



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

Advancing Free Trade
for Asia-Pacific **Prosperity**

Workshop on Fostering Inclusive Digital Economy: Empowering Women through Participation in Digital Start-ups

APEC Digital Economy Steering Group

November 2021



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

Workshop on Fostering Inclusive Digital Economy: Empowering Women through Participation in Digital Start-ups

SUMMARY REPORT

Virtual/Hybrid Event | Bandung, Indonesia | 17-18 June 2021

Digital Economy Steering Group

November 2021

APEC Project: ECSG 01 2019A

Produced by
Novianto Wibowo
Directorate of APEC and International Organization,
Ministry of Trade
Jl. M.I. Ridwan Rais No.5, Jakarta 10110, Indonesia
Tel. (62) 3858195 ext. 36224; (62) 81388954255
email: bowo_wibowo@yahoo.com
Website: www.kemendag.go.id

For
Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119616
Tel: (65) 68919 600
Fax: (65) 68919 690
Email: info@apec.org
Website: www.apec.org

© 2021 APEC Secretariat

APEC#221-CT-04.7

Contents

Introduction	1
Outcomes	4
Take away messages and recommendations	10
The situation of women's participation in the digital economy	10
Identified barriers for increasing women's participation in the start-up industry	11
Challenges	11
Opportunities	11
Recommendations	12
Next steps	13

Introduction

The digital economy offers significant opportunities in reducing gender inequality, expanding economic opportunities for women, and promoting inclusive economic growth. With digitalization, women can break some of the fundamental barriers that may prevent them from setting up businesses. Internet and digitalization could be the solution to women-led firms that seek to balance between family and work, access new markets, expand their customer base, access new sources of finance, and improve their financial autonomy (OECD 2018)¹. However, gender disparities in economic participation remain persistent among APEC economies. Approximately 600 million women contribute to the APEC region's labour force, but over 60% work in the informal sector. The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated gender inequality. According to the World Bank, as many as 163 million people could return to extreme poverty by the end of 2021². Women are disproportionately bearing this impact. McKinsey estimated that women were 1.8 times more likely than men to lose their jobs due to the pandemic. In addition, female jobs are 19% more vulnerable because women are over-represented in COVID-19-affected industries³.

Improving women's participation in the economy will benefit women and accelerate economic growth within and in the region. The McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) estimates that advancing gender equality could contribute around US\$ 12 trillion annually to the world economy by 2025. Furthermore, McKinsey Women Matter 2018 also forecasts that gender equality can raise Asia Pacific's collective GDP by an estimated US\$ 4.5 trillion by 2025. Although some APEC economies have made significant progress in providing opportunities for women entrepreneurship, considerable challenges remain to be addressed.

APEC Leaders has mandated officials to realize an inclusive digital economy by ensuring that digital strategies incorporate gender perspective, including addressing women's needs, circumstances, capabilities, and preferences through AIDER. Furthermore, the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) found that

¹OECD. 2018. Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate. Report. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/internet/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>, accessed on 17th September 2019.

² <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/updated-estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty-looking-back-2020-and-outlook-2021>

³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-counteracting-the-regressive-effects>

the full potential of women's contribution to the Asia-Pacific economy remains untapped⁴. As a result, women's economic empowerment and inclusion in the regional economy remain a priority in APEC's agenda. This priority was asserted by the endorsement of Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Santiago Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019-2030).

Against this backdrop, in 2019, the Ministry of Trade Indonesia submitted an APEC-funded activity under the Digital Innovation Sub-Fund. The project activities were scheduled to be held in 2020 but postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The project was then amended to include topics such as how the digital economy can leverage women-led businesses to cope with the pandemic and promote inclusive recovery. The workshop format was also changed from the conventional way of hosting a workshop to a hybrid form. Some domestic participants and speakers attended the workshop in person with strict health and safety protocols, while others participated in virtual.

