that amendments can restore a gender lens to existing support programs for women entrepreneurs. Agencies whose mandate is to improve access to financing argue that access to credit for women entrepreneurs is vital, and restoring a gender lens through amendments of existing programs or new ones can be helpful. DBP's Inclusive Lending for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs (DBP-ILAW) program is one example of such an attempt to improve an existing program to cater to the needs of women entrepreneurs. DBP executives cite that ILAW is under review precisely because it intended to improve service delivery.

***Information from the ground and other available data provided insights on the needs of entrepreneurs. This, more than gender priorities, plays a critical role in informing policy design.*** A bank executive asserts that "given the urgency and timing, we were not able to interview with groups. We based [our programs] on the current data. Additionally, there were already data on the most affected industries, so we used those to develop our program guidelines. We had no time to consult, but we based everything on needs, and we cater to all in need." However, another bank executive cites ILO, having provided some studies that show that women-led enterprises have different financing needs that their bank recognizes.

Notably, all agencies did not have gender-specific programs or products before the pandemic in terms of financial solutions. Likewise, there was none during the COVID-19 crisis. The DBP's Inclusive Lending for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs Program (DBP-ILAW) is an exception and is currently under review for amendments.

### 5.1.2 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

***Gender and development considerations in its current implementation by agencies, within and beyond the context of COVID-19 policy response, are generally procedural in compliance with the provisions of GAD under the purview of PCW.*** Most of the respondents attest to the general observation that agencies are merely submitting reports as part of an approval process that mandates that 5% of an agency's annual budget. Asked if the agency had opportunities to consult with different groups among their customers whose agenda is to promote women entrepreneurship, as part of a process to ensure provisions are gender-responsive, one respondent says, "GAD, as it is right now, is just mere compliance with the requirements of the Department of Finance. There is no deliberate effort to push women-led initiatives; there have been no consultations to push that particular agenda, there is none [during the pandemic]."

***While agencies have a general understanding of GAD provisions and the need to deliver results in specific areas specified in the law, some may lack the appreciation for the specific needs of women or, more importantly, the role that gender plays in economic development.*** One interesting case is the DBP-ILAW, a loan program specially targeted at women entrepreneurs. DBP reports the program to be under review for amendments. However, although specified for women, its product design was the same as the mainstream lending program for MSMEs. According to the agency, "the loan amount is the same as the regular loan from the bank. What we can say is there is no unique feature of this program that can set it differently from other programs of the bank." Although there seems to be a genuine interest in integrating gender considerations in policy design among most respondents, institutional understanding of gender and development, gender responsiveness and mainstreaming, agencies have yet to develop solutions specifically designed around women's needs. No agency in this study reports a specific program catering to the differential needs of women entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, some agencies believe that men and women do not have differentiated needs and play an essential role in economic development regardless of gender. Accordingly, the same agencies believe that the current policies have the same effects on both men and women, which can explain why the gender-blind approach, combined with the directives set by the specifics of the law, is preferred by some agencies over developing policies on gender differences.

***There is no agreement on gender-based differences between women and men entrepreneurs.***

Although all respondents from financial institutions recognize that most of their customers, women, tend to have a healthier repayment behavior than their male counterparts, some agencies consider such gender differences to be trivial. The Land Bank of the Philippines reports that "there are more males with payables past due date than females. Repayments for males are 97.1% while for women is 96.8%". However, they also recognize that the differences between repayment behavior could be due "to the nature of the business as may be seen in how a food-related business was affected by the pandemic compared to other businesses which ultimately affects the repayment rate." The Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) also notes that female entrepreneurs tend to "have a particular concern for developing the community along with their business instead of being led only by profitability."



One business community observes that the differences between men and women entrepreneurs in terms of their financial needs at the onset of the pandemic were not covered in their discussions with government agencies. They note, however, that most loan applications tend to come from women entrepreneurs.

***Moving forward, agencies and business groups agree on the opportunities to integrate gender considerations in improving existing policy responses as more information from the ground is generated and synthesized for subsequent amendments.*** DBP shares that the review of ILAW is a testament to the recognition of the bank in using a gender lens in crafting SME policy responses. They refer to insights from ILO with whom they are collaborating with for developing lending programs that cater specifically to women entrepreneurs. They also use feedback from account officers in the field as insights when reconsidering how to amend ILAW.

Another financial institution says that they rely on feedback from the field to improve service delivery at the level of the lending center, including the impact of projects on both men and women entrepreneurs and their immediate communities. Additionally, they mention that financial literacy programs and capacity building on digital strategies would help improve gender outcomes as they can gain better access to financial products that are already in place but may be inaccessible due to the ongoing pandemic. Financial institutions agree that, with customer feedback, they can better integrate gender considerations in their existing policy responses that are now going through an amendment process in time for planning and budgeting for the succeeding fiscal year.

The largest network of entrepreneurs in the Philippines uses their consulting relationship with the DTI to provide insights and experiences of MSMEs to improve, particularly the CARES program. Some beneficiaries are said to have experienced some delays in service delivery. They also said that in advocating for consistent business continuity planning, learning from the pandemic, they recommend both to their members and the DTI to improve their preparedness for possible future shocks and provide opportunities for enterprises to foster innovation amid a downturn. In light of this, the same business community conducts workshops and financing initiatives for MSMEs, including many women entrepreneurs. In addition, WomenBizPH suggests that much improvement in policy responses would be achieved if the dialogue about the needs of women entrepreneurs happens not only during Women's Month but as regularly as possible. In these dialogues, women entrepreneurs can provide feedback that could integrate gender considerations in policy responses.

***The DTI recognizes the vital role of business communities, and it considers their participation essential in designing policies and reaching out to the government's intended beneficiaries.***

Respondents from business communities engage with the government regularly through consultations and direct participation in policy implementation. They provide timely feedback to the government on policies affecting their members or programs that can affect market dynamics in the country. In addition, these communities had a high degree of awareness of the specific details of policy responses to COVID-19 as implemented by agencies like the DTI, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Small Business Corporation, Department of Finance, among others.

