



# **GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY**

ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND  
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CONTENTS

**List of Tables . . . . . iii**

**List of Figures . . . . . iv**

**Abbreviations . . . . . v**

**Glossary of Terms . . . . . vi**

**Executive Summary . . . . . ix**

    About AASCTF . . . . . ix

    AASCTF GESI Approach . . . . . x

    GESI Focus Groups . . . . . xi

    GESI Principles . . . . . xi

    GESI Theory of Change . . . . . xii

    GESI Entry Points . . . . . xiii

    GESI Strategy Execution . . . . . xiii

    Arrangements for GESI Strategy Implementation . . . . . xv

    GESI Monitoring and Evaluation . . . . . xv

**1 Introduction . . . . . 1**

    1.1 Background — About AASCTF . . . . . 2

    1.2 AASCTF Approach and Methodology Review . . . . . 3

    1.3 GESI Theory of Change . . . . . 6

**2 Approach to and Aim of the GESI Strategy . . . . . 9**

    2.1 GESI Principles . . . . . 11

    2.2 AASCTF’s GESI Focus Groups . . . . . 12

**3 Context . . . . . 13**

    3.1 GESI Policy Landscape . . . . . 14

    3.2 A Pathway to Inclusive Smart Cities in ASEAN . . . . . 16

    3.3 Overview of GESI Challenges and Opportunities in ASEAN . . . . . 18

**4 GESI Strategy Execution . . . . . 33**

    4.1 Entry Points for AASCTF . . . . . 34

    4.2 Targeted Activities and GESI Mainstreaming . . . . . 36

**5 GESI Monitoring and Evaluation. . . . . 49**

    5.1 Monitoring - Integration of GESI in AASCTF Framework . . . . . 50

    5.2 Evaluation - Integration of GESI in AASCTF Evaluation . . . . . 51

**Appendix 1: GESI Profiles. . . . . 53**

**Appendix 2: GESI Action Plan Template . . . . . 83**

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Links Between End of Investment Outcome and GESI Strategy . . . . . xii

Table 2: AASCTF’s Approach to GESI Mainstreaming . . . . . xiv

Table 3: GESI Monitoring and Evaluation. . . . . xvi

Table 4: Links Between End of Investment Outcome and GESI Strategy . . . . . 6

Table 5: AASCTF GESI Theory of Change . . . . . 7

Table 6: Gender Gap Index Rankings in ASEAN . . . . . 19

Table 7: Digital and Financial Inclusion in ASEAN . . . . . 21

Table 8: From “Ageing” to “Aged” in ASEAN . . . . . 26

Table 9: Targeted GESI Activities and Entry Points . . . . . 37

Table 10: AASCTF’s Approach to GESI Mainstreaming . . . . . 42

Table 11: GESI Responsibilities of Key AASCTF Staff . . . . . 46

Table 12: AASCTF Collaboration and Partnerships . . . . . 48

Table 13: GESI Monitoring and Evaluation . . . . . 52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Overview of GESI Principles . . . . . xi

Figure 2: Overview of AASCTF . . . . . 3

Figure 3: AASCTF Gold, Silver and Bronze Levels . . . . . 4

Figure 4: AASCTF Logic Diagram . . . . . 5

Figure 5: GESI Twin Track Approach . . . . . 10

Figure 6: GESI Principles . . . . . 11

Figure 7: Dimensions of Inclusive Cities . . . . . 16



ABBREVIATIONS

AASCTF	ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund
ASUS	ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASCN	ASEAN Smart Cities Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASUS	ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIS	Disability Information System/Software
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PAC	Practical Action
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SEUW	Southeast Asia Urban Development and Water Division
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TF	Trust Fund (AASCTF)
TO	Task Order
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Disability	Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. <sup>1</sup>
Gender	Refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviours – including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities and workplaces. <sup>2</sup>
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	<p>Gender equality is about equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys. It does not mean that women and men are the same. Gender inequality is a result of unequal power distribution between women and men, exacerbated by ongoing discrimination, weaknesses in laws, policies and institutions, and social relations that normalize inequality.</p> <p>Social inclusion is a broader concept, and is about ensuring that all members of society, including people with disabilities, are included in key processes, including but not limited to decision-making, consultation, employment opportunities, or involvement in government service delivery. The United Nations (UN) defines social inclusion as “the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights”.<sup>3</sup></p>
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is the understanding that people experience varying degrees of disadvantage based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, indigeneity and other characteristics. Women are not a homogenous group, and intersectionality acknowledges the different ways that people experience discrimination. <sup>4</sup>

1 World Health Organization. 2019. Disabilities. <https://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>

2 World Health Organization. 2011. Gender, Equity and Human rights. <https://www.who.int>

3 United Nations. 2016. Leaving No-One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf>

4 Ibid.



Term	Definition
Mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. <sup>5</sup>
Marginalized Groups	Marginalized groups are defined as those who are excluded from political, social, cultural and/or social spaces based on identity. This marginalization can impact their sense of dignity, ability, and opportunities afforded to take part in society. <sup>6</sup>
Twin Track Approach	An approach which recognizes that in order for development programs to be accessible to certain groups, it is important to recognize the specific needs and vulnerabilities and thus a responsive approach covers two aspects. Firstly, ensuring that Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is being mainstreamed into organizational functions, processes and systems. Secondly, targeted approach means adopting specific set of targeted interventions focused on a particular identified at risk group. <sup>7</sup>



<sup>5</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997. Gender Equality Tool. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.html>

<sup>6</sup> United Nations. 2016. Leaving No-One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/chapter1.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> DFAT. 2016. Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy. Canberra.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ABOUT AASCTF

The ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF or the Fund) is established by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with financing from the Government of Australia, through its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Ramboll Danmark A/S (Ramboll) is engaged by the ADB to design and implement the Fund programme. The Fund is currently scheduled to close by 30 June 2024. The Fund’s envisioned impact is to build livable cities that are green, competitive, inclusive, and resilient; and to promote high quality of life, competitive economies, and sustainable environments. The expected outcome of the Fund will be that systems and governance in participating ASEAN cities are improved through the adoption of smart solutions. The Fund aims to improve core functional thematic areas: planning systems, service delivery and financial management of participating ASEAN cities. AASCTF employs a number of approaches to its city-focused activities across eight countries and 26 cities, summarized as follows:

- Foundational Activities refer to activities which are either preparatory or overarching/cross-cutting operations and guiding the strategic direction of the AASCTF activities.
- Implementing Activities refer specifically to technical assistance and investment grant targeted city interventions undertaken in the pilot cities.
- Influencing Activities refer to widely targeted communication/knowledge sharing, regional twinning/networking activities and targeted capacity development activities.

ADB administers and oversees the day-to-day operations of the AASCTF through its Southeast Asia Urban Development and Water Division (SEUW). The implementation of the AASCTF is led by a Core Team of specialists from Ramboll (including a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion [GESI] Specialist). The Core team is supplemented by Non-Core experts in the delivery of implementing activities, specifically Task Orders at the city level. This GESI Strategy builds on ADB’s experience in mainstreaming and integrating gender in its operations, including mobilising its country and city-level gender infrastructure in support of AASCTF. The ADB regional gender specialists will provide input into the operationalisation of this GESI Strategy, including provision of technical expertise, country/city level knowledge and networking to support GESI activities as identified by the AASCTF GESI Specialists. Building on ADB expertise and existing ADB-supported projects underway is central to AASCTF’s operational model. Where appropriate, ADB Gender Specialists may be engaged to provide specific inputs on AASCTF interventions.

## AASCTF GESI APPROACH

The AASCTF recognises that the ASEAN region’s future is linked to the fate of its cities. The pace of urbanisation and economic growth has left many cities grappling with how to provide adequate housing, services, and infrastructure to meet the needs of their populations. Poverty, inequality, violence, crime, and environmental damage all occur where the urbanization process is not well managed or is under pressure. Women, older persons, children and people with disabilities, among other vulnerable and marginalised groups in cities suffer these impacts disproportionately in rapidly urbanizing environments.

Inclusive cities have four dimensions: A political dimension in which people have power and voice, and in which their priorities count; a technical dimension that addresses the legal, policy, and built environment; a normative dimension that looks at social norms and values, for example changes in behaviour among city officials; and a social dimension, which involves a consideration of the dynamics of interaction within public spaces and the potential for greater diversity and community spirit within them.

New technologies and digital solutions are providing opportunities to address these four interacting dimensions in addition to a broad array of urban challenges – offering an unprecedented chance to improve the inclusivity of cities. Central to the AASCTF approach is working with ASEAN cities to adopt smart solutions to address city needs and challenges. There is, however, no guarantee that the diffusion of smart solutions will automatically benefit all citizens. Key is the need to link smart cities to inclusive growth and development, recognising the enabling role that city governments can play to support innovative solutions for service delivery, capacity building and upscaling of smart city efforts to be inclusive.

The gender and social inclusion contexts within the AASCTF countries and cities are vastly variable, comprising a broad landscape of diverse and specific challenges, constraints, opportunities and barriers. Thus, to promote GESI across all AASCTF interventions, this Strategy adopts a “twin track” approach, consistent with best practices. The first ‘track’ is the development of targeted GESI activities that pursue efforts to pilot and/or demonstrate new and emerging ideas that hold potential for significant benefits to women, people with disabilities, and intersectional groups. The second “track” is mainstreaming GESI principles across all initiatives and operations.



The aim of this GESI Strategy is to highlight the GESI context within the AASCTF countries and cities, including identifying specific focus groups, and assessing challenges, barriers, opportunities and needs thereof; and to identify entry points and approaches to integrating GESI principles across all AASCTF activities, as well as undertaking targeted GESI initiatives.

GESI FOCUS GROUPS

To promote GESI through AASCTF interventions, this Strategy identifies the vulnerable focus groups that will be targeted, noting that within each intervention there will be a need to further verify and validate vulnerable groups within that city:

- Women and girls
- People with Disabilities
- Older persons
- Children

Poverty is highlighted as a key intersectional issue across the focus groups identified for AASCTF. Poverty exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and the above identified groups face a range of constraints that make them more vulnerable to poverty.

GESI PRINCIPLES

This GESI Strategy adopts the following principles to foster gender equality and social inclusion through the project cycle supported by AASCTF:



Figure 1: Overview of GESI Principles

GESI THEORY OF CHANGE

The AASCTF GESI Theory of Change, summarized below, describes how the change is understood to be achieved in the implementation environment. Building on the overall AASCTF programme logic, it sets out the proposed logic underpinning the delivery of the end of investment outcomes from a GESI perspective.

Table 1: Links Between End of Investment Outcome and GESI Strategy

AASCTF Impact	AASCTF Impact Liveable cities that are green, competitive, inclusive and resilient		
GESI-Focused Impact	Inclusive cities that are more accessible and responsive to the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons and members of other intersectional groups using smart solutions.		
Outcome Theme	Improved planning systems in participating ASEAN cities	Improved service delivery in participating ASEAN cities	Improved financial management in participating ASEAN cities.
Long-term GESI Outcomes	Improved city planning, policies and strategies that better meet the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups.	Improved service delivery that better meets the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups.	Improved financial management, products and services that better meet the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups
Intermediate Outcomes (short- to medium-term)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Smart city planning is informed by research/ analyses specifically on GESI focus groups.</li><li>2. City government has effective methods in place to engage with CSOs and communities on urban planning.</li><li>3. Emerging evidence is available that demonstrates the benefits of GESI in urban planning.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Smart city service delivery is informed by research/analyses specifically on who is omitted or unable to access services.</li><li>2. Emerging evidence of improved service delivery access for GESI focus groups.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Financial management products/services are informed by research/analyses/ disaggregated data on GESI focus groups.</li><li>2. Emerging evidence of increased access/ use of financial services.</li></ol>



GESI ENTRY POINTS

AASCTF will be realistic about what can be achieved and where value can be added. Gender equality, women’s empowerment and social inclusion are broad concepts and agendas. AASCTF’s strength lies in addressing GESI through leveraging smart solutions to challenges in urban planning, financial management and service delivery. Entry points are identified through analysis in this GESI Strategy of the challenges, barriers and opportunities for GESI focus groups in AASCTF countries and cities and also through the AASCTF Digital Solutions Toolbox which is a key “live” tool that allows the AASCTF to approach the identification of entry points in a dynamic manner with city governments. Key entry points to addressing GESI through targeted and/or mainstreamed initiatives across AASCTF are:

- Increasing awareness and capacity of city government actors on GESI in AASCTF thematic areas;
- Improving data collection and use through smart solutions related to GESI focus groups;
- Undertaking analyses and research on GESI to support and create credible and influential evidence base for city level smart interventions / further investment, with focus on how cities may better reach the “last mile”; and
- Improving smart solutions for GESI integration and engagement in city planning, financing and service delivery.

GESI STRATEGY EXECUTION

**Targeted GESI Activities:** GESI-specific activities will be undertaken where there is high potential that the initiative will lead to clear and significant benefits to women and other marginalised groups. The below bullet points summarises GESI-targeted activities that are being considered, with some having progressed to the concept level, and which are discussed further in the Strategy. Targeted GESI activities also provide opportunities for AASCTF collaboration with other programs or partners for mutual benefits and effectiveness. Targeted activities identified will be progressively evaluated and additional added depending on resources, and other contextual factors.

- Interactive Workshops on Inclusive Cities for gold, silver and bronze cities.
- Gender Transformative Flood Early Warning Systems (EWS) in the Philippines (Baguio), and conduct of an online knowledge sharing event on Gender Transformative EWS with bronze / silver Cities.
- Assisting ASEAN cities to implement digital learning / capacity building technologies and services targeted to GESI focus groups.
- Developing / enhancing access to mobile platforms that serve as digital hubs for community engagement/dialogue/participation.

- Developing / enhancing city governments’ digital platforms for ongoing collection, maintenance and use of disaggregated data (sex, age, PwDs).
- Mobile payments for government utility bills: development of applications for government departments and integration to enhance digital payments.
- Online platforms for service delivery / planning to support care of elderly and PwDs (at home and at care facilities).

**Mainstreaming GESI:** GESI mainstreaming activities constitute Track 2 of activities, within which, mainstreaming GESI is undertaken. Table 2 outlines how GESI issues will be considered and integrated.

Table 2: AASCTF’s Approach to GESI Mainstreaming

Activities	GESI Mainstreaming
Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GESI-focused initiatives and priorities are identified in Annual / Semi-Annual Progress Reports and Work Plans. GESI issues / entry points are considered and inform the direction / purpose of city intervention planning/design.</li><li>• Ensure gender-balanced representation in intervention (Task Order) teams as part of planning/design.</li></ul>
Influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication, awareness materials, and media on GESI that are developed are cognizant of digital illiteracy and disability.</li><li>• All knowledge sharing events will aim for a balance of male and female experts and include/invite representatives from GESI focus groups.</li></ul>
Implementing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All meetings/workshops/Focus Group Discussions will aim to be held in universally accessible premises, with timing for events and meetings to be gender-sensitive, recognizing that outside normal business hours may not be suitable for GESI focus groups and depending on the context, consulting to ensure the optimal time to maximize participation is chosen.</li><li>• Task Order teams to prepare GESI Action Plan for Task Orders where GESI is a core theme to include actions/targets to address GESI adequately through the intervention.</li><li>• Involve women and marginalized groups in the design/delivery/evaluation of Implementing activities as much as possible.</li></ul>



ARRANGEMENTS FOR GESI STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Working in collaboration is a key way in which the AASCTF can maximize effectiveness and ensure value for money. AASCTF’s GESI work will be implemented by specialists from Ramboll, with oversight by ADB. A GESI Specialist in the AASCTF Core Team will bring a GESI lens to all AASCTF interventions and activities. The GESI Specialist in the Core Team will work with international and local GESI Specialists through all AASCTF interventions (e.g. Task Order teams) to provide oversight to ensure activities support the GESI outcomes in the thematic areas. Social (and GESI) specialists on city intervention Task Order teams will be identified and engaged as part of AASCTF intervention planning. In some cases, particularly on GESI targeted activities, the GESI Specialist will work to identify and support interventions in collaboration with other development partners, including civil society and other advocacy groups, to deliver activities and outcomes.

This GESI Strategy builds on ADB’s vast experience in mainstreaming gender in its operations, including mobilizing its country and city-level gender -resources in support of AASCTF. The ADB regional gender specialists will provide support to the operationalization of this GESI Strategy, including provision of technical expertise, country/city level knowledge and networking to support GESI activities as identified by the AASCTF GESI Specialists. Building on ADB expertise and existing ADB-supported projects underway is central to AASCTF’s operational model. Where appropriate, ADB gender Specialists may be engaged to provide specific inputs on AASCTF activities.

Likewise, DFAT input into GESI Strategy operationalization will be sought, particularly in countries/cities where DFAT has existing programmes in place which may complement or enhance AASCTF activities. This includes knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration opportunities for the mutual benefit of DFAT (its implementation partners) and AASCTF activities.

GESI MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The AASCTF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework integrates GESI elements at all levels, with the integration of GESI based on basic questions, as follows:

- How GESI was considered as part of planning and design (Foundational Activities)?
- Participation of GESI focus groups in Influencing and Implementing Activities?
- The extent to which GESI focus groups benefitted from activities (user data)?

Key GESI indicators to support monitoring are provided below. These will be “tagged,” enabling analysis of GESI progress and results.

Table 3: GESI Monitoring and Evaluation

Activities		How?	When?	GESI Indicators/Progress Markers
Foundational activities		Internal proceedings Progress/ performance monitoring	Ongoing  Bi-annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• # of Task Orders with GESI issues/entry points and identification of how TO will contribute to better meeting the needs of GESI focus groups.</li><li>• % of women on AASCTF city intervention Task Order teams (international/national). % women/ men in terms of level of input into Task Order (TO Leadership, Senior, Mid-Level).</li><li>• # of interventions that propose to work with GESI-specialised partners.</li><li>• % of AASCTF budget allocated to GESI-targeted activities.</li></ul>
Influencing activities: Communications & Knowledge Sharing	Webinars	Participant evaluation (quality assessment and progress markers) Participant statistics	Post-webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of GESI focus groups/representatives at knowledge sharing events/meetings, workshops, training, conferences.</li><li>• % of women presenters/facilitators at webinars, conferences, workshops.</li></ul>
	Briefs, Newsletters, Videos, Social media	Web usage statistics Internal review	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of communication and knowledge sharing materials that are developed to meet digital illiteracy/disability needs.</li><li>• # of GESI-focused communication and knowledge-sharing materials.</li></ul>
Influencing activities: Regional Twinning and Networking (Bronze cities)	Meetings, Workshops, Conferences	City tracking Network analysis	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• # of GESI representative organisations/ institutions / stakeholders engaged through regional twinning and networking activities.</li></ul>
	MoUs, Networks			
Influencing activities: Capacity Building	Workshops, training, on-the-job training, etc.	Survey to participants (quality assessment and progress markers) Participant statistics	Post-capacity building activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• % of GESI focus groups/ representatives’ attendance at capacity building activities.</li><li>• % of women presenters/facilitators at webinars, conferences, workshops.</li><li>• Survey identifies positive/negative feedback (qualitative).</li></ul>
Implementing activities: Technical Assistance & Investment Grant/Loan Agreements		Progress/ performance monitoring (progress, quality): self-reporting + visits/interviews/ stories/case studies	Based on Task Order time-frames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• # of GESI Action Plans prepared.</li><li>• Monitoring assesses whether GESI activities were delivered as planned.</li><li>• # of GESI focus group members/ representatives involved and consulted in design/implementation of city intervention.</li><li>• Monitoring identifies GESI lessons learned and these are communicated to AASCTF teams for inclusion in ongoing and future activities.</li><li>• Qualitative stories/case studies obtained describing the changes to which AASCTF contributes (from GESI focus groups/city government representatives).</li></ul>

AASCTF's GESI performance will be evaluated at both a Trust Fund program level and at an activity level through foundational, influencing and implementing activities. Performance will be evaluated as outlined in the M&E Framework. Evaluation questions may be refined as part of the development of the M&E Framework. At an activity level, evaluation will focus on:

- What happened: Evaluating results / progress against plans.
- So What? Identifying what is working and what isn't from a GESI perspective in activities.
- What's Next? Identifying any changes to GESI activities going forward.