Workshop Objectives

- To facilitate sharing knowledge, best practices, and experiences among women-led entrepreneurs and policymakers to implement effective gender-responsive policies to foster women participation in the digital economy;
- Develop recommendations and future capacity-building activities to facilitate women's participation in digital start-ups and promote inclusive growth.

The workshop was divided into four (4) sessions with varying dynamics of experts', officials', and private sectors' presentations and a panel discussion. It aimed to bring together policymakers, academia, experts, and women entrepreneurs to develop recommendations on better-supporting women entrepreneurs in creating businesses that can successfully operate in the new normal. The workshop also aimed to identify policy approaches to support women-led businesses towards recovery following one of the severest adverse effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

There were 11 presentations delivered at the workshop. These presentations represented the perspectives and experiences of experts, success stories, and initiatives and approaches by the government and private sectors in coping with the pandemic and improving women's participation in the high-tech industry. The workshop also successfully attracted large attendances from 13 economies and two (2) international institutions. Of 112 participants, 52 participants were from Indonesia. The

⁴2010 Leaders Declaration, Yokohama

remaining 60 were from Chile, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States, Viet Nam, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Out of 112 participants, 84 (75 percent) were female participants. The experts who participated in this workshop were predominantly women (8 out of 11) from government offices, academia, women entrepreneurs, and international organizations.

At the workshop, the participants reviewed a wide range of approaches to promote women led-start-ups to expand their businesses and noted the critical role of women led-business for inclusive growth. Participants also evaluated the approach taken by members and recommendations by international organizations to encourage women's participation in digital entrepreneurship. Participants also noted the impact of the pandemic on women to balance between work and family, resulting in loss of and decline in productivity. However, there are opportunities for women to start their digital businesses from home amidst the rapid growth of the online marketplace during the pandemic.

The panels suggested equitable opportunities should begin from school-age children to labour markets. The government and educational institutions need to ensure that the environment is friendly and welcoming to female students. Women in the workforce should receive further training in the hard and soft skills required to advance their professions. In addition, the panels suggested that to promote equal participation and to narrow the gender gap; economies should: (i) provide equitable financial access to women-led start-ups; (ii) Minimize stereotypes and ingrained socio-economic biases; (iii) Maximize labour market participation through policy levers; (iv) Collect and track gender-disaggregated data, particularly on women in STEM fields, in the labour force and start-ups, and use it to assess the efficacy of programs and to guide policy development.

Note:

The list of participants is attached hereto as Annex 1.

The copies of the speakers' presentations can be downloaded through: <http://mddb.apec.org/Pages/search.aspx?setting=ListMeetingGroup&DateRange=2021/06/01%2C2021/06/end&Name=Workshop%20on%20Fostering%20Inclusive%20Digital%20Economy%3A%20Empowering%20Women%20Through%20Participation%20in%20Digital%20Start-ups%202021&APECGroup=%22Digital%20Economy%20Steering%20Group%20%28DESG%29%22>

Outcomes

The workshop was opened by the Director-General of International Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Trade Indonesia, Mr Djatmiko Bris Witjaksono. He raised the collective challenge of potential economic payoffs of empowering women that is evident for individuals, families, and the economy. He pointed out that gender gaps persist in the rapidly increasing digital economy. He also reiterates the critical role of the government to serve not only as a regulator but also as an accelerator to foster the digital ecosystem. He then provided several government programs to promote the digital ecosystem and the growing number of start-ups in Indonesia.

The Director of APEC and International Organization Negotiation, Mr Farid Amir, welcomed the participants. He mentioned that the need to seize the momentum to promote women's participation in the digital economy was the foundation to initiate this workshop. He observed that the development of digital technology had opened opportunities for women to participate in economic activities and potentially reduced the main obstacle that hinders women from finding a perfect balance between career and family. Technology is essential for women's financial wellbeing, given that women are over-represented among the poor. They are also under-represented as entrepreneurs. He highlighted that governments need to prioritize digital readiness to become producers and not just consumers. He then emphasized a holistic approach to capture value from digital trade, where digital entrepreneurship becomes a central focus which requires faster digitalization for smaller businesses and more attention to digital entrepreneurship, including upskilling and reskilling, especially for women.