WomenBizPH reports that they represent the Philippines in APEC or ASEAN high-level meetings. Thus, the council can shape MSME-related policies, programs, and initiatives. However, the council does not

have a seat in the MSME Development Council. They would consider it a welcome intervention to have a more direct role in forming even more inclusive or gender-responsive policies for MSMEs.

***Business communities/associations add value to policy implementation through awareness amplification, network outreach, and specialized support for women entrepreneurs.*** Business associations/communities have important roles to play in the MSME ecosystem. Throughout the pandemic, the communities interviewed helped the government generate awareness about the various COVID-19 policy responses for SMEs, mainly through social media and virtual events. A business association representative shares that “There is no integrated information dissemination between IATF and the LGUS, which hurt most of our members.” Thus, MSME members are not aware of state-led programs until their leaders have cascaded relevant information. Business associations/communities also help their members to access financing and markets. The communities interviewed launched numerous training and workshop opportunities for MSMEs throughout 2020, focusing on digitalization or digital transformation and adapting to the changing conditions in the environment due to the pandemic. They also feature subject matter experts who provide relevant information and engage with entrepreneurs privately or offline.

Business associations/communities agree that more support services that nurture women enterprises are needed. Ancillary support services for women entrepreneurs with young children, for example, are cited as an area of opportunity for consideration. Other support services can include networking opportunities among women entrepreneurs and greater access to capacity building and training programs.

### **5.1.3 POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

***Consensus on standard definitions of women entrepreneurship in the Philippines is missing.*** Women businesses are defined in various policies, and the literature varies across countries, contexts, and purposes (ITC 2020). The ITC technical note on the definition of women businesses identifies variations in the construction and interpretation of what constitutes a woman-owned business. The absence of a consensus in the definition is evidenced by its varied use and interpretations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (OECD 2017). In Vietnam, specific decrees direct support for women-owned enterprises, but no definitions on ownership was established (Decree No. 9/2001/ND-CP, Decree No. 56/2009/NP-CP, for example). Another example is the law on SME development in Laos, which identifies women as a priority in providing support to female entrepreneurs, although it did not specify working definitions in terms of ownership, management, control, or workforce composition (Lao PDR 2014).

However, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) establishes standards for women-owned and women-led businesses, cooperatives, and informal enterprises (ISO 2021). It also sets the criteria for ownership, management, and control to define standard definitions for women businesses. The IWA 34 establishes common definitions of women entrepreneurship, clarifying the framework for identifying women-owned and women-led businesses. It also provides working definitions of women entrepreneurship in terms of ownership, management, and control.

According to the standard which is entered into terminological databases, ISO and IEC Electropedia, women-owned businesses are those that are “50% owned by one or more women, whose management and control lie with one or more women, where a woman is a signatory, and which is operated independently from businesses that are not owned by women” (ISO 2021). Women-led businesses are those that are “at least 25% owned by one or more women, whose management and control lie with one or more women, which has at least one-third of the board of directors comprised of women, where a board exists, where a woman is a signatory of the businesses’ legal documents and financial accounts, and which is operated independently from businesses that are neither led nor owned by women” (ISO 2021). On the other hand, women-led cooperatives are those “in which women hold more than 50% of the total number of votes, where the majority of the board of directors are women, and where the majority of leadership positions, if applicable, are held by women” (ISO 2021).

In the Philippines, there is no established definition of women-owned or women-led enterprises. In the absence of an official definition, the PCW uses the following criteria in choosing the beneficiaries of the GREAT Women Project: An enterprise is women-owned if 1) a woman owns the enterprise - the business is registered under her name, 2) for cooperative - women members are female; and 3) for partnerships or corporation - more than 50% of the capital share is owned by women. An enterprise is women-led if more than 50% of employees/workers are women.

***Gendered impacts are difficult to monitor without a mutually agreed framework of technical definitions on women entrepreneurship and outcomes for monitoring.*** The lack of consensus on the definition of women-owned businesses can lead to challenges in identifying the beneficiaries of programs, gathering and processing sex-disaggregated data, and policymaking. One agency executive mentions the lack of internal and external consistency concerning definitions that agencies can use in planning, implementing, and monitoring initiatives for women entrepreneurs as beneficiaries. They assert that “no differences [could be observed] as far as we are concerned, and there are no differences because [we] cannot even define what women-owned or men-owned enterprises are.”

The lack of definition also affects the ability of agencies to monitor the gendered impacts of policies and programs. Some agencies assert that while it is easy for a third-party agency to advocate for monitoring on gendered impacts, the implementing agency will have difficulties in monitoring something that is not clearly defined (e.g. What is being monitored in terms of gender aside from participation in a program?) and not supported with organizational resources to do so. In addition, they emphasize the operational difficulty imposed by the scale of what needs to be monitored (e.g. thousands of beneficiaries across regional offices) given that there is no support for their agencies to design, implement and optimize gendered impacts monitoring. They suggest that external support is needed if gendered impacts of policies is a priority for the government. In the absence of any formal gendered impacts monitoring, their agency relies only on studies provided to them by external parties. Currently, their agencies report sex-disaggregated data only on program participation, aside from those already reported by PSA. Another agency reports that gendered outcomes are not currently being monitored as the ability to monitor by gender is operationally infeasible. This is mainly because of time and resource constraints and the lack of clear guidelines on how gender can be tracked.

***Despite the lack of consensus in a standard definition framework on women entrepreneurship, some agencies have initiatives to monitor gendered program uptake. Challenges remain, however.*** On the finance front, tagging of gender in loan applications is typically based on the sex of the authorized representative who applied on behalf of the owner (in the case of non-sole proprietorship) or the name of the borrower or account holder. One financial institution reported categorizing an enterprise as “women-owned” if at least 20% of its officers are women as monitored when the bank assesses the applicant firm’s organizational structure. Accordingly, for cooperatives and other financial institutions, if officers comprise at least 10% of board positions, they are classified as “women-owned,” following the advice of international coordinating agencies, among them ILO, World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Further, they define women-owned enterprises following the criteria: not less than or equal to 50% owned by a woman or women or 20% owned by women or woman, and one woman as chief executive officer (CEO). If the latter, the firm is immediately classified as woman-owned or women-led. This response demonstrates that even within the internal units of an agency, there are multiple ways by which women entrepreneurship is defined.