At the Trust Fund programme level, GESI evaluation will include the following questions:

- Is AASCTF maintaining an appropriate focus on women's empowerment, gender equity and social inclusion?
- How effectively has AASCTF contributed to improvements in the financial management, service delivery and/or planning systems which can be tangibly or logically linked to improvements in use/access for GESI focus groups (i.e. are GESI interventions effectively addressing identified barriers and conditions for GESI focus groups)?
- Is AASCTF generating evidence/learnings and communicating with city government and relevant stakeholders on how to effectively reach GESI focus groups through improved planning, service delivery and financial management?





# 1 INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 BACKGROUND — ABOUT AASCTF

On 1 April 2019, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved the establishment of the ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF or the Fund) under the Urban Financing Partnership Facility. On 2 April 2019, the Government of Australia, through its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), committed to contribute A\$20 million (about \$13.94) towards the Fund. Ramboll Danmark A/S (Ramboll) is engaged by the ADB to design and run the Fund programme. The Fund is currently scheduled to close on or before 30 June 2024.

The Fund's envisioned impact, aligned with both ADB's Strategy 2030<sup>1</sup> and ASEAN's Sustainable Urbanization Strategy<sup>2</sup>, is to build livable cities that are green, competitive, inclusive, and resilient, and to promote high quality of life, competitive economies, and sustainable environments. The expected outcome of the Fund will be that through the adaptation and adoption of digital solutions, systems and governance in participating ASEAN cities are improved. The Fund aims to improve core functional thematic areas (planning systems, service delivery and financial management) of participating ASEAN cities through adoption of appropriate smart solutions, in particular by way of:

- Strengthening **city planning** processes by enhancing the collection, storage, analysis and utilization of data on geospatial platforms.
- Promoting the use of integrated and smart network management systems to strengthen operational systems and to improve quality and efficiency of **service delivery**.
- Introducing integrated **financial management** information systems to improve institutional credit worthiness and fiscal standing.

Within the AASCTF output areas, cross-cutting priorities, namely gender equality, women's empowerment, social inclusion, and climate change will be mainstreamed. Through the adoption of digital solutions to improve the above key functional areas, and by addressing the cross-cutting issues throughout, the AASCTF will contribute to the following outputs: capacity development, partnerships support, and investment grants with the intent that scalable and replicable best practices across ASEAN are identified (see Figure 2). This document comprises the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy for the AASCTF.

<sup>1</sup> Asian Development Bank. 2018. *Strategy 2030, Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific*. Manila.

<sup>2</sup> ASEAN Secretariat. 2018. *ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy*. Jakarta.



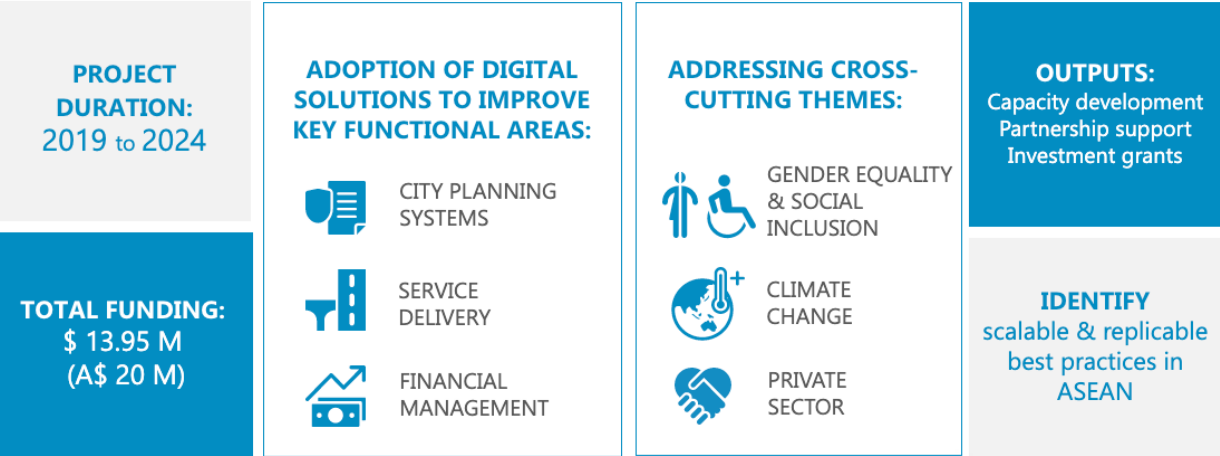


Figure 2: Overview of AASCTF

1.2 AASCTF APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY REVIEW

AASCTF employs a number of approaches and methodologies towards defining, designing, and implementing its city-focused activities across eight countries and 26 cities in the ASEAN region. The breadth of the TF necessitates approaches and methodologies applied in each city vary according to level of intervention (bronze, silver or gold); entry points, in terms of sector or themes as prioritized by local government counterparts; and timeline of ongoing and planned ADB lending activities. The countries, cities and levels are depicted in the below figure, in addition to the types of interventions and activities associated with the levels:document comprises the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy for the AASCTF.

**BRONZE:** Participation in regional capacity development and knowledge sharing events

**SILVER:** Leverage ongoing and/or future projects, namely through the undertaking of proofs of concept and pilots

**GOLD:** Investment grants to be used to support the development of demonstration projects

COUNTRY	CITY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Cambodia	Battambang	x	x	
	Bavet	x		
	Kampot	x		
	Poipet	x		
	Phnom Phen	x		
Indonesia	Banjarmasin	x		
	Cirebon	x		
	Makassar	x	x	x
	Palembang	x		
	Sorong	x		
Lao PDR	Kaysone	x	x	x
	Luang Prabang	x		
	Pakse	x		
	Vientiane	x		
Malaysia	Penang	x	x	
Myanmar	Yangon	x	x	x
Philippines	Baguio	x	x	x
	Coron	x		
	El Nido	x		
	Metro Manila	x		
Thailand	Chonburi	x	x	
Vietnam	Gia Nghia	x		
	Ho Chi Minh	x		
	Hue	x	x	
	Phan Rang	x		
	Phan Thiet	x		

Figure 3: AASCTF Gold, Silver and Bronze Levels

The AASCTF workstreams can be further delineated as follows:

- Foundational Activities** refer to activities which are either preparatory (e.g. City Selection, Concept/Task Order development, etc.) or overarching/cross-cutting (e.g. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Private Sector, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), etc.) the operations and guiding the strategic direction of the AASCTF activities.
- Implementing Activities** refer specifically to technical assistance and investment grant targeted city interventions undertaken in the pilot cities.
- Influencing Activities** refer to widely targeted communication/knowledge sharing (e.g. knowledge platform, webinars, briefings, newsletters, videos, etc.), regional twinning / networking activities and targeted capacity development activities.



Figure 4 shows the AASCTF logic which underpins the delivery of the end of investment outcomes and intended impact.

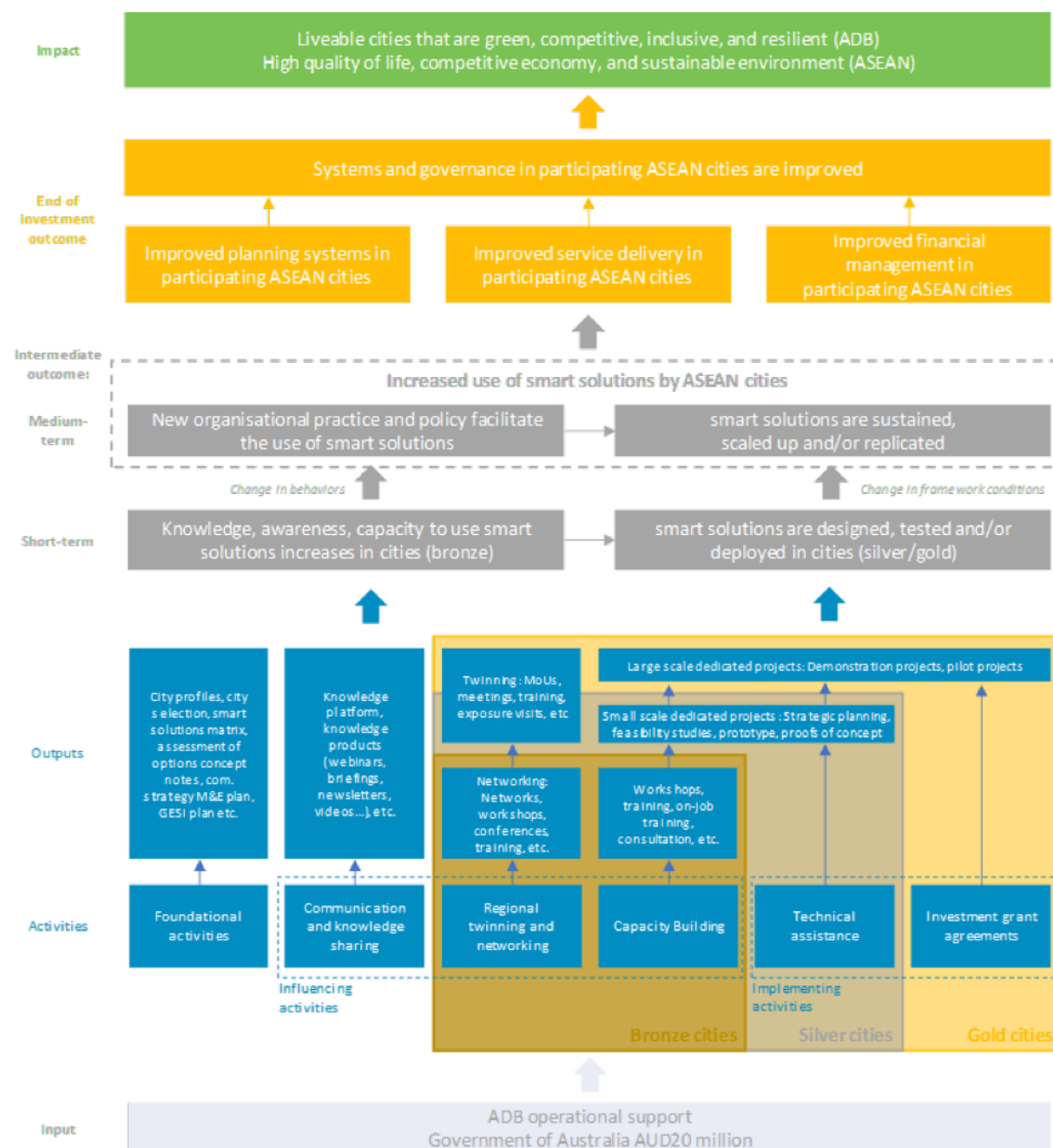


Figure 4: AASCTF Logic Diagram

### 1.3 GESI THEORY OF CHANGE

The AASCTF GESI Theory of Change describes how the desired change will be achieved in the implementation environment. Building on the overall AASCTF programme logic, it sets out the proposed logic which underpins the delivery of the end of investment outcomes and intended impact from a GESI perspective.

Table 4: Links Between End of Investment Outcome and GESI Strategy

AASCTF End of Investment Outcomes	Contribution of GESI to AASCTF End of Facility Outcomes
Improved planning systems in participating ASEAN cities	Smart city planning, policies and strategies that better meet the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups.
Improved service delivery in participating ASEAN cities	Improved service delivery that better meets the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups.
Improved financial management in participating ASEAN cities.	Improved financial management, products and services that better meet the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups

The Theory of Change shown in Table 5 illustrates the causal links, which are based on a number of assumptions (summarized in the next page). For example, the theory of change asserts that if smart city planning activities are informed by analysis of GESI situation / focus groups, the city has effective methods in place to engage with communities and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), then smart city planning, policies and strategies will more effectively meet the needs of GESI focus groups. The causal logic works similarly for the other long-term GESI outcomes, and the end of investment outcomes are causally linked to the overall project intended impact.

Table 5: AASCTF GESI Theory of Change

AASCTF Impact	AASCTF Impact Liveable cities that are green, competitive, inclusive and resilient		
GESI-Focused Impact	Inclusive cities that are more accessible and responsive to the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons and members of other intersectional groups using smart solutions.		
Outcome Theme	Improved planning systems in participating ASEAN cities	Improved service delivery in participating ASEAN cities	Improved financial management in participating ASEAN cities.
Long-term GESI Outcomes	Improved city planning, policies and strategies that better meet the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups.	Improved service delivery that better meets the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups.	Improved financial management, products and services that better meet the needs of women, people with disabilities, children, older persons, and members of other intersectional groups
Intermediate Outcomes (short- to medium-term)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Smart city planning is informed by research/ analyses specifically on GESI focus groups.</li><li>2. City government has effective methods in place to engage with CSOs and communities on urban planning.</li><li>3. Emerging evidence is available that demonstrates the benefits of GESI in urban planning.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Smart city service delivery is informed by research/analyses specifically on who is omitted or unable to access services.</li><li>2. Emerging evidence of improved service delivery access for GESI focus groups.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Financial management products/services are informed by research/analyses/ disaggregated data on GESI focus groups.</li><li>2. Emerging evidence of increased access/ use of financial services.</li></ol>

The Theory of Change is based upon several assumptions– these assumptions need to hold true for the changes to be realized. They include:

- Improved policy and normative change will lead to improved practices and behaviours within AASCTF target cities.
- Increasing evidence on the benefits of GESI in smart city planning systems, service delivery and financial management will incentivize more positive behaviour in both public and private sectors.
- Improved and accessible consultation with communities, women, people with disabilities, older persons, and intersectional groups will provide useful information and experience for improved urban planning, service delivery, and financial management, and city government are willing to use the information to make and sustain improvements through AASCTF interventions.
- Communities and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (e.g. that represent GESI focus groups) are interested in, and have the capacity for, greater participation in urban planning, service delivery, and financial management activity/intervention implementation.



## 2 APPROACH TO AND AIM OF THE GESI STRATEGY



Consistent with both DFAT<sup>1</sup> and ADB<sup>2, 3</sup>, policies and approaches on gender, this GESI Strategy follows a “twin track” approach (see Figure 4). The first ‘track’ is the development of specific GESI activities that target efforts to pilot and/or demonstrate new and emerging ideas that hold potential for significant benefits to women, people with disabilities, and intersectional groups. The second “track” is mainstreaming GESI principles across all initiatives and operations.

The aim of this GESI Strategy is to:

- Highlight the GESI context within the AASCTF countries and cities, including identifying specific focus groups, and identifying challenges, barriers, opportunities and needs. This analysis is provided in the below sections.
- Identify entry points and approaches to integrating GESI principles across all AASCTF activities, as well as undertaking GESI-focused initiatives.

This Strategy is a living document, intended to be refined and improved as the AASCTF evolves.



Figure 5: GESI Twin Track Approach

<sup>1</sup> DFAT. 2016. *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy*. Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> Asian Development Bank. 2019. *Strategy 2030: Operational Plan for Priority 2 – Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019 – 2024*.

<sup>3</sup> Asian Development Bank. 2012. *Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming Categories of ADB Projects*.

2.1 GESI PRINCIPLES

This GESI Strategy adopts the following principles to foster gender equality and social inclusion through the project cycle supported by AASCTF. AASCTF operationalizes these principles in the design, monitoring, implementation and assessment of AASCTF, as outlined in Figure 6.

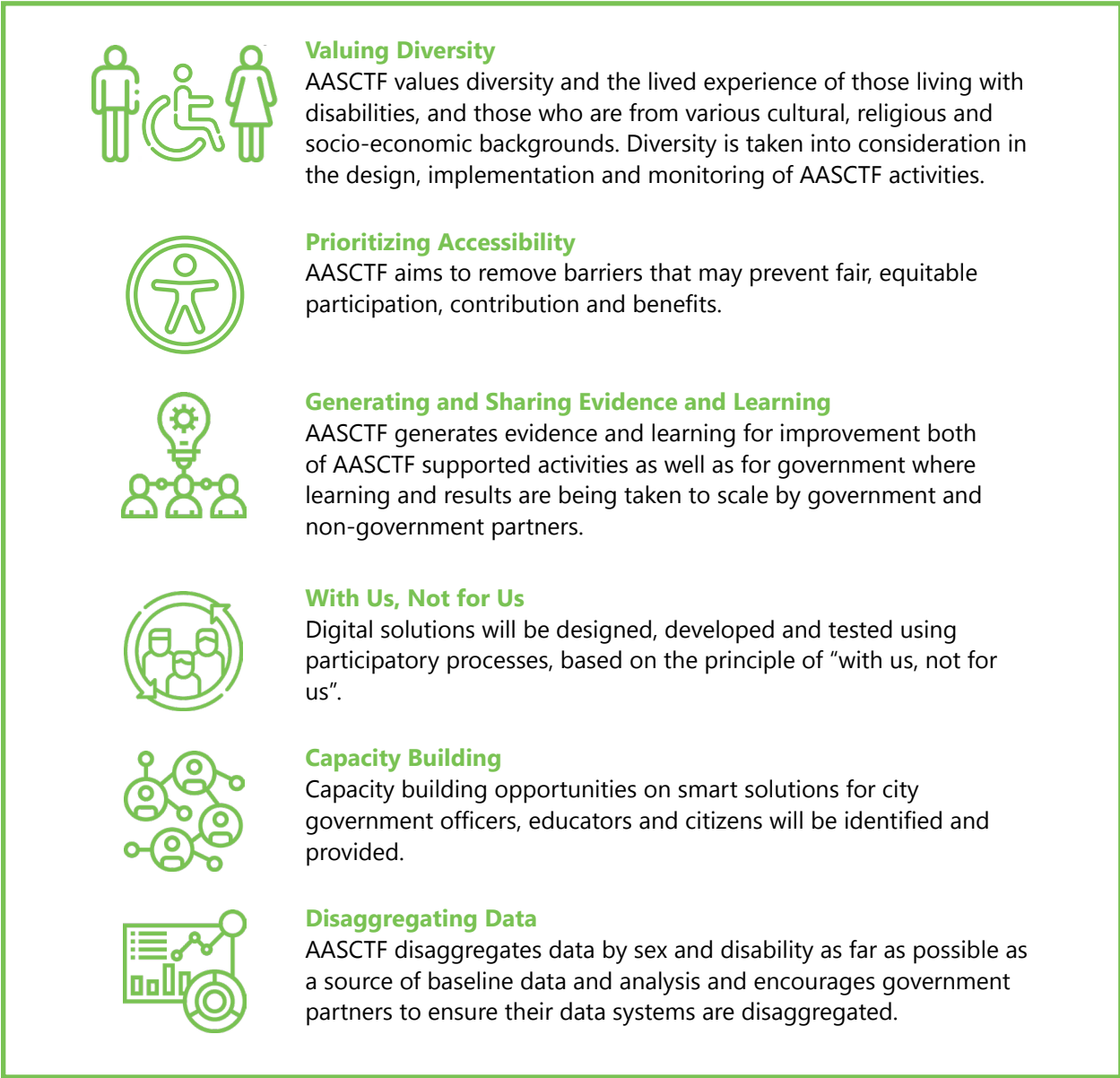


Figure 6: GESI Principles

2.2 AASCTF’S GESI FOCUS GROUPS

The AASCTF is unique in terms of its breadth of scope, levels of intervention, and nature of activities. It is also unique in its approach which works with city governments to address city needs and priorities. As discussed further below, the gender and social inclusion contexts within the AASCTF countries and cities are vastly variable, with specific challenges, constraints, opportunities and barriers. To promote GESI through AASCTF interventions, this Strategy identifies the vulnerable groups that will be targeted, noting that within each intervention there will be a need to further verify and validate vulnerability and marginalization within that city, over and above the broader analysis in this Strategy. AASCTF will focus on the following groups that are particularly vulnerable in ASEAN city contexts and in relation to increasing digitalization trends:

- Women and girls
- People with Disabilities
- Older persons
- Children

AASCTF recognizes that gender considerations, particularly with regards to women and girls, are a fundamental part of the TF programme. Women and girls can face a range of constraints that make them more vulnerable in urban contexts than men and boys. These constraints can be the result of women’s biological roles (e.g. child-birth and caring) – compounded by a socio-economic status, poverty, lack of access to services, as well as socio-cultural norms, traditions and policies (restrictions on women’s behaviours, violence against women) that may inhibit their participation in the work force.