Session 1: Overview on Women's Participation in Digital Start-ups: International and Regional Landscapes

In this session, three expert speakers examined the current landscape of women-led digital businesses and the challenges women-led companies face in the context of the ongoing pandemic. The first speaker, Dr Chiara Criscuolo, OECD, provided evidence of the gender divide in digital entrepreneurship. She then argued that start-ups are the key drivers of creative disruption. Start-ups also account for about 20% of employment but create almost half of the new jobs in OECD economies. She also stated that start-ups and female entrepreneurship are essential for inclusive growth and indicate female employment that accounts for 40% of all businesses in Indonesia. However, the share of female employees within female-owned firms is around 75 to almost 80%, which is

twice the average level and is much higher than within male-owned firms. She also shared a significant gender gap across start-ups in APEC economies where less than 25% of start-ups have at least one (1) female founder, and a generation of businesses are missed. This gap is pronounced, especially in digital-intensive sectors, such as internet services, hardware, data analytics, and financial services. In closure, she stated that narrowing the gap requires a holistic approach, including policies to tackle gender gaps in education and the labour market. Providing business support services, such as training, advice, counseling consultancy, coaching, more accessible finance, and expanding education in the respective groups are essential tools in government policies. In addition, available policy levers associated with the social policy (i.e., parental leave) can positively impact female entrepreneurship and gender norms in general.

Ms Widdi Mugidjayani, from a research institution, Presisi, Indonesia, focused her presentation on the digital economy and women-led initiatives in digital start-ups in Indonesia. She shared that the development of the digital economy in Indonesia grew even more rapidly during the pandemic, yet, it has not reached its growth potential. Women's employment in the ICT is about 34% in 2020, which is still relatively low compared to other economies; however, the trend is somewhat encouraging. Women in leadership roles have significantly increased in the telco sector. Compared to the last five years, there are now more successful women CEOs in digital start-ups in Indonesia. She also shared that the challenges faced by women in Indonesia are somewhat similar to those in other economies, such as limited working hours because of domestic duties, wage gap, and low participation in STEM education. She then highlighted promising initiatives by the government and private sectors targeting women employees, entrepreneurs, and women in start-ups. She showed examples, such as the 1000 Digital Start-up National Movement in 2016 and the "coding mum" that aimed to train housewives to become programmers to start a business through website creation.

The third speaker of this session was Ms Sara Duerto Valero, Regional Advisor on Gender Statistics in the United Nations Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. She presented the impact of COVID-19 disproportionately affecting women-led MSMEs and how the digital platform can be leveraged to cope with the effects of the pandemic. The study was conducted in Indonesia in 2020. In Indonesia, micro and small businesses, nearly half are owned and run by women, were the hardest hit by the pandemic. She reported that digital platforms are helping micro and small

companies to cope with the pandemic's impact, benefitting the ones owned by women the most.

Further, she stated that gender gaps persist, for instance, in terms of managing strategy. With greater access to finance and assets than women, male MSMEs owners are more likely to apply a broader range of approaches to combat revenue loss. These gender gaps are further magnified if the businesses are informal. Another important finding in the study is that digitalization is helping female and male MSMEs owners balance work and home responsibilities. She emphasized that the government needs to reach more women-led MSMEs businesses, particularly those that are informal, enhance their access to finance and technologies, address unpaid work, leverage partnerships between governments and the private sector, and better utilize Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSOs).

In the discussion session, participants learned about the difficulties women-led businesses face and a wide gender gap in digital entrepreneurship that has been exacerbated amidst the ongoing pandemic. On the other hand, the panels also indicated that the digital platform, which has grown exponentially during the pandemic, has created potential leverage to women-led business, as evidenced in Indonesia. The panels also underscore the vital role of the government to help women entrepreneurs access to finance and improve management skills to increase survivability and expand their businesses.