Monitoring of gendered impacts is challenging, especially in programs with many beneficiaries. One agency describes their tracking of gender participation to be an ongoing process as “[they] are yet to conduct extensive data analytics that has a gender lens. The database still needs to be cleaned for the gender component to come out; it is something that we can do in the future. Although there are attempts to carry this out today, there remain many challenges on the ground, especially in the implementation of programs.” They also said that, although “they want to have as much data as [they] could, [their] priority was to streamline the process for the [customers].” For them, streamlining internal processes is necessary before data generation and analytics requirements can be fulfilled.

***Some agencies use LGU data to supplement PSA reports.*** According to an agency respondent, the list of establishments that PSA monitors and updates is different from LGU reporting on the number of enterprises. According to them, the PSA “is behind because the basis of what they track is employee size while we track based on asset size as required by the Magna Carta.” They explain that PSA reported less than one million enterprises listed while LGU report over two million enterprises. Furthermore, they believe that one source of the differences in reporting is the exclusion of other enterprises “like lawyers having their own law office, doctors with their own practice. Maybe they also do not count sari-sari stores (neighborhood stores).”

Similarly, an agency executive shares that content creators and advertising influencers, for example, are hardly microentrepreneurs but would fall under micro enterprises given that most of them work alone and are self-employed but whose assets may very well be qualified as that of a small business.

***A culture of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) can drive better outcomes of policy responses.*** Aside from differences in MSME and women entrepreneurship definitions, institutionalizing and building a culture of monitoring and evaluation can drive greater accountability and transparency. This will help provide insights on improving service delivery of policy responses, and achieve better outcomes for beneficiaries. A National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) is currently in place, but its implementation is limited and fragmented, constrained by “weak technical capacity, lack of financial resources, and inadequate institutional capacity” (SEPO 2021).

Related studies on the impact evaluation of *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) demonstrate the value of M&E in modifying the program for effectiveness and efficiency, ensuring that the government is “spending on the right things, obtaining the best value for money, and is living within its means” (ADB 2013; SEPO 2021).

Adopting a National Evaluation Policy (NEP) can strengthen evidence-based policymaking, provide a structure to a monitoring system, build capacity for leading and managing evaluations at every level of government, and provide a framework for continuous learning and optimization of government priorities, among many other benefits (SEPO 2021). As of this writing, there are four bills in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress advancing the need for NEP, namely: Senate Bill No. 788, Senate Bill No. 1885, House Bill No. 3293, and House Bill No. 8025 (SEPO 2021).

Asked whether agencies monitor and evaluate outcomes of programs they joined before and during the pandemic, a woman entrepreneur and thought leader on entrepreneurship reports that there were no efforts to provide participants with follow-through on their enterprise development. According to her, most participants who attend seminars, for example, are evaluated only in terms of what they present (e.g., a business plan) but not how they are growing the business after. Most agency executives support this observation as well and attribute the lack of a formal M&E of program effects to capacity, financial resources, and time constraints. This can explain why most program monitoring is reported mainly in terms of participation and not their short- or mid-term impacts on participating enterprises and sectors.

## 5.2 *Learnings from entrepreneurs*

***Women entrepreneurs are faced with care work responsibilities more than their men counterparts.*** A woman entrepreneur agrees that “responsibilities remain the same” between male and female entrepreneurs who may have to manage priorities and juggle different roles and responsibilities. She concedes, however, that it seems that there are still prevalent gender roles at home where women, whether a full-time wife or full-time entrepreneur, have the same responsibility of caring for the home as most men.

Some respondents note that the difference between men and women entrepreneurs could be justified when looking at the case of women entrepreneurs who are mothers. They say that although male and female entrepreneurs may have similar needs, the same could not be said of women entrepreneurs who are mothers juggling multiple roles such as caring for their children and managing the home while running a business in a work-from-home arrangement. One respondent states that “the perspective changes once you consider the need of a woman who is a mother and another who is not.”

One respondent notes the opportunity to provide women entrepreneurs access to services that can help them participate in the economy, particularly those with children. One such service that the respondent believes will add value to mothers who are entrepreneurs is free childcare, which according to her, would give the entrepreneur, for example, “two hours that she can use to focus solely on the business or herself.” They note that unpaid care work can be transformed into

opportunities for women entrepreneurs to do business, as in the case where those who have access to it can do a part-time job while also being a full-time mother.

Business associations/communities agree that more support services that nurture women enterprises are needed. Ancillary support services for women entrepreneurs with young children, for example, have been cited as an area of opportunity for consideration. Other possible support services include networking opportunities among women entrepreneurs and greater access to capacity building and training programs.

***Women entrepreneurs are good at building communities.*** One entrepreneur shares that women, in general, want to uplift fellow women, and they constantly advise each other and share information that can help the community flourish. Another entrepreneur shares that her business has supported mothers through training and values formation, and these help female workers to develop confidence and a positive self-image. Given that her business is located in a suburban area, the entrepreneur notes that changing one's mindset about gender roles is essential. Thus, her business conducts monthly meetings to reinforce the idea that gender roles can be reversed (e.g. men take care of the children, women earn). A representative of the DBP shares that female entrepreneurs are more inclusive and demonstrate a genuine concern to develop the entire community.

***Male entrepreneurs have varying observations about their female counterparts.*** Among interviewed entrepreneurs in the study, male entrepreneurs based in urban centers agree that behavioral differences exist. Notably, they tend to agree on the diligence and detail-orientation of women entrepreneurs. Some but not all male entrepreneurs further away from urban centers, on the other hand, describe women's behavior in terms of managing the business, including how finances are handled, to be the same as men's. Some also argue that women are more entrepreneurial than fellow men entrepreneurs.