People with disabilities face a range of factors that limit their ability to participate in urban environments, including access to services and spaces, which in turn, impacts on their ability to work and live prosperous, independent lives.

Focusing on children and older persons has been informed by a life cycle approach, to reflect that individuals face different risks and vulnerabilities at different stages in life.

AASCTF also recognizes intersectionality – understanding that people experience varying degrees of disadvantage based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, age, indigeneity, economic status and other characteristics. The focus groups identified above are not homogenous groups, and intersectionality acknowledges the different ways that people experience discrimination and exclusion. Poverty is highlighted as a key intersectional issue across the focus groups identified for AASCTF. Poverty exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and the above identified groups face a range of constraints that make them more vulnerable to poverty. For example, women with disabilities may face double marginalization because of gender norms and stigma towards persons with disabilities. However, a woman with disability may have lower levels of exclusion if they are not living in poverty and have better access to services and resources.

This GESI Strategy provides further discussion of the GESI context for GESI focus groups within AASCTF countries and cities in the below sections.



## 3 CONTEXT



### 3.1 GESI POLICY LANDSCAPE

Underpinning AASCTF's approach to GESI is the policy framework of both the Australian government and the ADB, both of which promote gender equality and social inclusion as an overarching objective.

#### 3.1.1 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

As an Australian government-funded program, AASCTF is guided by the overarching framework and principles laid out in relevant DFAT strategy documents. These include:

- [Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper](#) provides a framework for Australia's engagement with the Asia Pacific Region and the globe. GESI are key values for Australia and integral to Australia's approach to aid and diplomacy. Australia promotes and invests in gender equality and social inclusion to protect and strengthen human rights and support increased productivity and stability in other countries.
- [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy \(2016\)](#) outlines three priorities for the Australian government's work on gender equality: 1) enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peacebuilding; 2) promoting women's economic empowerment; and 3) ending violence against women and girls.
- [Development for All 2015-2020 - Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program \(2015\)](#) aim is to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities, including through enhancing their participation and empowerment as contributors, leaders, and decision-makers. Two of the guiding principles for DFAT's work are 'developing programs and policies based on evidence' and 'supporting an active and central role for people with disabilities'.
- [Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response \(2020\)](#) outlines Australia's approach to tackling COVID-19 in the region, including how Australia's development program is pivoting to focus on the pandemic's response and recovery, together with development partners.

### 3.1.2 Asian Development Bank

- [ADB's Policy on Gender and Development \(1998\)](#) is the guiding framework for gender and development. The Policy adopts gender mainstreaming as the key strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across ADB operations.
- [ADB Strategy 2030 - Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019 - 2024](#) further builds on experience and aligns with Strategy 2030 and the SDGs to meet the rapidly changing needs of the region. It also reflects findings and recommendations from the gender vision background paper prepared by the ADB Gender Equity Thematic Group and latest thematic evaluation of ADB gender equality operations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Department. Strategic Operational Priorities include 1). Women's economic empowerment increased; 2). Gender equality in human development enhanced; 3). Gender equality in decision-making and leadership enhanced; 4). Women's time poverty and drudgery reduced; 5). Women's resilience to external shocks strengthened.
- The project-specific [gender action plan \(GAP\)](#) is a tool used by ADB to ensure "gender mainstreaming" is tangible and explicitly visible in project design and implementation. The project GAP mirrors the project outputs and is an integral part of project design. GAPs include clear targets, gender design features and indicators to ensure women's participation and benefits.

Reference is also made to The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which calls for a new and transformative vision, and establishes the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), which are integrated and indivisible, with gender equality as a central priority. The 2030 Agenda is a commitment by all countries and stakeholders to take a new direction towards sustainable development through stronger universal action, new partnerships, adequate financing and an integrated approach to achieving all goals. Gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed as explicit priorities through the stand-alone Goal 5 and by mainstreaming gender equality across the SDGs. In recognizing multi-dimensional inequality within and between countries, the 2030 Agenda is a commitment to "leaving no one behind". The ADB and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June 2016, in which the two organizations pledged to strengthen their partnership and cooperation to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, enacted in the publication of [Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Baseline and Pathways for Transformative Change by 2030](#). The report provides a baseline for monitoring progress on gender equality within the SDG framework and identifies priority actions towards achieving gender equality in the region. It provides the first assessment for Asia and the Pacific of how the 2030 Agenda is to be achieved by addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

### 3.2 A PATHWAY TO INCLUSIVE SMART CITIES IN ASEAN

The AASCTF recognises that the ASEAN region's future is linked to the fate of its cities. The region's urban areas are home to over one third of its total population, and they generate more than two thirds of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The pace of urbanisation and economic growth has left many cities grappling with how to provide adequate housing, services, and infrastructure to meet the needs of their populations. Poverty, inequality, violence, crime, and environmental damage all occur where the urbanization process is not well managed or is under pressure. Women, older persons, children and people with disabilities, among other vulnerable and marginalised groups in cities suffer these impacts disproportionately in rapidly urbanizing environments.

Inclusive cities have four dimensions, as follows<sup>1</sup>:



Figure 7: Dimensions of Inclusive Cities

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, S., and Nixon, N. 2019. *Inclusive Asian Cities – A Discussion Paper*. The Asia Foundation.



New technologies and digital solutions are providing opportunities to address these four interacting dimensions in addition to a broad array of urban challenges – offering an unprecedented chance to improve the inclusivity of cities. Central to the AASCTF approach is working with ASEAN cities to adopt smart solutions to address city needs and challenges. A “smart” city incorporates data and digital technologies into infrastructure and services—all with an eye to solving specific public problems and making the urban environment more liveable, sustainable, productive, and inclusive.<sup>1</sup> There is however, no guarantee that the diffusion of smart solutions will automatically benefit all citizens. Key is the need to link smart cities to inclusive growth and development, recognising the enabling role that city governments can play to support innovative solution delivery, capacity building and upscaling of smart city efforts to be inclusive.<sup>2</sup> The AASCTF path to smart cities in ASEAN region needs to be considered and understood from a political economy perspective, in which both changes to knowledge and behaviours, and changes to conditions are necessary to achieve the proposed outcomes.

The AASCTF works directly with city governments and their visions, agendas and priorities for their cities. In this way, the AASCTF activities are constrained by the requirement for endorsement by these important actors. Recognising the political economy forces at play within city governments and more broadly within cities, is important, as it is these forces that will play a central role in determining the ability of the AASCTF to deliver the end of investment outcomes it seeks to deliver, including specifically on GESI. City governments are vastly different across ASEAN countries, with divergent capacities, priorities, constraints, and willingness to address GESI.

In addition, city governments in the ASEAN region are often characterised by complicated bureaucratic structures and lack dedicated units or departments for urban planning, and which work (and have input and oversight) across all city agencies. Thus, urban planning decisions are often taken across multiple units or ministries and at different levels. Governance changes can therefore be slow, particularly where AASCTF aims to shift attitudes, norms and behaviours (and particularly those related to GESI). These are shaped - not only by political and economic factors - but by embedded social, religious and cultural beliefs and norms that can result in discrimination and stigma. Further, institutional management of increasing urbanisation challenges at the city or municipal level is often viewed as gender neutral. However, women and men participate in cities in different ways. The underrepresentation of women and people with disabilities in formal decision-making bodies and in urban planning systems exacerbates this view of city planning and service delivery. The exclusion of diverse voices from formal and informal consultation and city development decision-making mechanisms results in significant service delivery gaps. This Strategy advocates for governance structures and systems that are built for women's and marginalised group's participation to happen more systematically in urban local bodies, so they are institutionalized in city government structures, and systems.

Other constraints common to many of ASEAN cities includes a lack of empowerment of city government vis-à-vis central governments to effectively provide urban services, financial management, and city planning. In addition, there is recognition of the need to look beyond the traditional arguments of weak capacity and lack of political will at the local level, to focus on improving the role of city governments in delivering services in the context of multi-level governance systems. Persistent challenges include weak city government control over human resources and limited financial management and autonomy. These factors constrain the extent of control AASCTF has over aspects of activities. AASCTF therefore focuses on activity areas where results are emerging from work to date and areas that receive support from city governments, promoting the potential of AASCTF to effect positive change on GESI themes. This GESI Strategy recognises the role that AASCTF, working alongside city governments in ASEAN, can play in putting in place the building blocks for stronger, greener, more resilient, inclusive and competitive cities through smart solutions.

### 3.3 OVERVIEW OF GESI CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ASEAN

Building on the above section, this GESI Strategy turns to characterizing the GESI challenges and opportunities in AASCTF's ASEAN countries and cities. This section draws on the GESI profiles developed and provided in Appendix 1. These profiles seek to outline the GESI context within which AASCTF is operating, in order to support AASCTF at a strategic level to better inform engagement with city governments on entry points and allowing AASCTF to more deliberately focus attention on specific challenges and needs. The GESI profiles have been developed through desk-based research, using available data. The focus is on providing a country level GESI context, and highlighting gold and silver AASCTF city GESI contexts, where possible. These profiles will be supplemented by targeted surveys across all AASCTF cities with civilians, NGOs, government and other stakeholders, conducted in conjunction with ADB country/city offices. The results of these surveys are anticipated to fill the many city level data gaps in relation to service delivery, financial management, and planning, including identifying needs, challenges and opportunities experienced by GESI focus groups and further informing the targeted direction and operation of AASCTF in each city and this GESI Strategy.

This section is arranged to describe the context for women, people with disabilities, children and older persons. Central to the description of context for GESI focus groups is the assessment in relation to financial management, service delivery (and access), and city planning considerations.

<sup>1</sup> McKinsey & Company. 2018. *McKinsey Global Institute: Smart Cities in Southeast Asia*. Discussion Paper. [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com).

<sup>2</sup> OECD. 2020. *Smart Cities and Inclusive Growth: Building on the Outcomes of the 1st OECD Roundtable on Smart Cities and Inclusive Growth*. [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

3.1 Gender Context

Despite advances in policies and programs to promote gender equality across most ASEAN countries, there remain significant disparities between the lives of women/girls and men/boys. Snapshot indicators of gender disparity across the region are provided by the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index (GGI) (2020)<sup>1</sup>. The GGI measures the extent of gender-based gaps in four key dimensions (economic participation and opportunity, education attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment).

The Philippines can be seen to rank among the countries with the smallest gender gap (at 16 out of a total 153 countries) and Myanmar at the other end (ranking 114 out of a total 153 countries). The countries with the greatest disparities include Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar. Within gender equality in society, gender gaps in education are relatively narrow in most countries, although maternal mortality and financial and digital inclusion are significant improvement opportunities in most parts of ASEAN. Violence against women continues to be prevalent in many countries. Most countries in ASEAN can also improve substantially on political voice and empowerment.

Table 6: Gender Gap Index Rankings in ASEAN

Country	AASCTF Country Global Gender Gap Ranking (out of 153 countries)
Cambodia	89
Indonesia	85
Lao PDR	43
Malaysia	104
Myanmar	114
Philippines	16
Thailand	75
Vietnam	87

In terms of laws and policies promoting gender equality, it is impressive to note that all the ASEAN Member States have either accessed or ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination

of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), thereby affirming their commitment to gender equity, non-discrimination, and women’s empowerment. However, in practice, personal and customary law often takes precedence. For example, in Indonesia women’s equity, agency and financial empowerment are compromised by the presence of discriminatory social norms and cultural reliance on religious laws<sup>2</sup>.

Even when the constitution guarantees equality and there is no customary law, women’s freedom is curtailed by the application of a traditional/cultural codes of conduct. This is true in the case of Cambodia, the ‘Chbab Srey’, which is the traditional code of conduct for women, and largely defines women’s everyday life based on stereotypical roles of women that encourage submissiveness.

The Philippines stands out for the extent of gender equality in political representation and the economy. In the city of Baguio, women now dominate the Baguio City government, with 56% of the departments headed by women, and 42% of the total city workforce being women in 2018<sup>3</sup>. Laos also fairs well in relation to economic participation and opportunity (ranking 3rd out of 153 countries)<sup>4</sup>, however this is not matched at a political level, where women’s representation is low.

Myanmar fairs particularly poorly, and according to the City Life Survey<sup>5</sup> conducted by The Asia Foundation, urban women and men in Myanmar are equally educated, but women are almost twice as likely to be unemployed and not looking for a job. Furthermore, women are more likely to be responsible for childcare and housework, with women, who spend 11–15 hours per day on domestic labour, outnumbering men by a factor of more than four in this regard. These data strongly suggest that that women have a very different urban life experience than men in Myanmar. A key finding was that city governments and civil society must empower women to engage more extensively in municipal affairs. Like Myanmar, Malaysia also has a particularly poor record on political empowerment.

The McKinsey Global Institute published a report<sup>6</sup> (2016) on advancing women’s equality in the Asia Pacific. A key graphic from this report, of which is reproduced below, highlights issues around digital and financial inequality in ASEAN. Levels of financial and digital inclusion inequality are characterized using a traffic light system where green represents low disparity and red represent extremely high disparity. It is evident that there are significant improvement opportunities in these areas, not least in obtaining data to support increased understanding of digital inclusion.

<sup>2</sup> ASEAN Secretariat. 2016. *Projected Gender Impact of the ASEAN Economic Community*. <https://library.fes.de>.  
<sup>3</sup> Agoot, L. 2018. *Women Dominate Baguio City Government Workforce*. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1027807>.  
<sup>4</sup> World Economic Forum. 2020. *Global Gender Gap Report*. [www3.weforum.org](http://www3.weforum.org).  
<sup>5</sup> The Asia Foundation. 2017. *Myanmar City Life Survey – Pilot Initiative*. <https://asiafoundation.org>.  
<sup>6</sup> McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality in Asia Pacific*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum. 2020. *Global Gender Gap Report*. [www3.weforum.org](http://www3.weforum.org).



Table 7: Digital and Financial Inclusion in ASEAN

Country	Financial Inclusion (female/male ratio)	Digital Inclusion (female/male ratio)
Philippines	1.00	No Data
Lao PDR	No Data	No Data
Thailand	0.84	0.98
Indonesia	0.81	0.86
Vietnam	1.00	No Data
Cambodia	0.80	0.97
Malaysia	0.86	0.96
Myanmar	0.60	No Data

In ASEAN cities, women play a major economic role as business owners and entrepreneurs, especially at the micro and small enterprise levels. A glance through any ASEAN country reveals the presence (and in some cases, dominance) of women as micro and small entrepreneurs and retailers. These are some of the biggest growth sectors in ASEAN and are also some of the most vulnerable to shocks. As noted in ASEAN (2016)<sup>7</sup>, while women in the commercial space are aplenty, the reason for their presence in such large numbers is reflective of deeper socio-economic barriers, including in accessing credit, formal markets, and new technologies allowing them to rise above the micro and small scales. Financial services delivered digitally are powerful tools to empower women and marginalised groups – who disproportionately lack access to formal finance globally. For example, digital transactions have been shown to support remittance, of which 60% of recipients are women. Digital payments can also improve the poor’s access to other city-level services including utilities (e.g. through e-government applications or pay-as-you-go utilities)<sup>8</sup>. There are several examples of private sector innovation in this area. For example, ridesharing firm Grab has launched Grab Financial – a platform which provides microfinancing, insurance, and other services, primarily to Southeast Asians who were previously unbanked. Similarly, mobile money provider, Ascend Money, serves more than 30 million people in the region through its e-wallet app and its 50,000-strong agent network. The mobile wallet supports bill payments, mobile top-ups, money transfers and online and offline payments – without the need for a personal bank account.

Challenges that impede national and regional level efforts for promoting women entrepreneurship and business development are rooted in the socio-cultural normative framework of the region and continue to hold ground for the lack of concerted efforts to address them. Inherent forms of disadvantage like unequal access to resources and credit, unequal representation on committees which manage markets, among others, impede women’s potential and initiative (as evidenced in Figure 7). While laws across

ASEAN generally do not prevent women from holding property and bank accounts, bank accounts and land are mostly held by men thereby distancing women from any modes of formal financing. There are also very few examples of female-targeted financial products and services in most ASEAN countries. An example from Indonesia is the use of smart cards which can be used for payments as well as for accessing government services. The Pekanbaru’s Smart Card allows users to access 30 forms of licensing online; saving time and money for small businesses. Similarly, Bandung’s Smart Card can be used to make government payments, like school fees.<sup>9</sup>

As in the example from Indonesia above, Governments in the region are increasingly transitioning to e-government as a tool to manage back-office systems as well as to enhance the reach and impact of planning and public service delivery. However, much of e-government policy and implementation does not consider the differentiated access to, and impact of, technology for men and women. There is also little awareness and capacity to address the gender dimension of e-government. There are few examples in ASEAN countries in which governments have offered online services that specifically address women’s needs and decision-making role. Indonesia has “e-Musrenbang” or participatory planning and budgeting platforms in place that enable local governments to better engage citizens and discuss community aspirations in a formal forum, which can then be reflected in programs and activities. More recently “e-Musrenbang” processes have been implemented in many cities, including Makassar City. This platform provides information about city planning and makes it easier for communities to create proposals for their neighbourhood. Key challenges to the process in Makassar are noted to include lack of mechanisms for communities to monitor implementation of proposed projects/programs, and poor engagement mechanisms between city government and communities. Another example of improving gender sensitivity in urban planning is geospatial-based planning tool “Ur-scape” used by ADB’s Future Cities, Future Women Initiative in Bandung, Indonesia. Further, on the supply side, there is very little information (particularly at the city level) on usage and uptake of digital services by women as countries do not maintain sex-disaggregated statistics of citizen usage.

7 ASEAN Secretariat. 2016. *Projected Gender Impact of the ASEAN Economic Community*. <https://library.fes.de>.

8 OECD. 2018. *Financial inclusion and consumer empowerment in Southeast Asia*.

9 ASEAN. 2018. *ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy*. <https://asean.org>.

In the Philippines and Vietnam, women are two times as likely to occupy jobs at high risk of automation as males. In Indonesia and Thailand, they are one and a half times more likely.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, only 34% of computer science undergraduates in ASEAN are women. Core to smart cities is the incorporation of technology, not least in supporting and furthering GESI, but also in understanding the barriers and challenges thereof in relation to GESI focus groups. The region has the widest mobile gender gap of any region in the world, by some margin - women are 28% less likely than men to own a mobile phone, and 58% less likely than men to use mobile internet. As above, barriers to ownership and use of mobile phones and digital technology are noted to be economic and normative. In the context of COVID-19, in which the world has turned to virtual services and solutions, and access to and use of digital technologies have become a lifeline, the existing digital divide is likely to increasingly prevent women from accessing life-enhancing services for education, health, and financial inclusion. In this space the AASCTF's approach to smart solutions with the right and enhanced strategic approach can be efficient tools for enhancing resilience, inclusion and GESI empowerment in target cities. Emerging technologies include mobile platforms that serve as digital hubs for community engagement, allowing residents to access news, services, awareness materials, borrow and share tools and equipment, participate in savings groups, and access educational courses.