Session 2: Starting a Successful Digital Business: Lesson Learned through trying times and adapting to a new normal

The workshop then presented four (4) speakers from 3 women-led digital start-up CEOs/founders and one (1) executive official from Start-Up Chile, a public start-up accelerator in Chile. The speakers talked about their perspectives and experiences in starting their businesses and becoming successful digital entrepreneurs.

The first speaker was Mr David Fernandez Torres, Chief Growth Officer, Startup Chile, Chile. He explained Startup Chile as the first public start-up accelerator with a commitment & vision to create a higher impact on start-up entrepreneurs worldwide and use Chile as a foundation for starting their businesses. David also provided interesting facts about the importance of having women in the founding team for a start-up since it could have a greater chance of survival, as shown by his institution's data (61% against 49%). Thus, Startup Chile launched Female Founder Factor and the

Founders Club to provide for ecosystem development. The Club aimed to increase talent pool and skills, accelerating business, and growing exposure of current role models of women start-up leaders to inspire and gain investor/market confidence in women-led digital start-ups.

The second speaker, Ms Bessie Schwarz, CEO and Co-Founder of Cloud Street, United States, shared her experience with starting her business. With a background in community mobilization & climate science, she saw a potential gap in the market that was unaddressed. There was no satellite mapping to mitigate the floods that frequently occurred in the US. She also experienced significant gender stereotyping while accessing funding to scale up the business. She then reiterates why diversity in decision-making positions is instrumental for women-led entrepreneurs to reduce gender bias in decisions. She overcame these challenges by establishing scientific credibility as well as tapping into business potential.

The third speaker was Ms Natalie Sit, Founder, and CEO of Acestar, Malaysia. She brought an inspiring story about how she began her first entry-level job and became an award-winning female entrepreneur in the IT sector. She shared tips on building a successful business, envisioning a vision & mission statement, 5-year target plan, and taglines, among others. To be successful in business, Natalie argues that, although women face challenges in their traditional roles in the family, they should not use gender-based stereotyping as the sole factor to determine what they want to achieve in their lives.

The final speaker of this session was Ms Azizah Assattari, Founder & CEO of Lentera Nusantara, Indonesia. She shared her experience of identifying potential markets in the digital ecosystem by capitalizing on rich cultural and local heritage as the primary setting of her IP gaming and multimedia content. She saw opportunities to accelerate her digital ecosystem during the pandemic by catering to working from home customers interested in gaming. On tackling gender stereotypes, Ms Assattari argues that, based on her experience, women need to show evidence of their actual values and capabilities in predominantly male-based businesses. On many occasions, she served as a role model to inspire more girls to explore a career in the gaming industry.

In the QnA session, participants discussed encouraging women to develop their full potential in the digital world and tackle gender stereotypes. Mr David stressed the importance of women in leadership roles, and the ability to network with them is critical in encouraging women to develop in their professions. Ms Bessie reiterated the

importance of diversity in decision-making positions to reduce gender bias in decisions. On tackling gender stereotypes, Ms Azizah suggested that women need to show evidence of their actual values and capabilities in predominantly male-based businesses. The panels indicated that women's knowledge and talents are frequently overlooked. Thus, the discussions suggested that economies need to identify measures to increase women's access, remove legal barriers to economic resources, and raise social awareness through effective education and mass communication programs.