***Women groups can be tapped to disseminate information.*** One entrepreneur shares that the government can use women groups to disseminate information on policies, programs, and initiatives. Women entrepreneurs have a wider reach because of their presence on social media and e-commerce platforms. The representative of WomenBizPH validates this by noting that collaboration with partner organizations is key to facilitating information flows. Another entrepreneur also notes that some LGU work with women's groups to reach out to MSMEs. However, for partnerships to work, MSMEs need to be part of the network.

***Women entrepreneurs do not expect women-specific programs since they recognize that all entrepreneurs face the same financial and operating constraints.*** All women entrepreneurs agree that the financial repercussions of lockdowns and temporary business closures, especially those in contact-intensive sectors, affect all entrepreneurs regardless of gender and, as such, require universal solutions. A woman entrepreneur explains that customer-focused policies would not require differentiating between men and women beneficiaries. Another respondent remarks that the differences in the conditions for men and women lie not so much in the gender but the nature of the business. Male entrepreneurs also recognize that at the onset of the pandemic, entrepreneurs, regardless of gender, needed support to access financing and markets. An executive of a business

community advocating women entrepreneurship asserts that the problems faced by men and women entrepreneurs are the same, which may justify why policies are gender-neutral.

The PCW disagrees: "even with the ITC survey on COVID-19, it says that 62% of women-led small businesses have been strongly affected by the crisis compared to only more than half of men-led businesses." They further argued that "women are more vulnerable in the pandemic since the multiple burdens on women entrepreneurs in the past are more emphasized now. The pandemic disproportionately affects women as they take on these multiple roles now. We disagree that policies, especially in the time of a pandemic, should be gender-blind." Furthermore, the PCW (2021b), citing the MCW, explains that the "preferential treatment" in policies, programs, services, and actions that promote gender equity, especially in addressing the disadvantaged position of women in society, is temporary and "are meant to be discontinued when the objectives (i.e., equality of opportunity and treatment) have been achieved" (p. 22).

***Entrepreneurs have demonstrated resilience against downturns.*** Other than downsizing, some entrepreneurs increased their marketing and distribution channels while others turned to online selling (e.g. on Facebook or on their own website). They started to adopt digital payment solutions such as GCash and bank transfers, which was prompted by the lockdown measures and social distancing protocols. Entrepreneurs share that resilience against downturns requires careful planning of strategies and deliberate capacity building of the team. Another successful entrepreneur shares that creativity is essential. Currently, they are considering a move to essential industries and are exploring partnerships with other entrepreneurs.

***Several key areas can still be improved to support women and men entrepreneurs. These include handholding initiatives based on the size of the business.*** One such area is a more targeted mentoring initiative. An entrepreneur shares the need to understand issues and challenges better so that targeted solutions can be offered. Strengthening the structure in terms of policies and processes within the organization and strategies for the business to grow is vital for them. A successful entrepreneur, who opened additional branches during the pandemic, shares that strategies differ depending on the size of the business. While there is a need for internal controls (e.g. avoiding theft, managing inventories), microenterprises still need to be put in a place while small and medium businesses potentially need enhancements or upgrades.

Similarly, crafting plans to grow the business, including identifying critical positions that need to be filled, will help the business prepare for future resources needs. There were mentoring programs in the past that spanned for a month, although the real mentoring took place for just two hours. The academic community can also help to improve the MSME ecosystem by getting practitioners as lecturers. Their rich background will provide more value to the knowledge of aspiring entrepreneurs.

## 6. Recommendations

A whole-of-society approach to reinforce a gender lens in all aspects of policy could address gender and development goals engendered by the UN SDG, the MCW, and Ambisyon 2040. In the short run, efforts could help contribute insights into how existing programs could be amended for even greater inclusion with more mindful awareness of the differentiated needs of women entrepreneurs who comprise most of the MSME sector today. In the mid- and long-term, institutional understanding on gender mainstreaming and its relevance in policymaking, implementation, and monitoring will form cohesive policies that are aligned with both local and internationally recognized frameworks on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion for all.

Some initiatives that that can be considered from the government side:

1. ***Come up with an official definition of WMSME/MMSME that agencies can use in their data collection, monitoring, and evaluation efforts.*** This will result in a more cohesive interpretation of datapoints that can inform the gendered aspects of all policy responses. This will facilitate the interoperability of databases, which are necessary to capture, process, and interpret analytics for insights, reporting, and cyclical policy design. This will also help in the monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Adopting the IWA 34 standard on women entrepreneurship across all dimensions of policy design can be considered. The ISO standard on women entrepreneurship provides an internationally recognized basis for defining women entrepreneurship. One benefit is that the entrepreneurial ecosystem would be aligned on who should benefit from gender-responsive and inclusive policies. Furthermore, adopting the IWA 34 standard will allow policymakers to design policies, which address gender and development goals, to be integrated more strategically than ad hoc as might be done in analyzing a program midstream or postmortem.