The above summary provides an indication of the context for women in AASCTF's focus countries. The AASCTF aims to improve city planning, financial management and service delivery and, from a gender perspective, this means working with cities to better meet the needs of women. It is clear that for AASCTF, opportunities lie in reaching the "last mile" in target cities. This will mean ensuring that smart solutions recognise the importance of ensuring that digitally enabled delivery systems promote social inclusion (including service delivery kiosks or community multimedia telecentres in opening up spaces by playing the role of mediators and translators between community and intersectional groups). Entry points also encompass fostering mechanisms for increased collaboration, dialogue and participation between city government and women; as well as challenging norms through awareness raising and capacity development for gender equality in ASEAN. Collaboration on regional solutions, such as financing and knowledge sharing are also identified as a powerful catalyst for gender equality. As are interventions that seek to equip women with the digital skills needed to ensure future employment.

### 3.2 Disability Context

The disability experience resulting from the interaction of health conditions, personal factors, and environmental factors varies greatly. Persons with disabilities are diverse and heterogeneous, while stereotypical views of disability emphasize wheelchair users and a few other "classic" groups such as blind people and deaf people. Disability encompasses the child born with a congenital condition such as cerebral palsy or the woman who loses her leg to a land-mine, or the middle-aged man with severe arthritis, or the older person with dementia, among many others. Health conditions can be visible or invisible; temporary or long term; static, episodic, or degenerating; painful or inconsequential. Note that many people with disabilities do not consider themselves to be unhealthy. Also, while disability correlates with disadvantage, not all people with disabilities are equally disadvantaged. Women with disabilities experience the combined disadvantages associated with gender as well as disability. People who experience mental health conditions or intellectual impairments may also be more disadvantaged in many settings than those who experience physical or sensory impairments.<sup>1</sup>

As one of the most vulnerable and marginalised social groups, persons with disabilities — at around 690 million persons in Asia and the Pacific — continue to be at risk of exclusion from the benefits and outcomes of social, economic and environmental development in their country. Persons with disabilities face barriers to full and effective participation across all sectors of society, including employment, political participation, education and social protection.<sup>2</sup>

Urban environments in ASEAN highlight the importance of accessibility which is the breaking down of barriers across sectors that prevent persons with disabilities and the broader population from participating in society on an equal basis with others. This includes everyday routines that able-bodied persons enjoy; entering or exiting a residential building, crossing a street, going to school, or entering an office building, as well as the ability to communicate, which are common barriers to employment and education opportunities. Full and effective integration programs are still lagging in ASEAN. Technology to ease accessibility processes are readily available, which, combined with effective policies, is the space that AASCTF interventions may best be directed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. 2011. *World report on disability*. <https://www.who.int>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). 2018. *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



Accessibility is closely linked to AASCTF focus areas on service delivery and planning. Standards of accessibility vary across the region and are often not comprehensive in responding to the barriers to diverse disabilities. Although some countries and areas report high levels of accessibility of, for example, government buildings, in many cases the concept of accessibility is confined to issues faced by persons with mobility impairments, such as wheelchair users, and consideration of varied forms of disability is lacking (for example intellectual disability). There is a need across AASCTF countries to work on effective methods for transfer of knowledge and information, limitations to which remain inaccessible technologies and means of communication.<sup>4</sup> Innovations in disability planning and service provision include in Vietnam in which the Disability Information System/Software (DIS) has been incorporated into the government's National Target Program under the Ministry of Health. DIS helps the health staff enter data into the software and submit data to the district health centres. DIS also helps the Ministry of Health to identify people with disabilities who need rehabilitation programs, and the progress of the patient. This is a small example of smart solutions working to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Inclusion of disability perspectives in disaster risk reduction planning and management is identified as a core need across most of AASCTF countries and cities, with climate change and increasing disaster risk a prominent issue. The 3rd ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights Regional Dialogue on Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community<sup>5</sup> emphasized this, finding that “knowledge on disaster preparedness should be adequately shared to persons with disabilities including to children with disabilities.” UN ESCAP findings evidence only eight countries and areas in the region reportedly having disaster risk reduction plans and strategies which reflect disability perspectives (with Thailand being the only AASCTF country). The forum also noted that participation of persons with disabilities in policy-making processes was highlighted as a key point in ensuring the mainstreaming and full implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities.

In terms of the factors that increase the vulnerability of people with disabilities to poverty, research undertaken by Monash University highlights that reduced access to education and health services is a significant contributing factor<sup>6</sup>. This inevitably leads to reduced employment opportunities where, for example, in Indonesia, only 38% of people with disabilities (excluding vision disabilities) participate in the workforce compared to 66% without a disability.

There are also a range of socio-cultural and institutional factors that limit the access of people with disabilities to various services. For example, social and cultural attitudes about disabilities can influence

whether a family will send their disabled child to school; a lack of (and poor access to) schools designed for children with disabilities can contribute to lower education levels; and high costs associated with transporting and mobilising people with disabilities to services can be a significant drain on household income, compounded among the urban poor who often live in informal settlements. Additionally, government laws that regulate infrastructure specifications to facilitate the mobility of people with disabilities are rarely enforced and where infrastructure is built, it is seldom maintained. Furthermore, coverage in government-funded disability benefit programmes is as low as 28% in the Asia-Pacific region<sup>7</sup>.

The availability and comparability of disability data remain a persistent challenge across ASEAN. Differing concepts of disability as well as differing approaches and methods to collecting disability data result in a lack of comparability within and between countries and areas. It also means there is a general lack of reliable data from which policy can be made. As a result, persons with disabilities and the issues that limit their full participation in society are often underrepresented and unaddressed in policy-making.

3.3 Context for Older Persons

A population is considered to be “ageing when 7-14% of the population is over the age of 60, and “aged” when more than 14% of the population is over the age of 60. Table 8 shows the status of ASEAN countries in 2019, with nearly all considered to be “ageing” populations (bar Laos at 6.6% and Thailand which is already considered aged). It also shows by which year the population will be considered “aged”, and the projected status by 2050. Many ASEAN countries are projected to have an “aged” population by the early to mid-2030s, and by the 2050s have a very significant population of “aged” persons.

Table 8: From “Ageing” to “Aged” in ASEAN<sup>8</sup>

Country	Ageing (%)			Aged (%)		
Cambodia	2019	7.4	2044	14.6	2050	16.0
Indonesia		9.2	2033	14.0		19.2
Lao PDR		6.6	2046	14.0		16.1
Malaysia		10.4	2031	14.1		23.1
Myanmar		10.0	2033	14.0		18.5
Philippines		8.0	2050	14.2		14.2
Thailand		18.4	-	-		35.1
Vietnam		12.0	2023	14.0		28.3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> 3rd ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community,19-21 June 2017, Phuket, Thailand.

<sup>6</sup> Monash University (2017). *Disability in Indonesia: What can we learn from the data?* <https://www.monash.edu>.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). 2018. *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific*.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2017. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision - Special Aggregates, DVD Edition*.

Women comprise the majority of older persons in ASEAN in 2019 with older women more likely to live alone; experience higher rates of poverty by virtue of being less likely to have an income, or own property, have a pension; face problems in accessing government services (health, education, housing, etc.) and decent work; and more likely to be subject to neglect, abuse and discrimination. As with the above section on disability in ASEAN, pension coverage remains low across ASEAN. Furthermore, most older persons live with their children in the region, however women are more likely to live alone than men. Most older persons do not want to become dependent on others. Indeed, one reason for people continuing to work in old age is to avoid dependency, since this often result in a loss of status. In Indonesia, around 31% of older persons provided financial support to other households. When older persons are unable to work and, therefore, support others, the likelihood of their social exclusion can increase. The inability to participate in social affairs in the community poses a challenge to a person's dignity and may also impact on social cohesion.<sup>9</sup>

Ageing populations are also a key factor in disability prevalence. Some of the biggest challenges faced by people happen during old age, as the capacity to work gradually reduces due to increasing disability.<sup>10</sup> This is particularly pertinent considering ageing populations in ASEAN as noted above. Body functions often decline with age, and according to UN ESCAP<sup>11</sup> in many Asian countries, more than half of all persons with disabilities are older than 60 years.

In order to overcome the negative consequences of an ageing populations, ASEAN needs to harness technology, while maximizing the benefits of longevity for inclusive and sustained economic growth. AASCTF's focus in this space can seek to assist cities in planning for ageing through fostering adoption and diffusion of age-related smart technology solutions and lifelong learning. Here, key examples include remote and telework platforms, remote and virtual education and training, human resources and age diversity management, cloud-based job matching services, and adaptive technologies. Tapping technological solutions for education, from customized online courses to more engaging and participatory platforms such as games and simulations, can produce solid learning outcomes at affordable costs. More work needs to be done to close the "gray divide," the gap between technology and the ability of seniors to use it. This includes better connecting elderly workers to available and emerging technologies. Examples include enhanced information outreach and improved user-friendliness of services and devices.

Promoting age-friendly environment is one of the appropriate approaches to support quality of life toward ageing populations. However, the information regarding age-friendly environments in ASEAN is

still limited. Tiraphat et al.<sup>12</sup> in their study on age-friendly environment in ASEAN found that the highest inadequacies in ASEAN include:

- Participating in an emergency-response training session or drills which addressed the needs of older residents;
- Enrolling in any form of education or training, either formal or non-formal in any subject;
- Having opportunities for paid employment;
- Involvement in decision making about important political, economic and social issues in the community; and
- Having personal care or assistance needs met in the older adult's home setting by government/private care services.

These needs coincide with AASCTF focus areas and provide clear entry points of AASCTF to assist cities in better meeting the needs of older persons.

### 3.4 Context for Children

Rapid urbanization has been an important transformative force in the region that has had an impact on the ability of ASEAN member states to work towards securing the rights of children and meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly around the call to "leave no one behind". However, as noted in the 2019 ASEAN and UNICEF "Children in ASEAN" report, not all urban children are benefiting equally, and a substantial part of the urban population is being left behind. Urban (and, increasingly, semi-urban and industrialized) areas face growing populations in ASEAN with inadequate infrastructure to support this growth. Key needs include improving urban conditions and access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and the provision of safe and healthy environments.

The challenge of children without access to adequate shelter has been an ongoing and growing concern in ASEAN. Data from Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Myanmar and Cambodia show that from just above 20% (Indonesia) to more than 50% (Cambodia) of the urban population was living in slums in 2014.<sup>13</sup> The risks to children of living in urban slums are numerous and include insecure housing, limited water and sewage infrastructure and increased risk of disease. There are indications, nevertheless, that slum populations are decreasing in some regions of ASEAN: In Lao PDR, the proportion of the urban population living in slums dropped by half from 2005 to 2014, and decreases were also seen in Cambodia, and Vietnam. Poverty, previously predominantly a rural phenomenon, is becoming increasingly urban.<sup>14</sup>

9 MAKHOTA. 2018. *Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy*. Cardno.

10 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2017. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision - Special Aggregates*, DVD Edition.

11 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). 2018. *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific*.

12 Tiraphat, S., et al. 2020. *Age-Friendly Environments in ASEAN Plus Three: Case Studies from Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand*. International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health. Vol. 17, 4523.

13 ASEAN & UNICEF. 2019. *Report: Children in ASEAN: 30 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <https://www.unicef.org>.

14 Ibid.



ASEAN member states have made great strides in increasing access to- and participation in primary education. However, further development within the education sectors across the ASEAN region is necessary to ensure robust intersections between education and learning and the demands of the future, increasingly digital, labour market.<sup>15</sup> Assisting ASEAN cities to implement digital learning technologies and services is a key entry point for AASCTF in relation to children. Here, focus on ways to promote and enhance access to digital technologies, particularly among poorer households and in informal settlements will be important.

Additional entry points for AASCTF to assist cities in better meeting the needs of urban children will be in strengthening means of engagement with children in order to understand the unique vulnerabilities they face, as well as the spatial, social and economic barriers that prevent them from accessing services. Furthermore, efforts may be best directed to expanding the availability of data and evidence on urban children, promoting safe urban environments through smart solutions, and working to enhance city planning and budgeting so children and adolescents' voices are heard, and meaningful participation may be facilitated.

### 3.5 COVID-19

Current analysis of inclusive cities necessarily includes a standalone discussion on the COVID-19 pandemic which continues to wreak havoc on societies and economies in many ASEAN countries and cities, with particularly severe ramifications for AASCTF GESI focus groups. Projections suggest that economic shocks may drag millions below the poverty line, with potentially devastating implications for a region that is home to two-thirds of the world's poor. The collapse of labour-intensive export industries such as garment-making, handicrafts and fisheries, as well as loss of revenue from tourism and foreign remittances has already caused widespread income and job losses. These impacts are disproportionately affecting groups of people marginalised due to their socio-economic standing, gender, immigration status or race / ethnicity in this region.<sup>16</sup>

As highlighted by Djalante et al.<sup>17</sup>, the full consequences of the pandemic recession on the national economies of ASEAN states remain unknown and largely unanticipated. In the first half of 2020, regional growth contracted sharply to 0.5%, the lowest rate since 1967. Regional outlooks for employment recovery remain bleak and prolonged periods of financial stress are predicted in most sectors, with exceptions in niche sectors like e-commerce. Under these conditions where national and city governments face

mounting pressure to re-open economically, second waves of the pandemic are emerging as populations return to work. Indonesia and the Philippines are still on the brink of a first wave of COVID-19 and Lao PDR and Myanmar conduct business as usual amidst sporadic testing and critically under-prepared health systems.<sup>18</sup>

A key impact of COVID-19 has been on reproductive health services. In the Philippines COVID-19 resulted in the suspension of family planning services by over 50% in March 2020 as resources were directed to COVID-response and away from sexual and reproductive health services, and mobility challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions affected women's ability to access services. Indeed, even before COVID-10, the state of sexual and reproductive health of women and girls was already declared a "national social emergency" in 2019. Data from the 2017 National Democratic Health Survey showed that one in five girls is a mother by age 19, and two thirds of women are not using any form of birth control. It added that 24 % of women with little or no education have unmet need for family planning, leading to a lot of unplanned and even forced pregnancies. This is by no means a unique challenge, with similar issues experienced across ASEAN.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, measures to control the disease—such as closing businesses, restricting personal freedoms, and reducing community interaction—have caused fear, anxiety, and economic uncertainty, all of which are shown to contribute to violence against women and girls as well as LGBTI+ persons. Gender-based violence (GBV) has increased during the pandemic. By May 2020, the Malaysian government's crisis hotline, Talian Kasih, had received a 57% increase in calls from women since the lockdown was imposed, in which domestic violence was one of the main issues. Meanwhile in Indonesia, the Legal Aid Foundation of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice received a threefold increase in the number of reported domestic violence cases two weeks after work-from-home and stay-at-home orders were imposed.<sup>20</sup>

The extraordinary circumstances brought on by COVID-19 provide an opportunity to address longstanding inequalities—in access to health and basic services, finance, and the digital economy—and to enhance social protection. Already, the pandemic is upending conventional norms on education provision and social assistance, with internet, mobile, and digital payment platforms reaching broader swathes of populations than in the past.

There are many examples of smart solutions in ASEAN cities to COVID-19 which may be built on through AASCTF interventions. These include in Indonesia, where Telkom with four local start-ups, have launched Indonesia Bergerak, a website to monitor COVID-19 cases across Indonesian cities. Indonesia Bergerak presents a list of up-to-date COVID-19 cases and allows citizens to report urgent problems that need

<sup>15</sup> The World Bank. 2014. *Skilling up Viet Nam: Preparing the workforce for a modern market economy*. Vietnam Development Report 2014. <http://ocd.vn>.

<sup>16</sup> Kim, D. et al. 2020. *Pushed to the Margin: Vulnerable Groups in the Asia Pacific During COVID-19*. [www.asiapacific.ca](http://www.asiapacific.ca).

<sup>17</sup> Djalante, R., et al. 2020. *COVID-19 and ASEAN Responses: Comparative Policy Analysis*. Progress in Disaster Science, Vol 8(2020).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Oxfam Philippines. 2020. *Women's groups call for unhampered delivery of reproductive health services*. Media Release. <https://reliefweb.int>.

<sup>20</sup> Setianto, N. *The Disproportionate Effect of COVID-19 on Southeast Asian Women: Case Studies From Malaysia and Indonesia*. Australian Institute of International Affairs. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au>.



to be solved by their local authorities. Some issues reported include safe-distancing violations, medical equipment scarcity in local health facilities and emergency assistance. Gojek, an Indonesian multi-service provider, is helping micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) – in particular those in the food and beverages sector – to digitalise their business to survive in the pandemic-triggered economic downturn. As of June 4, it had added 100,000 MSMEs to its food delivery, courier, and e-wallet services, optimising their sales and targeting new customers.<sup>21</sup> In Bangkok, the Yothi Medical Innovation District – which supported by Thailand’s National Innovation Agency (NIA) – has introduced a tele-medicine platform that funnels medical start-ups during the pandemic. There are approximately 22 start-ups that give medical advice, diagnose cases, and make hospital and medicine arrangements for patients. This initiative could reduce the workload of medical staff, assist non-COVID-19 patients to avoid hospitals, thus, making health facilities less congested. In Ho Chi Minh City, a charity to distribute rice to people who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 lockdown has been established. Disbursing bags of rice from person to person could increase the population’s exposure to the virus. Hence, the charity uses a novel bank-like Automated Teller Machine (ATMs) supported by a camera system. This technology ensures only people in need receive the rice and encourages safe distancing when queuing.

The potential of technology may also be leveraged for sexual and reproductive health services. For example, the WHO partnered with social media platform TikTok to run an awareness campaign around COVID-19, which is being used by frontline workers to share information and experiences. Emerging evidence around the use of robots and drones to deliver essential food and medical supplies to quarantined/affected areas, and disinfect health facilities and contaminated zones, as well as ensure availability of contraception and abortion products to women, are ways in which existing technology has been mobilised to respond to health needs during this pandemic.<sup>22</sup>

AASCTF’s paper, titled “How Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic alters the Focus and Scalability of the ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund” identifies how AASCTF has pivoted to respond to the new set of priorities in ASEAN due to COVID-19. AASCTF recognises the need and opportunities for long-term perspectives of resilience that may require leveraging support from initiatives like AASCTF, as opposed to “shovel-ready” smart city innovations. From a GESI perspective, this means focusing on improving digital infrastructure that can support engagement with GESI focus groups that sustains evidence-based decision-making. Another entry point is through digitally-enabled capacity building that allows swifter transferability of scalable technology to GESI focus groups. Fostering engagement and collaboration with feminist movements, among other actors, is a way in which AASCTF may work with city governments

prevent and respond to gender-based violence and women’s sexual and reproductive health needs during (and after) the Covid-19 pandemic. Lastly, is AASCTF’s ability to work with city governments on achieving improvements in access to digital technologies among GESI focus groups – including, for example, in access to digital services for women’s sexual and reproductive health.



<sup>21</sup> Martinus, M. 2020. *ASEAN Cities: Putting the Smarts into the Fight Against Covid-19*. ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. <https://www.iseas.edu.sg>.

<sup>22</sup> Nanda, P. 2020. *Virtual and essential – adolescent SRHR in the time of COVID-19*. Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters, Vol. 28 (1). <https://www.tandfonline.com>.