Session 3: Policy Framework in Promoting Women's Participation in Digital Economy and Digital Start-ups

The following day, the speakers presented governments' approaches to promoting women's digital economy participation. Ms Eni Widiyanti, Assistant Deputy Minister for Gender Mainstreaming in the Economy, Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia, first conveyed that since around 50% of Indonesia's population is female, fostering women's participation in the economy may contribute to significant economic growth. However, she highlighted obstacles that hindered women's economic potential, such as the persistent gap in gender equality according to the Human Development Index and Gender Development Index. She also explained that the low number of women labor force participation is mainly caused by the social construct that pushes women to do more unpaid work. Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated gender inequality in Indonesia. Ms Eni elaborated on the government's approaches to narrow gender inequality before and during the pandemic. Some notable mentions are: (i) in close collaboration with around thirty ministries/agencies, her agency coordinated the implementation of a gender-sensitive budgeting approach for the development of MSMEs before and during the pandemic; and (ii) various other programs, such as Sispreneur, Mekaar, and Du Anyam were launched in joint partnership with private sectors, financial institutions, and NGOs, to foster women empowerment.

Dr Ong Chen Hui, Cluster Director, Biztech Group, Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), Singapore, then shared information about Women in Tech Singapore. This initiative aims to attract women, raise awareness, and help them develop and stay in the tech industry. The initiative targets girls in school and women in the labour workforce and the tech community. The program and its initiatives are a joint partnership between public and private sectors and general communities. Some of the notable events and movements are (i) girls in school: ask tech-related questions to female leaders; (ii) coding competitions and 'MentorConnect' to create mentorship

opportunities for women in the labor force; and (iii) inaugural of 100 Singapore Women in Tech for the general society. She also shared a study on boosting 'Women in Technology' across Southeast Asia (SEA). The study revealed that women's educational attainment in SEA is somewhat better than global averages. However, the number begins to dwindle as they move further from graduates toward workforce and senior management. The study also showed the three-key moment of truth for women pursuing long term careers in technology: (i) higher education: exposing girls to high tech education from an early stage to build their confidence, (ii) entry-level job: mentorship to coach younger women on how to navigate the perception of challenges of this career path; and (iii) long term career: compensation, the balance between family and career and opportunities. Transparency around the gaps and the progress in the tech job is also crucial to show commitment to tackling the challenges that some women face in pursuing the career.

The session's final speaker, Ms Anna Nesterova, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Global Rus Trade, Russia, shared a brief picture on globalrustrade.com, a Russia-based international marketplace for goods and services for B2B and B2C, covering 113 economies. She also shared information about the Russia and ASEAN Women Entrepreneurship Network project to develop a single multilanguage information platform. The project aimed to enhance cross-border trade opportunities for women-led enterprises in ASEAN and Russia. Within this project, she reported on a survey that was conducted and identified three (3) main policy areas considered to be the most significant factors for mainstreaming female entrepreneurship: (i) finance: providing gender-responsive financial support (ii) education: various training to improve women's capacity and literacy (iii) a holistic government approach in developing a policy framework for women.

In the QnA session, participants discussed the importance and availability of gender-disaggregated data to provide more accurate figures about women's entrepreneurship in digital platforms. The panels added that the lack of data would hinder effective policy approaches and lead to inaccurate and incomplete data on the status of women and girls and, in some cases, maintain gender disparities. Ms Enni informed the government plan to implement the One Data Indonesia to address the lack of gender-disaggregated data uniformity among government agencies. The panels advised that governments need to prioritize gender-disaggregated data to support them in implementing policy interventions that could help narrow the gender gap.

This last session of the two-day workshop was dedicated to discussing key takeaway messages and recommendations and suggesting follow-up capacity-building activities