2. ***Identify key gender-related MSMEs indicators that key agencies could regularly monitor.*** These indicators may provide a sharper and more integrated analysis of gendered outcomes of policies. Regular monitoring of such indicators will help to improve the design of programs, maximize learning opportunities, and identify emerging areas that require attention. This will also help in understanding emergent issues in entrepreneurship like new forms and arrangements. For example, the size of the workforce may no longer be reliable for use in policy design, monitoring and evaluation.
3. ***Pursue more aggressive promotion of government support programs for MSMEs to increase awareness in the MSME community.*** This can be done by utilizing government and private mass media channels, and social media accounts of relevant government agencies. Communicating programs to the network of business groups will also help raise awareness.
4. ***Nurture a culture of gender responsiveness in all dimensions.*** A whole-of-society approach is recommended in reidentifying the role that gender plays in economic development. While agencies, business communities, and enterprises exhibit awareness of women's issues, there remains a need to cultivate a gender-responsive culture beyond compliance. Integrating the MCW in all efforts by agencies through a "woman by design" approach will inspire a more



conscious effort for agencies to consider gender needs in every policy rather than leave gender considerations in postmortem or treated as an afterthought. The PCW Handbook for legislators in which specific guide questions are indicated for general bills, which are also applicable in assessing whether a policy is gender-responsive by design. Table 9A in the Appendix details the guide questions for policymaking. This design approach also encourages agencies and policymakers to decide which programs are required to be sex-agnostic and which ones need to be specific to men or women. Given that women own most MSME, gender-based programs are likely to encourage even greater economic participation while ensuring that the needs of men are not marginalized. Overall, institutionalizing a design approach to policymaking will help restore a gender lens and reinforce a more gender-aware culture.

The following can be areas for collaboration among the government, private sector, and donors:

1. ***Further strengthen the adoption of digitization solutions through training/mentoring programs on financial and digital literacies, business networking, and product development in the digital age.*** This will equip MSMEs with the requisite knowledge about a quickly digitalizing economy. Digital transformation and innovation capacity-building efforts will help MSMEs regain competitiveness and improve sector resilience amid an ongoing pandemic. Identifying measurable outcomes and monitoring of business needs can help in improving the design and implementation of programs and in identifying emerging challenges that need to be addressed.
2. ***Make alternative financing models such as peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding better understood in the MSMEs' community.*** WMSMEs stand to benefit from these alternatives as they navigate issues in working capital and challenges in digitization financing.
3. ***Prepare enterprises for future disruptions through innovations related to production planning and supply chain management.*** Both WMSMEs and MMSMEs have yet to use digital solutions in these areas, which are critical to the enterprises' operation and conduct of business.
4. ***Empower associations and business communities (including international women associations that work with local MSMEs) to ensure wider reach of information on government policy responses and capacity-building initiatives and to help address gaps related to care work responsibilities.*** Stronger collaboration between these communities and government agencies can help in cascading critical information on access to market, finance, business networks, and supply chain. A closer interaction between business communities and government agencies will bring capacity-building efforts closer to MSME beneficiaries. As agencies focus on inclusive growth for both men and women for which universal programs are adopted, business communities can capture the nuances of women entrepreneurship and provide them with access to a support system by and for women. Some women entrepreneurs will benefit from thought leadership by sharing daily challenges, effectively giving them a

more personal emotional support system that may not always be a priority for government agencies.

In addition, business communities can add value to the entrepreneurship ecosystem through ancillary support, community outreach, and specialized capacity building tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs. Providing ancillary support services that allow women to allocate their time for business and home life without facing penalizing trade-offs (i.e., one needs time away from care work to take care of the business, and vice-versa, or multitask at the expense of other considerations like mental health or quality) could encourage even greater women participation in entrepreneurship.

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## Appendix

Table 1A: Enacted laws to support MSME

Law	Provisions with gender component/targeting women's entrepreneurs	Provisions related to skills development/human capacity development	Provisions related to financial support
Go Negosyo Act (Republic Act 10644)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negosyo Centers in all provinces, cities and municipalities shall encourage women entrepreneurship through access to information, support, training and credit facilities (Sec. 4(m))</li> <li>One (1) representative from the Philippine Commission on Women sits as a member of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Council (Sec. 9(e))</li> <li>MSMED council shall conduct research, provide policy formulation, and establish linkages to support women's entrepreneurship (Sec. 10 (c) and (d))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negosyo Centers shall coordinate with schools and organizations on the development of youth entrepreneurship program (Sec. 4(l))</li> <li>Assistance to MSME shall be provided by the Negosyo Centers in the availment of technology transfer, production and management training programs, and marketing assistance of the DTI and other concerned agencies (Sec. 8)</li> <li>The MSMED council shall develop a course curriculum or training in entrepreneurship in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), TESDA and CHED. (Sec. 10 (e))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A start-up Fund for MSME shall be established where funds will be sourced from the MSME Development Fund and Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBE) fund (Sec. 7)</li> </ul>
An Act Providing Assistance to Women Engaging in Micro and Cottage Business Enterprises, and for Other Purposes (Republic Act 7882)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any woman has been engaged for at least one (1) year in any micro cottage businesses (subject to conditions) shall have a priority to get a loan not exceeding the value of her business equipment, at prime interest rate or at twelve percent (12%) per annum provided that they have a good sales track record (Sec. 3)</li> <li>Any woman who have been certified as eligible to operate a micro and cottage business with a maximum capitalization of PhP 25,000 (after training by TESDA, government or any government-accredited training institution) shall be eligible in obtaining a loan, under conditions stated in Sec. 3 (Sec. 4)</li> </ul>		
Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002 (Republic Act 9178)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barangay Micro Business Enterprise (BMBE) shall receive income tax exemption from income arising from their operations (Sec. 7)</li> <li>BMBEs shall receive exemption from the minimum</li> </ul>