## 4 GESI STRATEGY EXECUTION



### 4.1 ENTRY POINTS FOR AASCTF

The AASCTF has developed a Digital Solutions Toolbox which adopts the ADB's Smart City Analytical Framework<sup>1</sup> intervention areas as the basis for identifying entry points and possible interventions for AASCTF, including GESI. The Toolbox supports identification of viable and scalable smart city solutions which are aligned with the AASCTF functional areas (planning, service delivery, and financial management) and the AASCTF cross-cutting themes (GESI, climate change, and private sector). Given the very broad scope of the AASCTF and the fact that it is demand-driven by city governments, the matrix supports the co-identification with city governments and other city actors, of viable digital solutions. The Toolbox is a key "live" tool that allows the AASCTF to approach the identification of entry points in a dynamic manner with city government. The intervention areas include the following:

- **Mobility and transport** Digital technology enables and supports sustainable transport modes and mobility services to efficiently move people and goods while increasing accessibility and affordability, as well as reducing accidents, congestion, and pollution.
- **Energy** Intelligent systems monitor, control, and optimize energy demand and supply in real time, thereby providing affordable, reliable, and clean energy.
- **Environment** Digital solutions build on database applications to monitor and control environmental quality in air, water, and land, providing early warning and effective management of environmental pollution and degradation.
- **Water and wastewater management** Urban water supply and wastewater systems are managed in an intelligent and integrated manner through smart solutions based on real-time data, which decrease system losses, while supporting efficient metering and tariff collection.
- **Climate resilience and disaster risk management** Intelligent solutions enhance the coverage, precision, and reliability of information on natural hazards, enabling timely climate change adaptation and disaster risk management responses that reduce damage and loss and increase the coping capacity of governments, citizens, and businesses.
- **Food and agriculture** Digitally connected and enhanced agricultural and food systems allow high-precision and controlled farm production, which increases and diversifies food production, strengthens value chains, and reduces input use, food transport, waste, and imports.
- **Public management and services** Comprehensive digital services, "e-services", ensure easy access and quick processing of requests for citizens and businesses, while digitized public administration supports accountability, efficiency, and transparency.

<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2020. *Smart City Pathways for Developing Asia: An Analytical Framework and Guidance*. Manila.

- **Economy and jobs** Economic growth and employment opportunities are promoted through innovation and skills that transform existing industries and service sectors and create new digital services and markets as new engines of growth.
- **Education** Digitally enhanced learning tools and data-driven educational offerings provide highly personalized opportunities for training and education, while all citizens are taught digital skills relevant to make best use of existing and future applications.
- **Health** Through digital channels, a smart city manages a comprehensive health information system and provides all citizens with tailored health care services including personalized advice to lower the risk of illnesses and accidents.
- **Society and culture** Digital technologies empower citizens to take part in all aspects of social life and to benefit from the cultural offerings in a city, creating an open, collaborative, and engaged society.
- **Safety and security** Police and other agencies apply digital technologies and make cities safer by expanding real-time surveillance of public spaces, improving the prevention of crime and improving the management and response to emergencies.

The challenge is to ensure that the underlying challenges and barriers discussed above in relation to GESI focus groups are appropriately targeted and considered through the AASCTF intervention design and implementation. This includes a focus on changing knowledge, behaviour and actions through awareness and capacity building, as well as changing conditions through smart city interventions. AASCTF will be realistic about what can be achieved and where value can be added. Gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion are broad concepts and agendas. AASCTF's strength lies in addressing GESI through leveraging smart solutions to urban challenges. Core entry points to addressing GESI through targeted and/or mainstreamed initiatives across AASCTF intervention themes can be summarised in the following points:

- Increasing awareness and capacity of city government actors on GESI in AASCTF thematic areas;
- Improving data collection and use through smart solutions related to GESI focus groups;
- Undertaking analyses and research on GESI to support and create credible and influential evidence base for city level smart interventions / further investment, with focus on how cities may better reach the "last mile";
- Improving smart solutions for GESI integration and engagement in city planning, financing and service delivery.

Further discussion of key entry points and how these are being progressed in specific cities/interventions is included in below sections.

## 4.2 TARGETED ACTIVITIES AND GESI MAINSTREAMING

This AASCTF GESI Strategy includes targeted activities along "Twin Tracks": Track 1 is designed to target women, people with disabilities, older persons and intersectional groups in areas where progress has been slow; and Track 2 is GESI mainstreaming, including mainstreaming activities across AASCTF Foundational Activities, Influencing Activities, Implementing Activities. Activities are described at an overview level, so as not to repeat Concept Note/Task Order documentation.

### 4.2.1 Targeted GESI Activities

GESI-specific activities will be undertaken where there is high potential that the initiative will lead to clear and significant benefits to women and other marginalised groups. Ideally, these activities would be implemented in cases where there is strong demand and buy-in from city governments, however, in some cases, AASCTF may need to foster this demand through awareness-raising activities. Table 7 provides indicative/potential GESI-specific initiatives and entry points identified for further exploration. The table identifies the key functional area/outcomes targeted by the GESI-focused activity, as well as whether the activity is considered "Foundational", "Influencing", or "Implementing". Those which have been developed to concept level are provided in further detail below.

In addition, targeted GESI activities also identify where AASCTF may collaborate with other programs or partners for mutual benefits and effectiveness. These targeted activities identified below will be progressively evaluated and additional activities added depending on resources, and other contextual factors such as demand from city government and identification of specific needs. Furthermore, the scope of these activities may change as they progress to implementation.



Table 9: Targeted GESI Activities and Entry Points

No.	Targeted GESI Activity and/or Entry Point	Country/ City	Collaboration	Functional Area/Outcomes Area	Type of Activity	Status	Timing	Notes
1	Interactive Workshops on Inclusive Cities	All	The Asia Foundation	Planning Financial Management Service Delivery	Influencing	IC	2021 +	Concept Note under development
2	Gender Transformative Flood Early Warning Systems in Baguio	Philippines/ Baguio	Practical Action	Planning Service Delivery	Implementing	IC	2020/ 2021	Task Order under development
3	Knowledge Sharing Event on Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems with Bronze / Silver Cities	All	Practical Action	Planning Service Delivery	Influencing	IC	2021	To be fleshed out in further detail based on initial collaboration.
4	Smart Water Management in Yangon	Myanmar/ Yangon	The Asia Foundation	Planning Financial Management Service Delivery	Implementing	IC	2021/ 2022	Possibility currently at concept level for potential incorporation after AASCTF Stage 1 Task order establishment.
5	Assisting ASEAN cities to implement digital learning / capacity building technologies and services targeted to GESI focus groups	Vietnam Cambodia Myanmar Thailand	Not identified	Financial Management Service Delivery	Implementing	IEP	-	-
6	Mobile payments for government utility bills and disbursements of social benefits: development of applications for government departments and integration to enhance digital payments	Cambodia Vietnam Indonesia Thailand Laos	Not identified	Financial Management Service Delivery	Implementing	IEP	-	Potential for mobile (super) applications to be developed that advance financial inclusion by providing transaction accounts to recipients and strengthen the enabling environment for payment services. This may also coincide with mechanisms for establishing legal digital identification / authentication mechanisms.
7	Developing / enhancing access to mobile platforms that serve as digital hubs for community engagement/dialogue/ participation	All	Not identified	Planning Financial Management Service Delivery	Implementing	IEP	-	COVID-19 response and recovery accelerator potential. Examples include allowing residents to access news, services, awareness materials, borrow and share tools and equipment, participate in savings groups, and access educational courses).
8	Developing/enhancing city governments' digital platforms for ongoing collection, maintenance and use of disaggregated data (sex, age, PwDs)	All	Not identified	Planning Financial Management Service Delivery	Implementing	IEP	-	-
10	Online platforms for service delivery/ planning to support care of elderly and PwDs (at home and at care facilities)	All	Not identified	Service Delivery	Implementing	IEP	-	COVID-19 response and recovery accelerator potential.

#### 4.2.1.1 Interactive Workshops on Inclusive Cities

The Asia Foundation (TAF), in collaboration with AASCTF, is proposing to facilitate a series of interactive workshops with AASCTF 'bronze' cities on the topic of Inclusive Cities. The proposal is at the concept phase and includes a set of three interactive (90 – 120 min) workshops that will be developed in collaboration with TAF to be delivered primarily online in the first two quarters of 2021. The training will be bookended by a brief survey of existing knowledge and expectations at one end, and of topics of interest for future engagement at the other (particularly in Gold and Silver cities).

The envisaged course structure takes a problem-driven approach to the discussion of data and technology in pursuit of improved urban planning. The first module will explore the challenges of rapid urbanisation in Southeast Asia and will provide participants with a broad-brush understanding of the multiple levels on which considerations of the impact of planning policies should take into account potential impact on the diversity of the city's residents. Through a series of examples and case studies, participants will be encouraged to identify and report back on some of the ways processes of exclusion play out in the context in which they work.

Building on the challenges identified in the first, the second module will look at the broad array of policy options that are being trialled, tested and that have had results in improving lives and reducing inequalities across the globe, from prioritising pedestrian walkways for women, children and the elderly; to attempts to improve the safety of women on public transport. The module will introduce participants to the broad array of data and technical innovations that are being applied to address social exclusion in cities. Participants will be supported in workshopping entry points for inclusive policy change at city and national levels and in an initial analysis of the political feasibility of specific policy changes. Finally, building on a homework activity that participants will undertake in groups in the fortnight prior, the third module will allow participants to dive more deeply into a specific area of interest, priority or concern in a city of their choosing. In groups, participants will present the current situation, the ways in which decisions are currently taken, the alternative policy options and what a mock action plan might look like. The modules will draw upon existing research and initiatives of TAF's academic partners in each of the cities to highlight examples of data collection and reform efforts.

The main audience will be local government officials in relevant branches or departments (urban planning, service delivery and sectors) in municipal authorities of AASCTF partner cities, with up to 30 participants per cohort (six per city). The modules will be run in English with translation. The content will be aimed at an introductory, awareness level in order to establish a common ground and discourse for future engagements. Where relevant, the training will target staff in the Urban Planning directorate/section.

Other participants will include academic staff of the relevant university Urban Planning department and/or local Civil Society Organisations working on poverty, women's rights, urban regeneration or climate change. The modules will provide a unique opportunity for learning and for dialogue between government and non-government actors.

#### 4.2.1.2 Gender Transformative Flood Early Warnings Systems in Baguio

AASCTF is currently implementing the Baguio City Smart Flood Early Warning, Information and Mitigation System (the "existing Task Order). The project will assist Baguio City with both the planning for flood mitigation and the delivery of services for flood early warning and responses, using smart technologies. Central to the project is the establishment of a hydrologic and hydraulic model and real-time data captured in strategic locations. Outreach activities will be organized through a Website/Dashboard, web applications, SMS alerts, and mobile apps, so that Baguio City can be equipped with both the means to warn the population and the capacity to respond swiftly and well in advance of flood events. The model will also allow the city to develop a flood mitigation action plan with long-and short-term measures, including nature-based solutions, so that the extent of flood damages and losses is prevented and/or minimized. The system will be developed together with Baguio Local Government Unit.

A GESI-specific Task Order (referred to as the Practical Action [PAC] TO) is proposed to complement and enhance the existing project TO described above, recognizing that effective early warning systems (EWS) are people- centred; ensuring appropriate, applicable, and timely early warning reaches the last mile, including the most vulnerable. Gender is a critical consideration in ensuring effective EWS leave no one behind. Early warning systems that do not explicitly consider gender will likely be gender unequal, increasing the marginalization and vulnerability of groups who have less power and influence. Gender inequality and social marginalisation increases vulnerability to disasters, affects access to early warning, impacts preferences and capacities for preparation and response, and excludes women and marginalised groups from decision-making processes. Proactive efforts are needed to include the needs, priorities, and capabilities of marginalised gender groups, and magnify their voices at every stage of the EWS. Further, the PAC TO aims to:

- Improve understanding of decision-makers about drivers of gendered vulnerability and how these affect EWS needs within and between communities;
- Link the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups to considered and meaningful planning of preparedness and response actions; and
- Improve representation and inclusion of marginalised groups in the EWS.

The PAC TO will involve a collaboration with Practical Action, based on their innovative approach and experience implementing gender transformative early warning systems. This approach has been endorsed and taken up by UN Women in subsequent research, and it was also the subject of an initial collaboration with AASTCF on the AASCTF webinar discussing flood EWS.

The key outputs of the Study are anticipated to include:

- Output 1: Mixed Methods Gender and Inclusion Study. as part of baseline assessment
- Output 2: Provision of Recommendations and Guidance into design of FEWS.
- Output 3: Development of Standard Operating Procedures for Gender and Inequality Informed Action.

The outcome of this will be strengthened development, application and potential for replication of the Baguio City flood EWS and its impact on flood resilience in relation to gender and social inclusion.

#### 4.2.1.3 Knowledge Sharing Event on Gender Transformative Early Warning Systems with Bronze/Silver Cities

Based on the Activity 2 (Gender Transformative EWS in Baguio), a knowledge sharing digital event is proposed to share the approach and learnings from Baguio with other AASCTF cities. This event is proposed to drive awareness of gender transformative EWS in AASCTF cities, and will bring the key city government representatives, civil society representatives. Experts from Practical Action, and Ramboll / ADB together in an interactive digital format. For example, this may include presenting the approach undertaken in Baguio, the key findings, and the Standard Operating Procedures developed for Baguio gender transformative EWS that may be of benefit to other cities. Part of the event will also include a panel discussion with both pre-prepared questions and informal Q&A between the panellists and the audience. The event may also identify other cities where gender transformative EWS activities may be further developed as part of AASCTF interventions. This event will be further defined once the Baguio activity is underway.

#### 4.2.1.4 Smart Water Management in Yangon

In 2021, the AASCTF intends to support the Yangon city government in upgrading water and sanitation services in the city, at the heart of which will be the upgrading of water supply with a focus on a large reservoir. To facilitate the impact that this investment can enable, multiple supply and demand-side challenges need to be investigated. These include inadequate water supply, particularly to poor and peri-urban areas, and informal settlements.



Access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a significant challenge in Myanmar. WaterAid estimates that one in three people in Myanmar do not have access to clean water and 19 million people throughout the country don't have access to a decent toilet. While the situation tends to be much better in urban areas than in rural, distinct inequalities exist among Yangon's 5 million residents, in large part due to weak local governance. A recent study in Water Policy Journal found that recent efforts to improve water security in the city failed to reach most informal settlers, particularly those in the Hlaing Tharyar industrial zone on the city's outskirts. The study concluded that ongoing water insecurities amongst this population were 'driven on an institutional level by the lack of capacity and priority given to supplying and protecting informal settlers' stemming, in part, from the perceptions of government officials.

The aim of this proposed GESI activity is, through collaboration with TAF, to complement and supplement AASCTF-led initiatives to improve water management in Yangon, using digital technology to support their effectiveness and impact. TAF have an extensive civil society network in Yangon, and collaboration would tentatively be scoped to involve tapping into these networks to drive participatory governance processes through consultations with civil society organisations and other community groups to support their capacity to engage in WASH reform processes, in particular through evidence-based advocacy.

Ultimately, heightened community participation in local governance, among a diverse cohort of residents, will lend itself to more inclusive governance in the longer-term that better meets the needs of GESI AASCTF GESI focus groups. Workshops are proposed to provide Yangon city authorities with a platform for community engagement on plans for upgraded WASH services. These consultations will provide greater authority and legitimacy to the formal process of infrastructure upgrading, by enabling the direct involvement of women and other marginalised groups in decision-making.

4.2.2 Mainstreaming GESI

GESI mainstreaming activities constitute Track 2 of activities, within which, mainstreaming GESI is undertaken through Foundational, Influencing and Implementing activities. Table 10 outlines the ways in which GESI issues will be considered and integrated.

Table 10: AASCTF's Approach to GESI Mainstreaming

Activities	GESI Mainstreaming
Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>GESI-focused initiatives and priorities are identified in Annual / Semi-Annual Progress Reports and Work Plans. GESI issues / entry points are considered and inform the direction / purpose of city intervention planning/design.</li><li>Ensure gender-balanced representation in intervention (Task Order) teams as part of planning/design.</li></ul>
Influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Communication, awareness materials, and media on GESI that are developed are cognizant of digital illiteracy and disability.</li><li>All knowledge sharing events will aim for a balance of male and female experts and include/invite representatives from GESI focus groups.</li></ul>
Implementing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All meetings/workshops/Focus Group Discussions will aim to be held in universally accessible premises, with timing for events and meetings to be gender-sensitive, recognizing that outside normal business hours may not be suitable for GESI focus groups and depending on the context, consulting to ensure the optimal time to maximize participation is chosen.</li><li>Task Order teams to prepare GESI Action Plan for Task Orders where GESI is a core theme to include actions/targets to address GESI adequately through the intervention.</li><li>Involve women and marginalized groups in the design/delivery/evaluation of Implementing activities as much as possible.</li></ul>

4.2.2.1 Mainstreaming GESI in Foundational Activities

Key to GESIs mainstreaming at the Foundational level of AASCTF is ensuring consideration of GESI issues/ entry points inform the direction and purpose of city intervention planning. This is achieved through the dedicated GESI Specialist within the Core Team of AASCTF. The Core Team is responsible for engaging with city governments to identify city interventions and needs, and in developing Concept Notes and thereafter, Task Order design documentation for implementing and influencing activities. The first stage in the AASCTF process is the development of a Concept Note for ADB approval. The scope of both Concept

Notes and Task Order as design and planning documents, includes the identification and consideration of GESI needs and opportunities, thereby forming the basis for GESI consideration from the outset of AASCTF interventions. The above processes positively impact on GESI mainstreaming across all AASCTF activities.

A central way in which gender is mainstreamed across AASCTF at a foundational level is in the compilation of Influencing and Implementing activity teams (Ramboll and local -sub-consultants) and working to ensure gender balance thereof during planning. Gender balance on teams will be targeted throughout the AASCTF period.

Ramboll has a responsibility for ensuring that staff are aware of ADB and Ramboll policies (including the Ramboll Equal Gender Policy, Non-Discrimination Policy, Non-Harassment and Non-Violence Policy, and other policies).

Local counterparts / consultants on AASCTF teams need to ensure that appropriate facilities and support are available to women, older persons, and people with disabilities, to facilitate their participation in workshops and other activities.

As part of Foundational activities, AASCTF will also seek to identify and work with GESI stakeholders in AASCTF cities, including DFAT and ADB programmes, partners and projects. This includes civil society organisations, other donor programmes, and government stakeholders (see Section below on AASCTF partners).

#### 4.2.2.2 Mainstreaming GESI in Influencing Activities

AASCTF will work to expand the information and data readily available to key stakeholders (city governments, civil society, and others) on approaches, best practices and impacts of improved GESI through AASCTF interventions.

GESI-focused communication, awareness materials, media and knowledge sharing opportunities will be identified on an ad hoc and ongoing basis as part of AASCTF interventions and used to improve the mainstreaming of GESI in the delivery of interventions and awareness thereof among and within AASCTF cities and stakeholders.

Communication, knowledge, media and awareness products will be targeted at both internal and external stakeholders. In developing information products, AASCTF will place emphasis on ways in which the information, or important points are made available to stakeholders. Products will be tools to stimulate discussion and action and will be conducted in ways that encourage participation of all groups.

ADB and DFAT guidelines on accessible publications and communications will be followed. Where possible and practicable.

#### 4.2.2.3 Mainstreaming GESI in Implementing Activities

Mainstreaming as part of Implementing activities will occur primarily through the preparation of GESI Action Plans for Task Order. GESI Actions Plans will be developed where gender is identified as a central cross-cutting theme for Implementing and Influencing activities in AASCTF cities during Task Order development.<sup>1</sup> The intent of the GESI Action Plan is to provide a guide to and operationalise implementation of GESI mainstreaming and targeted GESI activities by AASCTF city intervention teams (with oversight and input by AASCTF GESI Specialist(s)).