to advance women in digital start-ups. Ms Chiara told a multi-pronged approach for women's digital inclusion. She elaborated four (4) policy strategies for policymakers to consider: (i) provide girls and women with the necessary skills (e.g., STEM, management, and leadership) to prepare themselves for a technology-driven economy; (ii) to empower women-led start-ups with better access to finance and information, and mentoring/being a role model to inspire other women; (iii) to minimize gender stereotypes and ingrained biases from education to labour force; and (iv) to maximize labour market participation by utilizing a gender-perspective policy for women, e.g., parental leave, affordable childcare, equal sharing of unpaid housework, better connectivity for women in rural areas, and equal pay. She implied that it would require evidence-based action, measurement, and evaluation to refine and take the rulemaking process to scale. Mr David suggested developing an inclusive start-up ecosystem within the government body and pointed out that fostering start-ups will significantly contribute to economic growth. Ms Bessie reminded the importance of diversity and representation of women in the decision-making process and top-level organizations to lessen stereotypes and biases. Mr Neil el Himam, Deputy Minister for Digital Economy and Creative Products at Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia, echoed David and Bessie's recommendations while presenting Indonesia's public start-up ecosystem called BEKUP (Baparekraf for Startup). Indonesia's approach to supporting start-ups provides a digital ecosystem with an intensive series of in-depth mentoring in five (5) of the most prominent cities in Indonesia. Mr Neil also revealed the dramatic increase in e-commerce transactions during the pandemic. He shared an interesting fact that 56% of sellers of the e-commerce ecosystem in Indonesia are women.

Mr Ari Satria, Secretary to the Directorate General International Trade Negotiation, Ministry of Trade Indonesia, formally closed the workshop. He thanked participants for the rich and productive discussions and felt the workshop had contributed to advancing women's participation in digital start-ups.

Take away messages and recommendations

The situation of women's participation in the digital economy

- The digital start-up is the key driver for creative disruption, fostering new inventions and creating new jobs and technology developed from new sectors and potential sources of economic expansion. Start-ups accounted for 20% of all employment in OECD economies but made almost half of the new jobs.

- Women-led businesses are the foundation for inclusive growth; the potential economic payoff is high. As is evident in Indonesia, women-led businesses tend to hire more women employees. Start-ups with women in the founding team may also have a greater chance to survive, as apparent in Chile.
- Despite this potential, across APEC economies, less than 25% of start-ups have a female founder. The gender gap results from 'observed' (e.g., education in STEM) and 'unobserved' (discrimination, bias) differences in women's participation in Indonesia's tech industry. This trend is increasing, however, on a different trajectory, compared to men. There are emerging examples of successful women starting and leading digital businesses, which shows women's potential in the start-up business.

Identified barriers for increasing women's participation in the start-up industry

- Funding: It is somewhat difficult for women-led start-ups to secure funding to grow their businesses.
- Gender stereotype, salary discrepancies, and bias: While this inequality can be seen in every industry, it seems particularly prevalent in the male-dominated tech industry.
- Unpaid care work: Women's time is more constrained due to limited options to reduce and redistribute care. Women find it challenging to balance business and family. The digital economy can offset constraints but needs public investment, public-private commitment, and a supportive digital ecosystem.

Challenges

The pandemic has had disproportionate economic effects on women. School closures have left more women than men to balance work with home-schooling, resulting in loss of job and/or income and decline in productivity. Women are also at the forefront of caring for COVID-19 patients, protecting the elderly – at home and in health care centers. The World Economic Forum estimates the global gender gap has increased by a generation due to COVID-19 – from 99,5 years (pre-COVID-19) to 136,5 years (2021).

Opportunities

The COVID-19 crisis has also fostered the new norm of working from home. This new arrangement could reduce the barriers to women's participation in the workforce, such as the need to constantly balance time away from home or at work—with family obligations or working in less female-friendly physical environments. Starting a digital shop or start-up also has apparent advantages for women. It would take fewer

resources to develop and manage a start-up compared to building a physical shop. ICT offers flexibility and ownership in marketing products and services; it would also be easier to find customers. Digital markets and players are multiplying during the pandemic. In Indonesia, the study by the UN Women-Go-Ojek-BPS-Pulse Lab on the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses found that more women and women-led digital start-ups were selling products online than before. Women users were also more likely to note that such platforms provided opportunities to juggle home and work responsibilities. However, gender inequalities persist in coping strategies. Women with specific characteristics (e.g., educated, own device, more internet access), on the other hand, were more successful in pivoting online. Similarly, women, who are more likely to own informal businesses, saw more barriers to access government support for their small businesses to cope with the crisis.