Law	Provisions with gender component/targeting women's entrepreneurs	Provisions related to skills development/human capacity development	Provisions related to financial support
			<p>wage law coverage provided that their employees will receive social security and healthcare benefits (Sec. 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned financial institutions shall set up a special credit window that will cater to the needs of BMBEs (Sec. 9)</li> <li>• A BMBE Development Fund shall be established and relevant agencies may avail of the fund for technology transfer, production and management training and marketing assistance to BMBEs. (Sec. 10)</li> </ul>
<p>Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Republic Act 6977, as amended by Republic Act 8289 and further amended by Republic Act 9501)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Council (MSMEDC) shall act on periodic reports including gender responsiveness of MSME policies and programs submitted by different government agencies. Reports may include among others disaggregated data on gender and programs and projects geared towards women empowerment. (Sec. 14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government shall promote and support entrepreneurship through intensifying and expanding programs for training in entrepreneurship and for skills development for labor (Sec. 2(a))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government shall promote and support entrepreneurship through 1.) facilitating MSME' access to sources of funds, 2.) doing away with stringent collateral requirements, 3.) establishing safeguards for the protection and stability of the credit delivery system (Sec. 2(b), (d) and (e))</li> </ul>
<p>Philippine Innovation Act (Republic Act 11293)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven (7) executive members of the National Innovation Council (NIC) will be appointed by the President from the ranks of business, entrepreneurs, academe, and the scientific community, at least one (1) of whom shall be a woman (Sec. 6(s))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among the functions of the Secretariat to the NIC is to build strategic intelligence to human capital development (Sec. 8 (f))</li> <li>• The government, through the NIC, shall support the establishment of innovation centers and business incubators in partnership with different stakeholders. The goal, among others, is to foster skills and technology transfer, and collaboration on innovation initiatives between small and big businesses (Sec. 13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation Fund will be established to strengthen entrepreneurship and enterprises developing innovative solutions benefitting the poor. (Sec. 21)</li> <li>• Innovation Development Credit and Financing Program shall be developed which consists of loans and other financing activities for innovation activities (Sec. 22)</li> <li>• All banking insitutions shall set aside at least four percent (4%) of their total loanable funds for innovation development credit (Sec. 23)</li> </ul>



Table 2A: Services to MSME and program-related services

<b>A. Services to MSME</b>	<b>Female entrepreneur</b>	<b>Male entrepreneur</b>
<b>Training</b>		
Product design related	308	137
Export related training	6,179	3,946
All other training*	4,032	2,456
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,519</b>	<b>6,539</b>
<b>Enterprise Development</b>		
Export promotion	1,859	1,386
International Trade Expo/Missions	118	183
Domestic market matching	772	327
Entrepreneurial support and development	697	481
Small Business Finance	5,405	3,097
<i>Value of Loan Releases (in PhP)</i>	<i>456,850,088.85</i>	<i>364,515,694.61</i>
Product design related	821	476
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,672</b>	<b>5,950</b>
<b>Total MSME Services</b>	<b>20,191</b>	<b>12,489</b>
<b>B. Program-Related Services</b>		
Industry Cluster Enhancement (ICE) Program	41,675	36,676
Shared Service Facility (SSF)	24,502	23,422
Kapatid Mentor ME	1,677	751
Negosyo Center (NC)	327,790	190,861
OTOP Next Gen Project	23,216	11,527
RIPPLES	911	519
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>419,771</b>	<b>263,756</b>
Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)	225,128	224,774
<i>Farmer-beneficiaries</i>	<i>185,047</i>	<i>184,809</i>
<i>Landowners</i>	<i>40,081</i>	<i>39,965</i>
<b>Total - Program Related Services</b>	<b>644,899</b>	<b>488,530</b>

Source: Department of Trade and Industry, Preliminary Sex Disaggregated Data, Cumulative Report for the Year 2020. \*conducted by the Philippine Trade Training Center and Foreign Trade Service Corps

**Table 3A: Sample of definitions of women-owned and women-led business used by different institutions and organizations**

Institution/ Organisation	Definition	Basis					
		Women in principal ownership	Women in majority ownership and/or control	Women in top mgt or board of directors	Proportion of women workers/ employees	Own-account workers/ self-employed	Sex of Entrepreneur
WEConnect International Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)	Have 51% ownership by one or more women. Day-to-day operations must be managed by one or more women. Long-term control and management of the business by one or more women. Contribution of capital and/or expertise by women. Operated independently from other non-certified businesses (i.e., Pass-through companies, franchises or sales representatives are not eligible).		✓				
WB Enterprise Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Firms with female participation in ownership are defined as firms -with a woman among the principal owners.</li> <li>-Firms with majority female ownership are defined as firms with greater than 50% female ownership.</li> <li>-Female permanent full-time workers are defined as female paid employees that are contracted for a term of one or more fiscal years and/or have a guaranteed renewal of their employment contract and that work 8 or more hours per day. Further distinguished between production and non-production workers.</li> <li>-Firms with a female top manager. Top manager refers to the highest-ranking manager or CEO of the establishment. This person may be the owner if he/she works as the manager of the firm.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Women's Business Enterprise National Council	A Women's Business Enterprise, commonly referred to as a WBE, is an independent business concern that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more women who are U.S. citizens or Legal Resident Aliens; whose business formation and principal place of business are in the U.S. or its territories; and whose management and daily operation is controlled by		✓				

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Institution/ Organisation	Definition	Basis					
		Women in principal ownership	Women in majority ownership and/or control	Women in top mgt or board of directors	Proportion of women workers/ employees	Own-account workers/ self-employed	Sex of Entrepreneur
	a woman with industry expertise.						
International Finance Corporation	At least 51% female ownership. At least 20% female ownership and 1 woman CEO/COO and at least a 30% female board where board exists.		✓	✓			
U.S. Small Business Administration	Be at least 51% owned and controlled by women who are U.S. citizens. Have women manage day-to-day operations and also make long-term decisions.		✓				
UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy	Majority women-led businesses are those where women make up more than 50 per cent of the partners or directors in day-to-day control of the business, or where the sole proprietor is a woman.		✓				
Global Entrepreneurship Monitor	Sex of entrepreneur						✓
OECD	Self-employed are defined as those who own and work in their own business, including unincorporated businesses and own-account workers. Employers are women who report their status as self-employed with employees in population surveys.					✓	
Facebook/World Bank/OECD Future of Business Survey	Female-owned/managed enterprises are defined as enterprises having at least 65% of female owners or top managers.		✓	✓			
Canada Business Women in International Trade (BWIT)	Women-owned businesses are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by one or more women.		✓				
ILO	<b>By sex of employer</b> (workers who, working on their own account or with one or a few partners, hold the type of jobs defined as "self-employment jobs" (i.e. jobs where the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits derived from the goods and services produced), and, in this capacity, have engaged,					✓	