The intent is that GESI Action Plans provide a simple way to ensure that GESI is specifically considered consistent with this Strategy, and not as an overly complex or burdensome addition to activities or as a box-ticking exercise. The GESI Action Plan should be developed prior to, or during the early phase of city intervention implementation. Appendix 2 provides the GESI Action Plan template. The GESI Action Plan should be a “live” document that is updated and referenced throughout the activity/intervention, recognizing the need to be agile in the GESI space and respond to dynamic needs that may emerge. The GESI Action Plan may be a standalone document or may be included within other design and monitoring framework documents, as appropriate for each intervention.

Furthermore, GESI mainstreaming as part of AASCTF Implementing activities will be achieved through approaching meetings, workshops, Focus Group Discussions with the aim that these are held in universally accessible premises, with timing for events and meetings to be gender-sensitive, recognizing that outside normal business hours may not be suitable for GESI focus groups and depending on the context, consulting to ensure the optimal time to maximize participation is chosen.

GESI focus groups will also aim to be involved in the Implementing activities as much as possible, including in planning, designing, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating them.

<sup>1</sup> It is noted that not all AASCTF activities will have gender as a central cross-cutting theme. See the AASCTF Digital Toolbox for the range of interventions that may be supported by AASCTF.



4.2.3 Arrangements for GESI Strategy Implementation

This section sets out how AASCTF will execute its GESI strategy. This is achieved through the following mechanisms discussed further below:

- AASCTF GESI Specialists
- Support from ADB and DFAT

AASCTF’s GESI work will be led and implemented by specialists from Ramboll, with oversight and support by the ADB. A GESI Specialist in the AASCTF Core Team will bring a GESI lens to all AASCTF interventions and activities. The GESI Specialist in the Core Team will work with international and local GESI Specialists through all AASCTF interventions (e.g. Task Order teams) to provide oversight and input to ensure activities support the GESI outcomes in the thematic areas. Social (and GESI) specialists on city intervention Task Order teams will be identified and engaged as part of AASCTF intervention planning.

Working in collaboration is a key way in which the AASCTF can maximise effectiveness and ensure value for money. In some cases, particularly on GESI-targeted activities, the GESI Specialist will work to identify and support interventions in collaboration with other development partners, including civil society and other advocacy groups, to deliver activities and outcomes.

This GESI Strategy builds on ADB’s experience in mainstreaming and integrating gender in its operations, including mobilising its country and city-level gender infrastructure in support of AASCTF. The ADB regional gender specialists will provide input into the operationalisation of this GESI Strategy, including provision of technical expertise, country/city level knowledge and networking to support GESI activities as identified by the AASCTF GESI Specialists. Building on ADB expertise and existing ADB-supported projects underway is central to AASCTF’s operational model. Where appropriate, ADB Gender Specialists may be engaged to provide specific inputs on AASCTF interventions.

Likewise, DFAT input into GESI Strategy operationalisation will be sought, particularly in countries/cities where DFAT has existing programmes in place which may complement or enhance AASCTF activities. This includes knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration opportunities for the mutual benefit of DFAT (its implementation partners) and AASCTF activities.

4.2.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility to promote gender equality and social inclusion in AASTCF lies in the hands of all staff. Key staff in leadership and technical positions within AASCTF have specific responsibilities as summarised in Table 11.

4.2.5 Collaboration on GESI

Table 11: GESI Responsibilities of Key AASCTF Staff

Key Staff/Positions	Responsibility
AASCTF Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that AASCTF’s annual work plan pays necessary attention to GESI issues and has sufficient budget allocated towards GESI initiatives</li></ul>
AASCTF GESI Specialist (Core Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accountable for strategic direction of GESI within the AASCTF and overall quality assurance of GESI implementation</li><li>• Provides technical support and mentoring to AASCTF interventions teams for GESI</li><li>• Monitors and reviews progress towards GESI Action Plans</li><li>• Acts as key GESI contact for ADB / DFAT</li></ul>
AASCTF GESI / Social Specialists (Intervention Level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accountable for the implementation of AASCTF GESI interventions (primarily on city intervention teams) with oversight of the GESI Specialist (Core Team)</li></ul>
AASCTF Monitoring and Evaluation Core Team Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leads the monitoring and evaluation efforts, including support in data collection / evaluation on GESI indicators</li><li>• Supports development of AASCTF Progress (and other) Reports</li></ul>
AASCTF Communications Core Team Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepares communication and knowledge products to share good practice</li><li>• Supports knowledge sharing and learning events</li></ul>
City Intervention Task Order Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with GESI Specialist (Core Team) to develop and implement GESI Action Plan for city interventions.</li></ul>

AASCTF will also aim work with other DFAT and ADB funded programs, development partners, and GESI Specialists / project advisors to implement the initiatives and approaches outlined in this Strategy. This proposed collaboration recognises that other programs and partners have existing networks and bodies of work that can be leveraged and/or strengthened through AASCTF activities. As AASCTF's interventions are in place, AASCTF will pro-actively identify opportunities for further collaboration and engagement with other ADB and DFAT programs, particularly in digital innovation. In addition, AASCTF will engage both nationally and locally with other donor funded initiatives where synergies exist and there is mutual benefit. These synergies will be further identified as part of the GESI mainstreaming activities during city intervention planning and are not discussed at a city level in this Strategy.

Table 12: AASCTF Collaboration and Partnerships

Programme/ Partner	Existing/Potential Collaboration
<b>ADB programmes in AASCTF countries / cities</b>	AASCTF will seek to engage with and identify opportunities for building on ADB programmes in AASCTF cities to increase the overall impact in GESI. For example, the ADB Liveable Settlements Investment Project in Makassar, Indonesia.
<b>DFAT programmes in AASCTF countries / cities</b>	AASCTF will seek to engage with and identify opportunities for building on DFAT programmes in AASCTF cities to increase the overall impact in GESI. This may include, for example: Investing in Women: Regional program (Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines) that aims to accelerate women’s economic empowerment in the region and contribute to inclusive economic growth in South East Asia. Investing in Women partners with large employers to: prioritise gender equality as a business imperative; work with impact investors to expand women’s access to capital; partner with governments to promote equality through policy making; advocate and campaign to challenge bias, stereotypes and attitudes. AASCTF may find synergies with this programme where it partners with governments, and in its advocacy activities.
<b>Practical Action</b>	Practical Action is a development agency that works with communities and expert partners to develop ingenious solutions to bring about real and lasting change. Their focus is on bringing together community members, private companies, local government and policy makers to put the plans into action in collaborative approaches that meets everyone’s needs. They pilot and refine approaches and then work to share these with others so that more can be achieve. Practical Action has specific expertise and approaches to disaster early warning systems, which has also been taken up by UN Women.
<b>UN Women</b>	UN Women’s work on Safe Cities which aims to create safe and inclusive cities for women and girls via policy and behavioural change. They conduct Safety Audits to identify concerns for women’s safety and sexual violence and also conduct public awareness raising campaigns across the region.
<b>UN Habitat</b>	UN-Habitat is working on the implementation of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanization Strategy (ASUS) through their regional program, with potential synergies with AASCTF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential mutual exchange of services;</li><li>• Knowledge sharing focused on ASUS priority actions (e.g. Digital solutions for safety and security, transportation and solid waste management etc);</li><li>• Joint advocacy at urban events;</li><li>• Collaboration in exploring linkages and synergies between projects or activities in common cities;</li><li>• Opportunity to collaboratively develop and test a methodology to evaluate and implement smart city development indicators in ASEAN;</li><li>• Collaboration on ASEAN digital governance platform(s) closely aligned with City Investment Platform under development by UN-Habitat.</li></ul>



## 5 GESI MONITORING AND EVALUATION



For AASCTF, monitoring is defined as an ongoing process to collect, analyze, and communicate data related to progress and performance. Monitoring focuses on describing “what” is happening and is orientated towards regularly providing information that can be utilized to make adjustments to continuously improve AASCTF performance.

Evaluation is distinct from monitoring in that it involves judgement about merit or worth, and generally happens at points in time and not on an ongoing basis. Evaluation focus on answering the question “so what?”, which is different from monitoring.

The following sub-sections summarise the approaches to monitoring and evaluating GESI, as described in and consistent with the AASCTF M&E Framework.

### 5.1 MONITORING - INTEGRATION OF GESI IN AASCTF FRAMEWORK

The AASCTF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework integrates GESI elements at all levels, with the integration of GESI based on basic questions, as follows:

- How GESI was considered as part of planning and design (Foundational Activities)?
- Participation of GESI focus groups in Influencing and Implementing Activities?
- The extent to which GESI focus groups benefitted from activities (user data)?

Key GESI indicators to support monitoring are provided in Table 13. These will be “tagged”, enabling analysis of GESI progress and results.

## 5.2 EVALUATION - INTEGRATION OF GESI IN AASCTF EVALUATION

AASCTF's GESI performance will be evaluated at both a Trust Fund programme level and at an activity level through foundational, influencing and implementing activities. Performance will be evaluated as outlined in the M&E Framework. Evaluation questions may be refined as part of the development of the M&E Framework. At an activity level, evaluation will focus on:

- What happened: Evaluating results / progress against plans.
- So What? Identifying what is working and what isn't from a GESI perspective in activities.
- What's Next? Identifying any changes to GESI activities going forward.

At the Trust Fund programme level, GESI evaluation will include the following questions:

- Is AASCTF maintaining an appropriate focus on women's empowerment, gender equity and social inclusion?
- How effectively has AASCTF contributed to improvements in the financial management, service delivery and/or planning systems which can be tangibly or logically linked to improvements in use/access for GESI focus groups (i.e. are GESI interventions effectively addressing identified barriers and conditions for GESI focus groups)?
- Is AASCTF generating evidence/learnings and communicating with city government and relevant stakeholders on how to effectively reach GESI focus groups through improved planning, service delivery and financial management?

Table 13: GESI Monitoring and Evaluation

Activities		How?	When?	GESI Indicators/Progress Markers
<b>Foundational activities</b>		Internal proceedings Progress / performance monitoring	Ongoing  Bi-annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of Task Orders with GESI issues/entry points and identification of how TO will contribute to better meeting the needs of GESI focus groups.</li> <li>• % of women on AASCTF city intervention Task Order teams (international/national). % women/men in terms of level of input into Task Order (TO Leadership, Senior, Mid-Level).</li> <li>• # of interventions that propose to work with GESI-specialised partners.</li> <li>• % of AASCTF budget allocated to GESI-targeted activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing activities: Communications &amp; Knowledge Sharing</b>	<b>Webinars</b>	Participant evaluation (quality assessment and progress markers) Participant statistics	Post-webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of GESI focus groups/representatives at knowledge sharing events/meetings, workshops, training, conferences.</li> <li>• % of women presenters/facilitators at webinars, conferences, workshops.</li> </ul>
	<b>Briefs, Newsletters, Videos, Social media</b>	Web usage statistics Internal review	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of communication and knowledge sharing materials that are developed to meet digital illiteracy/disability needs.</li> <li>• # of GESI-focused communication and knowledge-sharing materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing activities: Regional Twinning and Networking (Bronze cities)</b>	<b>Meetings, Workshops, Conferences</b>	City tracking Network analysis	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of GESI representative organisations/institutions / stakeholders engaged through regional twinning and networking activities.</li> </ul>
	<b>MoUs, Networks</b>			
<b>Influencing activities: Capacity Building</b>	<b>Workshops, training, on-the-job training, etc.</b>	Survey to participants (quality assessment and progress markers) Participant statistics	Post-capacity building activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of GESI focus groups / representatives' attendance at capacity building activities.</li> <li>• % of women presenters/facilitators at webinars, conferences, workshops.</li> <li>• Survey identifies positive / negative feedback (qualitative).</li> </ul>
<b>Implementing activities: Technical Assistance &amp; Investment Grant/Loan Agreements</b>		Progress / performance monitoring (progress, quality): self-reporting + visits / interviews / stories / case studies	Based on Task Order time-frames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of GESI Action Plans prepared.</li> <li>• Monitoring assesses whether GESI activities were delivered as planned.</li> <li>• # of GESI focus group members/representatives involved and consulted in design/implementation of city intervention.</li> <li>• Monitoring identifies GESI lessons learned and these are communicated to AASCTF teams for inclusion in ongoing and future activities.</li> <li>• Qualitative stories/case studies obtained describing the changes to which AASCTF contributes (from GESI focus groups/city government representatives).</li> </ul>



APPENDIX 1: GESI PROFILES

1.1 CAMBODIA	
AASCTF Gold City:	None
AASCTF Silver City:	Battambang
AASCTF Bronze City:	Battambang; Bavet; Kampot; Poipet; Phnom Penh
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>There has been substantial progress in the legal and judicial sector in Cambodia since 1992 and the first post-Khmer Rouge period democratic elections. There is limited access to justice for many citizens especially vulnerable groups–the poor, survivors of domestic violence and rape, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. Violence against women and children remains a major issue.</p> <p>Cambodia’s constitution references the treaty on women’s rights in Article 31 and prohibits discrimination against women in Article 45. However, it does not outlaw domestic violence, but merely urges the prevention of violence within households and between spouses. Cambodia’s national action plan for gender equality, Neary Rattanak IV, sets broad goals for addressing specific areas of inequality.</p> <p>Since 2001 gender equality efforts have been gaining momentum and receiving national endorsement, beginning with efforts to engender the 2003-2005 National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS). Currently, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) and the Cambodia National Council for Women (CNCW) make up the national machinery for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. MoWA launches the Neary Rattanak (national action plan) which focusses on economic empowerment of women, gender equality in education, legal protections, public health issues, including HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and women’s political participation. MoWA also prioritizes CEDAW implementation and mainstreaming gender equality into the general policy framework.</p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	16.20
Women Population	8.32
Global Gender Gap Index rank	89
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.694
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	75%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	86.5%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	36.7%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	39.9%
Women in Labour Force	4.20 million
Seats in parliament held by women	17.74%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	160
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	20.9
<p>Cambodia ranks 89th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 153 countries. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (75%) is below the men of the country (86.5%). Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 25.9% of the total population. Cambodian women are employed at almost the same rate as men but are more likely to be in the informal economy or in lower-paid positions. Regionally, relatively few women are employed at senior or managerial levels. The majority of women are employed at the lower end of the value chain, typically performing entry-level clerical and sales roles. The women make up a high percentage of the garment sector (80-90%) and 30-40% of the construction sector. Although the national government, aims at gender mainstreaming, gender responsive budgeting is not undertaken. Most of the responsibility at the national level for any gender-related action is assigned to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, which does not receive the financial and technical resources necessary to fully implement these actions.</p> <p>Most Cambodians continue to maintain biased ideologies on domesticity. According to a UN national survey, 92% of females and 82% of males believe that a woman’s most important role is to take care of house and home, while 62% of males and 57 % of females agree that men should have the final say in family matters. Further, violence against women is alarming. A 2015 study commissioned by the government and UN, reported that 32% of partnered women experienced emotional abuses by an intimate partner in their lifetime, while 21% experienced physical or/and sexual violence. Another UN multicounty study in 2014 reported that 32.8% of men participated in the study reported perpetrating physical or/and sexual violence against an intimate partner in their lifetime. One in five men reported raping a woman or girl.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>One innovative app warrants mention in relation to smart cities, assists food and service sector workers to stay free from harassment and violence in their workplaces. It uses animation to teach women about their rights, and importantly, connects women with services they might need such as legal advice, psycho-social support, shelters or medical care. The developer of this app note that it addresses the scarcity of public services available to survivors of domestic violence (which is a persistent and widespread issue in Cambodia).</p>	

1 Oxfam. 2020. Gender Justice: What Should be Done in Cambodia. <https://cambodia.oxfam.org>.

1.1 CAMBODIA (continued)	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	3.4% <sup>2</sup>
<p>According to the UNESCAP Report, there is 3.4% prevalence of disability in Cambodia. Cambodia’s recent history, including war, genocide and widespread poverty, resulted in a significant number of persons with disabilities. Continuing issues with land mines, traffic and other accidents, old age, poor nutrition and rising non-communicable diseases results in the continuing vulnerabilities of the population. Persons with disabilities have not always been included in all aspects of life: sometimes due to physical restrictions, sometimes policy barriers and other times due to discrimination and lack of understanding.<sup>3</sup> These prevent them from full and effective participation in their society.</p> <p>The Phnom Penh Centre For Independent Living, an NGO with the mission to empower people with severe disabilities to live independently, reported that the physical environment in Cambodia contains multiple obstacles where public streets and roadways have no facilities for persons with disabilities, and getting around is dangerous at best in many cases almost impossible.<sup>4</sup> There is also recognition of the limited participation of PWDs in planning, budgeting and implementation. Data on disability is another area that needs further attention in Cambodia, in order to foster more informed policy and decision-making.</p>	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	778 thousand.
<p>The elderly category has not been included in the Housing Policy from 2014 as a vulnerable group and therefore their needs are not targeted. At present there is no agency is focused on the issue of planning and designing aged housing and managing housing programs for the ageing urban poor. This is especially critical as “the proportion of older people living in slums and charity shelter is rising quickly and have become long-term slum-dwellers.<sup>5</sup></p>	
Children	
Statistics	5 million
<p>With one third of its citizens under 15 years of age, Cambodia has one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia.<sup>6</sup> Accessibility to WASH is an important indicator of child’s wellbeing in a state, Cambodia which earlier had a high prevalence of open defecation has more than halved its prevalence since 2000. Urban coverage of basic sanitation more than doubled from 46% to 96% from 2000 to 2017 and the gap between richest and poorest was reduced “by over 60%” over that time.</p> <p>About 300,000 people are joining the labour force every year in Cambodia. Most young people face difficulties to find adequate shelter and decent jobs. Even though the unemployment rate of the youth in the whole country is relatively low at 2.4% in 2014, the percentages in urban areas are tending to be higher (Phnom Penh 20.1% according to UNCT 2009). An additional problem is that most young people are engaged in the informal economy as vulnerable workers.<sup>7</sup></p>	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Cambodia has the following indexes;	
DAI Index	0.397
DAI Business Sub-index	0.413
DAI People Sub-index	0.388
DAI Government Sub-index	0.390
<p>According to the World Bank Report, Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion in ASEAN, Cambodia at present does not have a National Financial Inclusion strategy, though once is under development. Some indicators of digital financial inclusion are demonstrated as follows: financial institution account (18%), made of received payments in the past year (16%); paid utility bills using a mobile phone (2%); used a mobile phone or the internet to access an account (6%). Digital inclusion is low in Cambodia comparative to other ASEAN countries; however, it is gathering pace. Mobile phone and social media use have grown rapidly, and there is a budding digital start-up sector. Progress and impacts are very uneven, though. There are specific gaps in the availability of digital skills. Less than 30% of the population in Cambodia has basic digital skills such as using basic arithmetic formula on a spreadsheet, as compared to almost 50% of the population in Indonesia having these skills. Less than 3% of the population in Cambodia has intermediate digital skills of connecting and installing new devices and less than 1% of the Cambodian population has advanced digital skills of finding, downloading and configuring software. Only 32.4% of individuals with tertiary education in Cambodia are using computers and internet, as compared to 87.8% in Indonesia, 52.6% and 89.7% in Thailand.<sup>8</sup></p>	

2 UNESCAP2019. *Disability at a glance 2019, Investing in accessibility in Asia and the Pacific*.

3 Disability Action Council (Cambodia). 2017. *Promoting Social Inclusion in Cambodia*. <https://bangkok.unesco.org>.

4 The ASEAN Post Team. 2020. *Cambodia’s Disabled Left Behind*. <https://theaseanpost.com>.

5 Ministry of Land Management, urban Planning and Construction, & General Department of Housing. 2016. *Cambodia National Report for Habitat III Preparation*.

6 UNICEF. *Children in Cambodia: Facts and Figures*. <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/children-cambodia>.

7 *Ibid*.