Recommendations

- A multi-pronged approach to promote equal participation and the narrow gender gap:
 - (i) Supply-side: skills, education, and labour markets
Governments and schools have a crucial role in ensuring that girls in high school, college, and working women have an equitable opportunity to develop their technology interests, knowledge, and abilities. For that, government and educational institutions should guarantee that a technological curriculum is implemented at the earliest, and the setting is appealing and friendly to female students. Women in the workforce should also have access to additional training in the hard and soft skills required to pursue their careers further.
 - (ii) Empowering female start-ups with better access to financial resources
Ensure government stimulus plans reach women's businesses, including informal businesses. Ensure diversity in the decision-making, board of directors, and top-level organization. For instance, The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) in Singapore established a Council for Board Diversity (CBD) to promote women's representation on boards of Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX) listed companies, as well as on boards of organizations in the people and public sectors. The Council is comprised of prominent business leaders and professionals from society, private, and public sectors.
 - (iii) Minimizing stereotypes and ingrained socio-economic biases
Encouraging family, society, educational and governments institution, and the private sector to proactively address gender equality within their institutional settings.

- (iv) Maximize labour market participation through policy levers (e.g., family-friendly, affordable child care, and connectivity)

Provide a supportive environment to encourage women's careers in technology. For instance, the government can initiate policies requiring structural workplace benefits, such as nursing rooms, maternity (and paternity) leave, an equal sharing of unpaid housework, and childcare support. Governments should also provide adequate and affordable internet services for women-led MSMEs in rural areas
- (v) Measurement and evaluation against achievement.

Collect and monitor gender data, including sex-disaggregated data on women STEM, in the labour force and start-up, and use it to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and feed this information in policy design.
- Ecosystem development:
 - Consider establishing a sound and diverse ecosystem consisting of various societies, start-ups, and related organizations that draw key actors and stakeholders to foster a collaboration among government and private sectors to initiate training, campaign, and acceleration programs.
 - Partnering with the industry could also develop a robust women's network and ensure that best practices are leveraged across all technology sectors. Initiatives such as MentorConnect in Singapore aimed for diversity in the workplace. It was led by Dell Technologies and backed by various public and private sectors that could make more women mentors available to motivate more women and girls in the high-tech industry.
- Inclusive recovery from COVID-19
 - (i) Reach more women-led businesses, particularly informal ones; enhance access to technologies; gender-responsive stimulus package; address unpaid work (e.g., safe schools opening); leverage partnerships with governments, private sector, and CSOs.

Next steps

- Organize APEC information-sharing process to develop programs that assist women-led start-ups and businesses in expanding their business model. Connect business networks with public and private sector actors interested in developing programs to encourage women's entrepreneurship.
- Organize a regular event that allows women entrepreneurs, private sectors, and the government to network and share ideas on programs to promote women's entrepreneurship.

- Continue to address programming inadequacies and assist economies through capacity building and integrating best practices in designing responsive and targeted programs.

Appendix I: List Participants/Speakers Summary Table

Economy (of Participants) <i>(Insert rows as needed)</i>	# male	# female	Total
Chile	1	4	5
Indonesia	17	31	48
Japan	2	4	6
Korea	0	2	2
Malaysia	1	1	2
Peru	0	5	5
The Philippines	1	8	9
Russia	1	1	2
Singapore	0	5	5
Chinese Taipei	0	6	6
Thailand	1	4	5
USA	0	1	2
Viet Nam	2	2	4
Participants (Total)	26	75	101
Economy (of Experts) <i>(Insert rows as needed)</i>	# male	# female	Total
Chile	1	0	1
Indonesia	1	3	4
Malaysia	0	1	1
Russia	0	1	1
Singapore	0	1	1
United States	0	1	1
OECD	0	1	1
United Nations	0	1	1
Speakers/Experts (Total)	2	9	11