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Institution/ Organisation	Definition	Basis					
		Women in principal ownership	Women in majority ownership and/or control	Women in top mgt or board of directors	Proportion of women workers/ employees	Own-account workers/ self-employed	Sex of Entrepreneur
	<p>on a continuous basis, one or more persons to work for them as employee(s).</p> <p><b>By sex of own-account workers</b> (those who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold the type of jobs defined as “self-employment jobs”, and have not engaged on a continuous basis any employees to work for them. Members of producers’ cooperatives are workers who hold “self-employment jobs” in a cooperative producing goods and services.</p>						
Statistics Sweden	<p><b>By sex of self-employed</b> (those who own and work in their own business, including own-account workers, with or without employed personnel). There can be two or more persons jointly authorized to represent a company or association. Then both are accounted for. If we need to pick only one person as owner of a company we first see who is assigned as CEO, then who has the highest income</p>					✓	
Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, We-Fi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≥ 51% owned by a woman/women; or</li> <li>• ≥ 20% owned by a woman/women; and have ≥ 1 woman as CEO/COO (President/Vice-President); and have ≥ 30% of the board of directors comprised of women, where a board exists; and</li> <li>• For those women entrepreneurs with a loan from a financial institution, the loan size at origination would be between US\$5,000 to US\$1 million. We-Fi allows for exceptions, for example including businesses with as low as 5 employees (rather than IFC’s 10), and start-ups.</li> </ul>		✓	✓			

Source: ITC (2020, p.21)

Table 4A: Small Business Corp. Bayanihan COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises releases and applications

	Gender of the authorized representative	Amount (PhP)	%, within enterprise category	%, with respect to overall total loans
<b>Loan applications - January to May 31, 2021</b>				
Micro-enterprise	Male	2,482	36.0	
	Female	4,416	64.0	
	Blank	1	0.0	
	Total	6,899		75.9
Small enterprise	Male	683	52.7	
	Female	613	47.3	
	Blank	1	0.0	
	Total	1,297		14.3
Medium enterprise	Male	348	64.0	
	Female	196	36.0	
	Blank	-	0.00	
	Total	544		6.0
Unidentified	Male	191	55.2	
	Female	155	44.8	
	Blank	-	0.00	
	Total	346		3.8
Overall total		9,086		
<b>Releases - January to May 31, 2021</b>				
Micro-enterprise	Male	232,883,249	43.5	
	Female	302,917,015	56.5	
	Blank	80,000	0.0	
	Total	535,880,264		24.7
Small enterprise	Male	471,410,329	56.0	
	Female	370,419,834	44.0	
	Blank	135,000	0.00	
	Total	841,965,164		38.8
Medium enterprise	Male	505,330,702	65.0	
	Female	271,941,496	35.0	
	Blank		0.0	
	Total	777,272,197		35.8
Unidentified	Male	10,033,000	58.9	
	Female	6,990,000	41.1	
	Blank		0.00	
	Total	17,023,000		0.8
Overall total		2,172,140,625		

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	Gender of the authorized representative	Amount (PhP)	%, within enterprise category	%, with respect to overall total loans
<b>Loan applications - January to December 2020</b>				
Micro-enterprise	Male	5,633	35.5	
	Female	10,218	64.5	
	Blank	1	0.00	
	Total	15,852		88.9
Small enterprise	Male	831	52.3	
	Female	758	47.7	
	Blank	-	0.00	
	Total	1,589		8.9
Medium enterprise	Male	62	59.6	
	Female	42	40.4	
	Blank	-	0.00	
	Total	104		0.6
Unidentified	Male	209	74.6	
	Female	71	25.4	
	Blank	-	0.00	
	Total	280		1.6
Overall total		17,825		
<b>Releases - January to December 2020</b>				
Micro-enterprise	Male	363,706,354	40.8	
	Female	527,514,909	59.2	
	Blank	50,000	0.00	
	Total	891,271,263		56.7
Small enterprise	Male	255,331,158	53.1	
	Female	225,419,436	46.9	
	Blank		0.00	
	Total	480,750,594		30.6
Medium enterprise	Male	103,449,455	57.0	
	Female	78,080,642	43.0	
	Blank		0.00	
	Total	181,530,097		11.5
Unidentified	Male	14,595,000	75.2	
	Female	4,822,000	24.8	
	Blank		0.00	
	Total	19,417,000		1.2
Overall total		1,572,968,954		

Source: Authors' calculations based on the data provided by the Small Business Corporation.

Note: Male and female categories are based on the gender of the authorized representative who applies on behalf of the juridical borrower.

**Table 5A: ACPC's COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Program Monitoring Report, as of March 31,2021**

DA's COVID 19 Programs	Target Beneficiaries		Actual Beneficiaries Served		Individuals	
	Individuals	Groups	Individuals	Groups	By Sex	
					Male	Female
<b>BAYANIHAN 1</b>						
Sourced from Agency Regular Budget (Attributions and Refocused)						
Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project (SURE COVID-1	40,000	150	50,296	149	30,681	19,615
<b>BAYANIHAN 2</b>						
Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project (SURE COVID-1	60,000	167	8,611	23	5,167	3,444
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>58,907</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>35,848</b>	<b>23,059</b>

Source: Agricultural Credit Policy Council

**Table 6A: MSME Credit Guarantee Program of the PhilGuarantee Corporation**

Industry	Number of male accounts	Number of female accounts	Total Accounts	Outstanding loan for male accounts	Outstanding loan for female accounts	Total outstanding loan amount
<b>As of December 31, 2020</b>						
Accommodation and Food Services	69	164	233	6,901,613	15,403,718	22,305,331
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	20	23	43	7,939,663	2,261,924	10,201,587
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1	0	1	87,640	0	87,640
Business Process Outsourcing Establishments						
Construction	5	2	7	502,295	166,697	668,992
Electricity, Gas, and Water Supply	1	1	2	103,330	79,892	183,223
Hotels and Restaurants	2	3	5	209,705	292,400	502,105
Human health and social work activities	2	2	4	228,547	267,684	496,231
Information and Communication	4	2	6	293,049	212,466	505,514
Manufacturing	96	113	209	11,395,798	11,584,167	22,979,965
Other Service Activities	56	59	115	5,419,378	5,803,320	11,222,698
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Activities						
Real Estate Activities						
Transportation and Storage	11	11	22	11,966,309	7,554,509	19,520,817
Wholesale and retail trade	626	1,648	2,274	67,483,811	162,640,743	230,124,553
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>2,028</b>	<b>2,921</b>	<b>112,531,136</b>	<b>206,267,521</b>	<b>318,798,658</b>