8 Te Velde, D. W., et al. 2020. *Fostering an Inclusive Digital Transformation in Cambodia*. ODI, DFAT, CDRI.

1.1 CAMBODIA (continued)	
An Asia Foundation Report found that around 39% of the urban population have smart phones in Cambodia (94% of Cambodians own a mobile phone). <sup>9</sup>	
Economic and Financial Inclusion	
<p>According to the World Gender Gap Index Report, Cambodia holds 25th rank in the economic participation and opportunity index of women. Despite high levels of participation in the economy, women benefit less from their participation in the economy than men. This is because of women’s high concentration in vulnerable employment. Vulnerable employment, especially unpaid contributing family worker status, offers few opportunities for income or good working conditions. Men’s employment is also more diversified than women’s.<sup>10</sup> Agency is required to enhance economic inclusion amongst women. Despite their numbers in terms of business ownership, women have lower levels of agency than men, who dominate the Government- Private Sector Forum and chambers of commerce. Representation of women in microenterprises are not represented in policy formulation.<sup>11</sup></p>	
COVID-19 Impact	
<p>The economy of Cambodia is expected to register its slowest growth since 1994, contracting by between -1 percent and -2.9 percent according to a World Bank Report.<sup>12</sup> Cambodia’s narrowly based and open economy is highly exposed to the pandemic. Cambodia is experiencing significant demand shocks across three key sectors: garments (exported mostly to Europe and the US); international tourism; and construction (driven largely by Chinese foreign direct investment). Cambodian women are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. CARE<sup>13</sup> estimates that women represent 83% of garment workers and a large proportion of tourism and entertainment industry workers. With jobs lost, women are at increased risk of Gender Based Violence and exploitation. In the face of ongoing school closures, women are more likely to undertake unpaid caring responsibilities, potentially leaving paid employment. People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable i Cambodia and experience challenges accessing basic services and employment. They are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to barriers to accessing preventative information and hygiene, and reliance on physical contact with the environment and caregivers. Disruptions to services, challenges to accessing assistance, higher poverty rates and vulnerability to economic shock predispose Cambodians with disabilities to being further left behind.<sup>14</sup></p>	
Key Actors/Stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) Cambodia Green Urban Development Program: The project aims at comprehensive urban planning, green transport planning and mobilization of investment to deliver basic services, including wastewater treatment, renewable energy supply, waste management, and public transport. Designing and strengthening GGGI’s interventions will be crucial to support the government in its planning, financing, and implementation of sustainable long-term urbanization initiatives.<sup>15</sup> Battambang City has been chosen as one of the cities for development in 2020.</li><li>Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Government of government of Cambodia Australia-Cambodia Cooperation on Equitable Sustainable Services (ACCESS): ACCESS aims to improve the sustainability, quality and inclusiveness of services for persons with disabilities and for women affected by gender-based violence (GBV). It also aims at strengthening the capacity of Cambodian government, civil society and private sector service providers to sustainably improve services for persons with disabilities and women affected by GBV.<sup>16</sup></li><li>Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia: (Ponlok Chomnes) \$2.9 million, 2019-2022. This is a DFAT funded Project managed by The Asia Foundation. Ponlok Chomnes aims to strengthen the capacity of Cambodian institutions to undertake quality research that informs public policy analysis and dialogue in Cambodia.</li><li>Asian Development Bank (ADB) The Second Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Corridor Towns Development Project: The project represents the second phase of the ongoing GMS Corridor Towns Development Project in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. It supports the first four strategic thrusts of the GMS Strategic Framework 2012 2022 namely (i) strengthening infrastructure linkages; (ii) facilitating cross-border trade, investment, and tourism; (iii) enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness; and (iv) developing human resources. The focus on corridor town development follows an approach that will maximize the economic benefits of increased trade and traffic flows along the major transport corridors in the GMS with the expected positive impacts resulting from accelerated investments in strategically located towns and cities, and added value on economic growth through development oriented on green growth and climate resilience. The objective is to strengthen competitiveness of the GMS economic corridors through environmental infrastructure.<sup>17</sup></li><li>Asian Development Bank (ADB) The Provincial Water Supply and Sanitation Project :The project will improve piped water supply in Battambang and Kampong Cham, benefitting an additional 209,000 people(or about 40,000 connections)by 2022, through the construction of two(02) water treatment plants with a combined capacity of 61,600 cubic meters per day and new distribution networks with a combined length of 161km. This will increase coverage of piped water supply to about 90% of the population in the project cities.<sup>18</sup></li></ul>	

9 The Asia Foundation. 2014. *Mobile Phones in Cambodia*. <http://asiafoundation.org>.

10 ADB. 2015. *Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment in Cambodia*. <https://www.adb.org>.

11 *Ibid*.

12 The World Bank. 2020. *COVID-19 Epidemic Poses Greatest Threat to Cambodia’s Development in 30 Years*. <https://www.worldbank.org>.

13 Von der Dellen. 2020. *CARE Rapid Gender Analysis for COVID-19*. Cambodia. <https://careevaluations.org>.

14 Australian Government. 2020. *Cambodia COVID-19 Development Response Plan*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au>.

15 The Global Green Growth Institute. 2020. *Cambodia Green Urban Development Program*. <https://gggi.org>.

16 DFAT. *Inclusive Participation and Governance in Cambodia*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au>.

17 ADB. 2020. *ADB Projects Page*. <https://www.adb.org/projects/46443-002/main#project-pds>.

18 ADB. 2017. *ADB to Help Improve Water Supply, Sanitation in 4 Cities in Cambodia*. <https://www.adb.org>.



1.1 CAMBODIA (continued)
Opportunities and Entry Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhancing digital skills of GESI focus groups in Cambodia to facilitate broader access to digital services and opportunities. Working with city authorities to enhance government digital service delivery to be more responsive to GESI focus groups' needs and challenges.</li><li>More inclusive and participatory planning, budgeting and implementation.</li><li>Awareness raising and focus on socio-cultural and normative changes on GESI within AASCTF interventions.</li><li>Data on disability (and other marginalised groups) is another area that needs further attention in Cambodia, in order to foster more informed policy and decision-making.</li><li></li></ul>

1.2 INDONESIA	
AASCTF Gold City:	Makassar
AASCTF Silver City:	Makassar
AASCTF Bronze City:	Banjarmasin; Cirebon; Makassar; Palembang; Sorong
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>Successive governments have replaced the country's traditional approach to poverty relief with developmental social assistance programmes and reformed the social insurance system by implementing a new administrative and legislative architecture, expanding coverage and improving benefits. Whilst there are a substantial number of Indonesian laws and policies aimed at improving gender equality, disability and social inclusion, progress is often hampered by ineffective implementation of such laws and policies. The Government of Indonesia has set targets for women's participation in parliament, political parties and decision-making institutions, with legislation mandating 30% female representation (JICA, 2011). Several labour laws in Indonesia deal directly with gender equality. For example, laws governing maternity and menstruation leave. In Indonesia, social insurance coverage increased from 28.3% in 2009 to 51.2% of intended beneficiaries in 2015. In 2012, the ministries of Finance, Home Affairs, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection with Planning and Development (Bappenas), issued a joint letter on the national strategy to accelerate gender mainstreaming through gender-responsive planning and budgeting. Their objective is to fast-track the realisation of gender equity and equality in Indonesia. Ministry of Finance Decree No.119/PMK.02/2009 requires gender inclusive budgeting at national and local level. This includes provision for women to be present at government budget planning meetings, however this rarely occurs.<sup>1</sup> An absence of timely sex-disaggregated data across all sectors presents problems for informed policy, planning and decision making.</p>	
Present State of Urbanization	
<p>Indonesia is undergoing a historic transformation from a rural to an urban economy. The country's cities are growing faster than in other Asian countries at a rate of 4.1% per year. By 2025 – in less than 5 years – Indonesia can expect to have 68% of its population living in cities.</p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
<p>The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:</p>	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	267.7 million
Women Population	132.9 million
Global Gender Gap Index rank	85 out of 153 countries
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.7 (where 0.00=imparity and 1.00=parity)
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	94%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	97.3%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	79.9%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	77.6%
Women in Labour Force	49.26 million
Seats in parliament held by women	17.4
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	177
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	18.3
<p>Indonesia ranks 85th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 153 countries. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (94%) is below that of men (97.3%). Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 18% of the total population. This could be attributed to the transport constraints faced by the women. A survey of Indonesian women found that 31% women who have ever turned down a job did so because of transport constraints. In the 2006 KfW Entwicklungsbank study on gender impact of local public transport and mobility in the Asian megacities, it was found that Women in Jakarta depended upon public transport as poor people cannot afford taxis or private cars. It is also expensive and, due to the traffic, extremely dangerous to use motorcycles. Gender-specific risk awareness and specifically gender-related motives (the use of primarily masculine models) largely make motorcycles vehicles that are for men only. Dependency on the Trans Jakarta Bus Rapid Transit system and urban light rail network proved to be most gender neutral and its utilization for mobility across the city was high.</p> <p>Resistance to the concept of gender equality can still be strong in Indonesia, and as noted by the World Bank<sup>2</sup> the term gender is still misunderstood, and "gender mainstreaming efforts in both the government and non-government sectors remain narrowly focused on increasing female participation, rather than being more broadly focused on issues of human rights, advancement and empowerment,</p>	

1 Ministry of Women's Empowerment gender mainstreaming tools including six performance criteria for annual awards to Ministries: commitment, policy, disaggregated data, involvement of community organisations, gender-responsive budget and program achievements. A study by Asia Foundation (2015) found that less than a quarter of the 42 local governments surveyed had actually implemented specific mechanisms to guarantee women's participation in these meetings.

2 The World Bank. 2013. *Gender equality: Policy Brief 1*. Gender mainstreaming. <https://tinyurl.com/y7otk3cg>.

1.2 INDONESIA (continued)	
and disparities between women and men’s economic opportunities”. While women actively contribute to the national and household economy, they are excluded from many decision-making structures and processes at the family, local and national level. Even when women are engaged in decision-making positions, they are often found on the side-lines, or occupy low-level positions. Women’s lack of representation in decision-making positions is also a critical barrier to the development of economic and social policies that consider their specific social, political and economic perspectives and interests.	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	10,150,719 <sup>3</sup>
There is limited research undertaken on the issue of PwDs in Makassar Indonesia. However, as the social cultural, economic aspects of disability are similar within Indonesia, a study related to the city of Banjarmasin has been referred to provide an indicative overview. Key issues include lack of inclusive design in the streets of Banjarmasin which has caused vulnerable groups such as children and elderly with disabilities to struggle to access basic facilities such as health facilities, schools, public transportation, and public spaces. Most importantly, many PwDs hardly leave their homes due to limited mobility. Their situation is exacerbated by the lack of awareness in the local community on their current predicament. For children, lack of access to schools, and the increased likelihood of bullying at school are highlighted as challenges. Furthermore, families with children with disabilities tend to hide their children at home based on widespread socio-cultural stigma. There is also an acute shortage of shortage of qualified teachers and accommodating facilities in inclusive schools in the city. <sup>4</sup>	
A Rapid Assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 in Indonesia <sup>5</sup> has found that people with disabilities face barriers in accessing educational information on the COVID-19 outbreak and the government’s social safety net programs. Most respondents have also experienced an 80-90% income reduction, either due to losing their jobs or losses in their small home-based businesses.	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	16,374 thousands
According to the UN World Population Ageing Report 2019, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia has the largest share 37% of the world’s population over 65 years. The report further states that as in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia countries, public transfers are relatively low as compared to other regions and the older individuals and families are under pressure to find means of consumption at older ages. Own assets and accumulated wealth are the primary source of support for the older persons. ADB Social Protection index indicates that Indonesia spends 2.1% of its aggregate GDP for social protection expenditure. According to the World Social Protection report, only 14.1 % of the elderly population receive old age pension in Indonesia. While 75% who work in the non-formal sector have no old age security at all. <sup>6</sup> Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) is provided by the government to those aged above 70 years. The government has also implemented Prosperous Family Cards for the older population. Currently there are 150,000 older persons over 70 years who are less able. They receive social assistance amounting to IDR 2,000,000 per year. This program is implemented with the consideration that there is a value-oriented system that should keep parents within their families. <sup>7</sup> In Indonesia, the proportion of older people (60 years old and above) accounts for 41 percent for the COVID-19-related deaths, while their proportion for the COVID-19 positive cases is merely 10.9 percent according to the COVID-19 National Task Force data as of 22 September 2020. <sup>8</sup>	
Children	
Data	80 million <sup>9</sup>
According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Indonesia, about 16,920 children are living on the streets. It is spread across 21 provinces. West Java has the largest number of street children with 2,953 street children. It is followed by Jakarta (2,570), East Java (2,701) and Central Java(1477),North Sumatra(1000), West Sumatra(822),South Sulawesi(652),Banten(556) and Yogyakarta(503). <sup>10</sup>	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Indonesia has the following indexes. DAI measures digital adoption across three dimensions – people, government and business. The index covers countries on a 0–1 scale. The overall DAI is the simple average of three sub-indexes. Each sub-index comprises technologies necessary to promote development in the digital era: increasing productivity and accelerating broad-based growth for business, expanding opportunities and improving welfare for people, and increasing the efficiency and accountability of service delivery for government.	

3 Government of Indonesia. 2010. *Census 2010*.

4 UNESCO and Kota Kita. 2019. *Banjarmasin City: A Disability-Inclusive City Profile*. <https://en.unesco.org>.

5 Saputra, A. 2020. *Indonesian disability activism amidst the COVID-19 pandemic*. <https://www.newmandala.org>.

6 ILO. 2017. *World Social Protection Report 2017-2019*. <https://www.ilo.org>.

7 Department of Older Persons, Government of Thailand. 2018. *Care for Older Persons in ASEAN+3: The Role of Families and Local and National Support Systems*. <https://www.duke-nus.edu.sg>.

8 United Nations Population Fund. 2020. *Addressing Older Persons’ Vulnerability during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. <https://reliefweb.int>.

9 UNICEF. 2020. *The State of Children in Indonesia – Trends, Opportunities and Challenges for Realizing Children’s Rights*. Jakarta: UNICEF Indonesia. <https://www.unicef.org>.

10 Dipa, A. 2018. *Over 16,000 Indonesian Children Live on Streets*. Jakarta Post. <https://www.thejakartapost.com>.

1.2 INDONESIA (continued)	
DAI Index	0.457
DAI Business Sub-index	0.419
DAI People Sub-index	0.412
DAI Government Sub-index	0.539
Indonesia has adopted the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework and has made substantial improvements in digital integration. It is at an advanced stage in digital connectivity and affordable access and fairly advanced in financial ecosystem, commerce and trade and workforce transformation aspects.	
Although Indonesia as a country has showed significant transformation in the growth of its economy, digitization and inclusion of women in the digitization process still needs further development as according to a 2018 McKinsey report <sup>11</sup> the ratio of digital inclusion of women to men is 0.86 in the country. The World Bank Report, Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion in ASEAN, found only 48% of the population held financial institution accounts, 35% of the population had made or received payments in the past year; 4% had paid utility bills using a mobile phone; and only 8% had used a mobile phone or the internet to access an account.	
Linked closely to the below section on financial inclusion, is the “e-Musrenbang” or participatory planning and budgeting context in Indonesia. Musrenbang enables local government to better engage citizens and discuss community aspirations in a formal forum, which can then be reflected in programs and activities. Musrenbang processes are different from city to city. More recently “e-Musrenbang” processes have been implemented in many cities, including Makassar City. In 2015, building on learnings from previous iterations of e-Musrenbang in the City, a new platform was developed called SIPPD (Sisten Informasi Perencanaan dan Pembangunan Daerah). This platform provides information about city planning and makes it easier for communities to create proposals for their neighbourhood. Key challenges to the process in Makassar are noted to include lack of mechanisms for communities to monitor implementation of proposed projects / programs, and poor engagement mechanisms between city government and communities.	
Economic and Financial Inclusion	
The Indonesian economy has undergone dramatic changes over the last few decades. Indonesia achieved middle income status in 2004 and high growth also rapidly reduced poverty from 23% of the population in 1999 to 11% in 2016. The share of manufacturing and services in the economy is growing, and agriculture declining (although still a high level overall). Yet one area that has not changed much is participation of women in the labour market. <sup>12</sup> However, the propensity for women to participate in the labour force appears to be increasing among the younger generation, particularly the more educated living in urban areas. It is estimated that in Indonesia only 23% of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are owned by women (Asia Foundation, 2013). Systematic barriers to entrepreneurship prevent women from economic opportunities worldwide. Women’s underrepresentation as entrepreneurs in Indonesia is attributed to various factors. Tambunan (2009) identifies obstacles such as low levels of education and fewer training opportunities for women, household responsibilities, legal, cultural or religious constraints, and a lack of access to formal credit and financial institutions. A lack of time to complete income generating activities due to caring or unpaid roles can also leave women with fewer opportunities to develop their own livelihoods and can result in vulnerability to insecure or discriminatory situations. The ratio of financial inclusion of women is 0.81(low). <sup>13</sup> Unlike in many other developing nations, microcredit in Indonesia has not been specifically targeted towards women (ADB, 2006).Although according to the ADB Report Accelerating Financial inclusion in South East Asia with Digital Finance, female account ownership worldwide has increased from 47% in 2011 to 58% in 2014. 2014 Data from Findex indicates the gender gap has reversed in Indonesia (minus 3%) indicating that the percentage of women who own accounts in Indonesia is higher than that of men, However, it is noted that in Indonesia informal service provides continue to dominate the financial inclusion landscape with 59% of savings and 77% of borrowing still conducted informally.	
COVID-19 Impact	
In June, International Monetary Fund predicted that the global economy would shrink by 4.9% percent in 2020, warning of especially harsh conditions for low-income households. Indonesia had already cut its 2020 GDP growth outlook to 2.3%, from 5.3%, by April. %. The Covid-19 lockdowns in Indonesia have channelled many people online for shopping, learning, entertainment, and working, accelerating the shift to digital services. Simultaneously, companies are pushing ahead with internal digitization for staff, customers, and suppliers (for instance, enhancing supply-chain visibility, offering digital learning experiences, and providing new channels to customers). <sup>14</sup>	

11 McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality in Asia Pacific*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.

12 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Monash University. 2017. *Women’s Economic Participation in Indonesia: A study of gender inequality in employment, entrepreneurship and key enablers for change*. Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance (AIPEG). <https://www.monash.edu>.

13 McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality in Asia Pacific*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.

14 Lath, V., at al. 2020. *With Effort, Indonesia Can Emerge from the COVID-19 Crisis Stronger*. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.