MEN- AND WOMEN-OWNED/LED MSMES AND THE COVID-19 POLICY RESPONSES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Industry	Number of male accounts	Number of female accounts	Total Accounts	Outstanding loan for male accounts	Outstanding loan for female accounts	Total outstanding loan amount
<b>As of May 31, 2021</b>						
Accommodation and Food Services	40	98	138	4,023,716	9,138,272	13,161,987
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	59	101	160	24,468,484	32,337,558	56,806,041
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0	1	1	0	90,819	90,819
Business Process Outsourcing Establishments	6	3	9	514,731	236,081	750,812
Construction	17	13	30	19,765,805	1,663,099	21,428,905
Electricity, Gas, and Water Supply	28	45	73	3,213,452	4,822,769	8,036,222
Hotels and Restaurants	148	629	777	14,698,931	61,915,255	76,614,185
Human health and social work activities	5	18	23	461,749	3,528,673	3,990,422
Information and Communication	2	1	3	2,500,000	93,938	2,593,938
Manufacturing	397	719	1,116	48,307,882	72,476,289	120,784,171
Other Service Activities	324	413	737	33,091,696	39,289,962	72,381,658
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Activities	11	1	12	26,499,643	136,378	26,636,021
Real Estate Activities	8	19	27	818,520	2,076,040	2,894,560
Transportation and Storage	43	40	83	67,013,229	20,970,807	87,984,036
Wholesale and retail trade	2,423	6,858	9,281	305,324,468	696,055,046	1,001,379,513
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,511</b>	<b>8,959</b>	<b>12,470</b>	<b>550,702,305</b>	<b>944,830,986</b>	<b>1,495,533,291</b>

Source: Philippine Guarantee Corporation.

Note: Male and female categories are based on the gender of the authorized representative who applies on behalf of the juridical borrower.

Table 7A: Landbank I-RESCUE Lending Program as of June 30, 2021, by borrower type

BORROWER TYPE	NUMBER OF BORROWERS	AMOUNT APPROVED (IN MILLION PESOS)	AMOUNT RELEASED (IN MILLION PESOS)
MSME	330	PhP 3,406.65	PhP 3,232.05
Coops	88	PhP 2,292.12	PhP 2,070.28
Large	78	PhP 16,641.05	PhP 15,562.76
MFI	6	PhP 1,963.95	PhP 1,960.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>PhP 24,303.77</b>	<b>PhP 22,825.71</b>

Source: Landbank of the Philippines



**Table 8A: Landbank I-RESCUE Lending Program sex-disaggregated data for MSME borrowers as of June 30, 2021**

	NUMBER OF BORROWERS	APPROVED AMOUNT (IN MILLION PESOS)	RELEASED AMOUNT (IN MILLION PESOS)
Female	163	PhP 1,674.88	PhP 1,611.81
Male	80	PhP 627.61	PhP 594.48
Unidentified (Corporate Borrowers)	87	PhP 1,104.16	PhP 1,025.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>PhP 3,406.65</b>	<b>PhP 3,232.05</b>

Source: Landbank of the Philippines.

Note: Male and female categories are based on the account name.

**Table 9A: Guide questions in developing gender-responsive policies**

DIMENSION	WOMEN-SPECIFIC BILLS	GENERAL BILLS
Definitions and assumptions	<p>What gender-based assumptions underlie the definition of the problem? Does the measure assume certain stereotypes about women and men with respect to capacities, roles, rights, etc.?</p> <p>What are its assumptions about women's experiences and/or situation? Are they valid for all women? Or are they true only for some women or groups of women?</p>	<p>Does the policy have underlying assumptions about women and men in terms of their conditions, capacity, etc.?</p> <p>Are those assumptions valid or are they gender-biased?</p>
Scope	<p>Does the policy contribute to the enhancement of women's rights? If yes, in what way? Does it uplift the status of women? In what way?</p> <p>Does the policy address practical or strategic gender needs of women, or both? In what way?</p> <p>Does the policy promote gender equality and assist in transforming gender relations? In what way?</p>	<p>Will the policy equally benefit women and men? In what ways? If not, what provisions can be included to ensure that women benefit as men do?</p> <p>Will it have a negative impact on people? On women, specifically? On other marginalized sectors of society? If yes, what measure can be integrated in the proposed policy to minimize the potential differential negative impact of the proposal on women and other sectors?</p> <p>What provisions can be integrated into the policy to promote women's empowerment and enjoyment of their rights? What provision can be integrated to eliminate gender-based discrimination, if any?</p> <p>Is the language used gender-sensitive or gender-fair? Does it subsume "women" by using the generic masculine nouns and pronouns?</p>
Consultation	<p>Has the policy undergone consultation with the affected sector (if the policy is sector-specific)? Who were consulted? Were their inputs taken into consideration? How or in what manner were their inputs integrated into the policy?</p>	<p>Has the policy undergone consultation with the affected sector (if the policy is sector-specific)? Who were consulted? Were their inputs taken into consideration? How or in what manner were their inputs integrated into the policy?</p>
Implementation and Support	<p>Are resources, materials, and mechanisms available for the implementation of the policy once passed?</p>	<p>Are resources, materials, and mechanisms available for the implementation of the policy once passed?</p>

Source: Adapted from PCW (2021).