1.2 INDONESIA (continued)
Key Actors/Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Asian Development Bank (ADB): Revitalization of Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) using a Water-Sensitive Approach. The project is underway in Makassar city. It aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of a water-sensitive approach for wastewater treatment, flood risk reduction, and urban environment improvement using decentralized green infrastructure to biologically treat contaminated and polluted water<sup>15</sup>. Using community-driven development approaches, the RISE project is empowering urban poor beneficiaries to co-design and implement nature-based solutions for sanitation, drainage, and water supply.<sup>16</sup></li><li>Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Government of Indonesia: MAMPU aims to improve the access of poor women to essential services and other government programs in order to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment and support the achievement of Government of Indonesia Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets.<sup>17</sup></li><li>DFAT and Government of Indonesia: Program Peduli aims to promote social inclusion to reduce poverty among marginalised people in Indonesia. This includes efforts to increase access to public services and social assistance, increase social acceptance, protect human rights and improve government policies on social inclusion.<sup>18</sup></li><li>DFAT: KOMPAK (Kolaborasi Masyarakat dan Pelayanan Kesejahteraan) works to reduce poverty through improved basic services and economic opportunities for the poor and vulnerable. KOMPAK is a program aimed at institutional transformation. Working at both the national and sub-national levels, KOMPAK focuses on community empowerment, service delivery, governance, and civil society. AASCTF may identify opportunities to engage / collaborate with KOMPAK, particularly from a knowledge sharing point.</li><li></li></ul>
Opportunities and Entry Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Incorporation / use of sex-disaggregated data across for informed policy, planning and decision making.</li><li>Increasing awareness between and within government departments of GESI to foster normative changes.</li><li>Development of enhanced engagement mechanisms between city government and communities. Increasing capacity for collaboration with GESI focus groups by city governments.</li><li>Development of Gender Sensitive Transport Planning: Planning of transport services which would integrate gender issues more women would be walking/using strollers)hence development of accessible ramps/platforms for access to public transport</li><li>Urban planning which has more accessibility features in accordance with the universal standards would help improve independent mobility.</li><li>Digital Workspaces: creation of workspaces where women can connect, collaborate and exchange ideas related to their businesses</li><li>Integration of safe spaces/recreational spaces catering to women and children within the urban design and identification of these spaces on GIS based mobile application.</li><li></li></ul>

15 ADB. 2018. *Regional: Revitalization of Informal Settlements and their Environments Using a Water-Sensitive Approach – Project Overview*. <https://www.adb.org>.

16 Bailey, J. 2019. *Civil works for RISE demonstration site underway*. ADB Livable Cities. <https://www.livablecities.info/rise-demonstration>

17 MAMPU. *About MAMPU*. Australian Government DFAT & Government of Indonesia. <https://www.mampu.or.id>

18 *Ibid*.

1.3 LAO PDR

AASCTF Gold City:	Kaysone
AASCTF Silver City:	Kaysone
AASCTF Bronze City:	Kaysone; Luang Prabang; Pakse; Vientiane
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>The government of Laos is committed to economic growth and reduction of poverty, demonstrated in its approach by adopting National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) and the 7th Five-year National Socioeconomic Development Plan (NSED). The 7th NSED aims to diversify economic activity, scaleup human capital, promote inclusion of women, ethnic groups and those living in the remote areas. This is aimed to be achieved through interventions on national economic development, rural development, livelihood promotion, public administration, and boosting competitiveness. In the interest of inclusion and development of women in the country, National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2011-2015) that aims to achieve gender equality by improving women's human capital, participation in government, and access to assets and services has been developed. The strategy along with the 7th NSED comprises of the Government of Laos approach to advancing Gender equality.</p>	
Present State of Urbanization	
<p>The share of urban population in Laos increased to over one-third of the total population in 2015. This is still well below the global average of 54%. The urban population growth rate was 4.5%over the period 2005-2015, with more than two-thirds of population growth in Vientiane Capital in recent years caused by net in-migration. Indications are that most migration is rural to urban, primarily to Vientiane Capital. There is also a significant movement across the border to Thailand, which has similar language and culture. However, reliable statistics are scarce.<sup>1</sup></p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
<p>The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:</p>	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	7.10 million
Women Population	3.52 million (49.5%)
Global Gender Gap Index rank	43 out of 153 countries
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.731
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	79.4%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	90%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	59.4%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	60.7%
Women in Labour Force	0.88 million (12%)
Seats in parliament held by women	27.5% <sup>2</sup> (2018)
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	185
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	15.3
<p>Lao PDR ranks 43rd in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 185 countries. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (79.4%) is significantly below than the men in the country (90%). Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 12% of the total population. It could be attributed to the engagement of women primarily in the informal workforce. According to ADB Country Gender Assessment Report, the proportion of women in wage employment has increased from 38 to 44% in the 1991-2005-year period. Transition from subsistence farming to cash crops such as coffee, rubber and establishment of factories producing export goods in urban areas has created more wage jobs. Hence more financial independence for women. Tourism being one of the fastest growing sectors has a lot of women involved especially in hotels and petty trade/direct sales to tourists such as operating food stands and selling handicrafts. Women are however underrepresented in the formal sector and at management levels.</p>	
<p>The National Enterprise Survey of 2009 conducted by the World Bank found that 31 percent of businesses were partly or fully female-owned. Female Owned Firms (FOFs) area more likely to operate in retail sector. In order to finance their businesses, women often approached micro financing institutions and hence women make up a strong female client base comprising of approximately 61 % of microfinance savers nationally. Both women and men report marketing and lack of start-up finance and working capital as the key factors hampering business entry. Business licensing costs too high. Top three (03) constraints were noted to be the tax rates, access to finance and inadequately trained workforce. Evidence gathered in Vientiane Capital in 2003 from many markets demonstrates that women avoid financial formalities to get loans and lack confidence to enter formal banking institutions. Women prefer loans from informal saving schemes and moneylenders. Hence accessibility to markets and financial services are very limited.<sup>3</sup></p>	

1 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities*. UNDP Lao PDR. <https://www.la.undp.org>.

2 UNDP. 2019. *Human Development Report, 2019*, Lao PDR. <http://hdr.undp.org>.

3 ADB. 2012. *Country Gender Assessment Report*. <https://www.adb.org>.

1.3 LAO PDR (continued)	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	2.8% <sup>4</sup>
According to the ILO, with the exception of people disabled as a result of unexploded ordnance (UXO) explosions, there is no reliable information on the number of people with disabilities in the Lao PDR. Furthermore, ILO highlights that ensuring a disability perspective in all aspects of policy and labour legislation, effective implementation and enforcement of existing disability laws and policies and providing for equal employment opportunities and training are among the focus areas that will contribute to the reduction of poverty and to the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in the country.	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	299 thousand
The overall expenditure on social protection as a share GDP is 0.8%. Older persons are provided assistance which comprises of noncontributory transfer or social pensions. Key challenges noted among older persons in Laos include a lack of comprehensive legislation on ageing and older persons, Limited data on ageing: health conditions, diseases, poverty and vulnerabilities; poorly developed government services and poor coordination between multisectoral agencies. <sup>5</sup>	
Children	
Lao Government has made significant progress in providing children of Lao rights to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as is indicated by reduction to open defecation to more than half in the country. <sup>6</sup> It has also increased its access to safely managed sanitation from 22 % in 2000 to 58% in 2017. <sup>7</sup> However a significant challenge faced by the government is the issue of street children in urban areas of Lao PDR.As discussed in ADB Report, At the Margins Street Children in Asia and the Pacific, rapid change in the economies of Southeast Asia including the shift toward market economies in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam, have produced geographic and other forms of inequality, stimulating migration. These processes of human movement are also played out in-country, with migration and trafficking from rural to rapidly growing urban areas. The country has the highest percentage of child marriage in East Asia and the Pacific, with 37 per cent of women aged 20 to 49 married by the age of 18. <sup>8</sup>	
In a joint report published by the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union and the United Nations Population Fund <sup>9</sup> the need for strong linkages between the education and employment sectors to ensure that all young people, regardless of gender, disability or ethnicity are able to benefit from the growing opportunities that will arise in the region is highlighted. The Report found that young people identified the lack of employment opportunities as a concern and that there is a need for more youth-focused employment initiatives, or greater awareness that services are available to them, particularly in urban areas where work as part of the family farming unit is not available as an option. Work to reduce disparities in access to safe, quality education including both primary and secondary education, life skills, and vocational training as well as career planning, to ensure that young people have access to education and training that aligns with the available job opportunities is a key opportunity.	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Lao PDR has the following indexes;	
DAI Index	0.259
DAI Business Sub-index	0.340
DAI People Sub-index	0.169
DAI Government Sub-index	0.269
Key findings of the study notes that Lao PDR is lagging significantly in terms of accessibility, quality and affordability of internet services compared to other comparable regional economies. Prices for internet are comparatively high. High capacity fixed broadband services are very limited and extremely expensive and fixed broadband—required for high-capacity data transmission to support the next wave of digital development—is particularly limited. <sup>10</sup> The latest available affordability data from the International Telecommunications Union (2017) shows that mobile broadband prices in Lao PDR are just below the average for Asia-Pacific (4.2% of GNI per capita for 1 GB, compared to 5.4% for Asia-Pacific), but that fixed broadband prices are notably higher than in neighboring economies (16.5% of GNI per capita for Lao PDR, compared to 14.5% of GNI per capita for Asia-Pacific). On broadband pricing, a recent survey of 196 countries ranked Lao PDR as the 192nd most expensive at US\$231.76 per month. By comparison, the cost in Cambodia was US\$52.89, Vietnam US\$62.86 and Myanmar US\$76.76.	

4 UNESCAP. 2019. *Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific — Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development*, 2019. <https://www.unescap.org>.

5 Phouminidr, B. 2019. *Policy of Ageing in Lao People's Democratic Republic. Regional Workshop on Integrating Policy and Research on Ageing in ASEAN: Conversation Across the Policy and Research Divide*. <https://www.duke-nus.edu.sg>.

6 ASEAN & UNICEF. *Children in ASEAN – 30 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <https://www.unicef.org>.

7 *Ibid*.

8 UNICEF. *Adolescence and Youth: Adolescent and youth development and participation*. UNICEF Lao PDR. <https://www.unicef.org>.

9 Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, and United Nations Population Fund. 2014. *Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis Lao People's Democratic Republic*. <https://lao.unfpa.org>.

10 The World Bank. 2018. *Digital Connectivity in Lao PDR – Lagging Behind Peers A short assessment with policy recommendations to catch up*. <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.

1.3 LAO PDR (continued)
According to the World Bank Report, Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion in ASEAN, Lao is still in the process of developing a National Financial Inclusion Strategy and presently there are limited digital financial services present in the country. Some indicators of financial inclusion in the country are as follows: financial institution account (29%), made of received payments in the past year (13%); paid utility bills using a mobile phone (1%); used a mobile phone or the internet to access an account (2%). Savings, money transfers and bill payments were identified as products which, if offered through DFS, would be taken up immediately. <sup>11</sup>
It is noted that Lao PDR is in a nascent phase in the digital financial inclusion sphere with minimal usage of mobile phones to access financial services. There are opportunities to enter and collaborate with the Mobile Network operators (MNOs) in the country to increase usage of digital financial services.
Economic and Financial Inclusion
Government has focused on increasing access to banking services in remote and rural areas of the country. This effort has been complimented by recent developments in banking and financial service models around the world—in particular with the development of branchless banking models and with offering financial services with or without banks. To increase access, Bank of Lao has been supporting financial institutions and multi-national organisations to develop DFS projects in Lao PDR.
According to Indochina Research's I-TRAK report, 55% of respondents think women face more challenges in the workforce than men. Some of the obstacles mentioned by respondents included domestic expectations to manage work life and housework, social attitudes towards women in the workplace and physical strength issues in some more demanding jobs. The report also mentions that 25% of the women polled would like to open their own business within the next 5 years, and an additional 18% would like to expand their existing business. Additional ways in which Lao women expect to find more success in the future is by pursuing higher education (17%) and getting a promotion (6%). <sup>12</sup>
COVID-19 Impact
COVID -19 pandemic has severely affected economic growth, which will decline to an estimated range of between -0.6 to -2.4 percent in 2020. The unemployment rate rose to 25 percent in May 2020, from 16 percent at the end of 2019. <sup>13</sup> CARE's recent Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Laos <sup>14</sup> highlights that some gender roles have been further entrenched (e.g. increase in childcare and domestic responsibilities) due to lockdowns and school closures, whilst some opportunities for more equitable relations have opened up (husbands sharing more household duties). COVID-19 is noted to have majorly increased women's economic insecurity, particularly urban women, due to the pandemic's impact on sectors with large female workforces (tourism, services, healthcare, garment factories), further exacerbated by their already financially and socially circumstances. COVID-19 s likely to further entrench economic gender gap that exists across Laos. Access to services and resource is another key area where impacts are disproportionately felt by women including in water, hygiene and sanitation, information, healthcare, and food, although it is noted that there has been some government effort to translate COVID-19 information into ethnic minority languages. It is further noted that opportunities for women's participation in decision-making platforms on the COVID-19 response has been limited, thereby impacting on the ability for gender-responsive approaches and solutions to be implemented.
Key Actors/Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone (SaSEZ): as a critical means to mobilize investments in non-resource based sectors. The SEZ focuses on services, logistics, industries and residential businesses.</li><li>ADB Lao People's Democratic Republic: Second Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project (currently active). Project aim is to increase opportunities for young women to access technical and vocational education. The project is providing training for women who want to work in traditionally male occupations.<sup>15</sup></li><li>ADB Second Greater Mekong Sub Region Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Project: The project will help transform secondary GMS central and southern corridor towns into economically inclusive, competitive tourism destinations by improving transport infrastructure, urban environmental services, and capacity to sustainably manage tourism growth. It will boost trade in services and deepen regional cooperation and integration in the GMS and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). About 97,000 residents are expected to directly benefit from climate-resilient infrastructure development and increased access to economic opportunities.<sup>16</sup></li><li></li></ul>

11 United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). 2015. *Digital Financial Services in Lao PDR: Market Insights on Product Needs and Channel Management*. <https://www.uncdf.org>.

12 Indochina Research Ltd. 2015. *Laotian Women in the Workforce*. <https://www.aseanbriefing.com>.

13 The World Bank. 2020. *The World Bank in Lao PDR: Overview*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/overview>.

14 Sriprasert, P., and Nguyen, A. 2020. *CARE Rapid Gender Analysis COVID-19 Lao People's Democratic Republic*. July. <https://www.careevaluations.org>.

15 ADB. 2017. *How Lao PDR is Using TVET to Break Gender Barriers at Work. Case Study*. <https://www.adb.org>.

16 ADB. 2020. *Projects*. <https://www.adb.org>.



1.3 LAO PDR (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ADB Second Greater Mekong Subregion Corridor Towns Development Project: It supports the first four(04) strategic thrusts of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Strategic Framework 2012 2022 namely (i) strengthening infrastructure linkages; (ii) facilitating cross-border trade, investment, and tourism; (iii) enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness; and (iv) developing human resources. The focus on corridor town development follows an approach that will maximize the economic benefits of increased trade and traffic flows along the major transport corridors in the GMS with the expected positive impacts resulting from accelerated investments in strategically located towns and cities, and added value on economic growth through development oriented on green growth and climate resilience. The objective is to strengthen competitiveness of the GMS economic corridors through environmental infrastructure.</li></ul>
Opportunities and Entry Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identification and Installation of free Wi fi- hotspot areas.</li><li>Collaboration with Mobile Network Operations to increase use of digital financial services.</li><li>Online Platforms to enhance the capacity of women in small businesses with a focus on improving financial management and financial literacy.</li><li>Interventions to reduce disparities in access to safe, quality education including both primary and secondary education, life skills, and vocational training as well as career planning, to ensure that young people have access to education and training that aligns with the available.</li><li>More and better data on GESI focus groups.</li><li>Fostering capacity of government agencies to address GESI.</li><li></li></ul>

1.4 MALAYSIA

AASCTF Gold City:	Penang
AASCTF Silver City:	Penang
AASCTF Bronze City:	Penang
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>The Federal Constitution recognises and guarantees Malaysian women fundamental rights as citizens, providing that “there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender” (Federal Constitution: 8(2)). Article 8(2) was amended in 2001 to include the word “gender”. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is prohibited by the body of laws on various violent crimes such as assault and rape in the Penal Code and by the Domestic Violence Act 1994. The Malaysian Government, through the Ministry of Human Resources, promulgated a Code of Practice on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace with the intent to raise awareness around this issue and offer behavioural guidelines to employers and employee. Additionally, the Federal Constitution mandates non-discrimination on the basis of sex in employment under a public authority (Federal Constitution: 8(2)). Workplace rights are governed by the Employment Act 1955, a legal framework covering matters such as payment of wages, rest days, hours of work, holidays and termination. The Act includes some provisions that apply exclusively to women, such as maternity leave and women’s legal right to choose a profession. Challenges remain in Malaysia’s dual legal system, which sees the application of Shariah law customary practices, that impede women’s rights in many areas.</p> <p>Other institutional level challenges include poor data access and use in urban problem solving and management.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, it is noted that there is poor use of data in Malaysia to facilitate collaborative decision-making among government agencies and that in order to realise the benefits of innovation and inclusion through information, shifts in existing socio-cultural norms and political will be required. Furthermore, institutional complexity and coordination issues across various levels of government affect the efficiency of urban planning and implementation, with particularly reference to GESI focus groups. For example, land use planning and urban transport are generally not well integrated.</p>	
Present State of Urbanization	
<p>Malaysia is among the more urbanized countries of East Asia. The urban population increased during this period(2005-2015) from 10.2 million (43% of the total population) to 15 million (53%), making it among the more urbanized countries and economies in the region in demographic terms, after Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore (and Taiwan,China).<sup>2</sup></p> <p>The majority of the urban poor and low-income families in Malaysia live in public housing — high-rise flats for newer construction, and 5-story walk-up flats for older construction. The main issues for flat dwellers include issues of affordability, the lack of appropriate community spaces, poor maintenance and limited public transportation. Safety concerns, including the prominence of crime and violence.<sup>3</sup></p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	31.50
Women Population	15.32
Global Gender Gap Index rank	104
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.677
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	91.1%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	96.3%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	75.4%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	69.2%
Women in Labour Force	5.77 million
Seats in parliament held by women	19.12%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	29
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	n/a

1 Baker, J. and Lee, M. 2017. *Competitive Cities: A Game Changer for Malaysia*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org>.  
2 The World Bank. 2015. *Malaysia among Most Urbanized Countries in East Asia*. <https://www.worldbank.org>.  
3 The World Bank. 2017. *Achieving a System of Competitive Cities in Malaysia: Overview*. <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.

1.4 MALAYSIA (continued)	
Malaysia ranks 104th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 185 countries, scoring poorly on political empowerment and economic participation. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (91.1%) is below the men of the country (96.3%), although still comparatively high to other ASEA countries. Participation of women in the workforce comprises 18.3 % of the total population. According to responses to the Malaysian Labour Force Survey in 2018, 60.2% of women who are not part of the labour force cited housework, including child and elderly care, as the main reason for not seeking work. <sup>4</sup> In 2014, the MWFC D published a booklet of statistics on women, family and development. A closer look at women who are employed in the formal sector reflects certain trends. The highest concentration of women are employed in the service and sales industry (30 percent), followed by 17 percent providing clerical support. Only 14 percent are reported to be professionals. The rest of formally employed women are scattered in very small numbers in the following sectors: elementary education, plant workers, agriculture, craft trade, technicians, associate professionals and managers. Women in urban areas have higher chances of being employed (54% of urban women are employed formally), while 47 %of rural women have formal work. These numbers are an indication of how gender norms have influenced where women find work. <sup>5</sup>	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	1.4% <sup>6</sup>
In Malaysia there are mandates in national laws and/or regulations for access audits in international airports. Malaysia reported as fully accessible international airport. It also reported their websites are accessible. <sup>7</sup> However, according to a study, <sup>8</sup> transportation is a critical problem for people with disabilities. The present public transportation system in the country is unfriendly and inaccessible to them. 10.8% (39) of the 358 employed respondents mentioned that their employers provided transportation to their workplace, 44.4% (159) travelled to their workplaces using their own transport and the remaining 12.0 % (43) depended on public transport. The private sector was also more committed towards the provision of other facilities such as toilets, disability-friendly routes, emergency lighting and restrooms. Only 2.1% of the respondents employed in the public sector said their employers provided transport to work, compared to 21.8% of employees in the private sector.	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	2211 thousands
The overall expenditure on social protection as a share of 4.2%of GDP (Malaysia) in the ADB Social Protection Index study. The study states that 143.48 million were spent on the elderly population were provided assistance which comprises of non-contributory transfer or social pensions. In Myanmar, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is the concerned ministry caring for the elderly. Home care-based services are provided for as an assistance. However, Malaysia had social insurance coverage far below the Asian average of 38.5% in south East Asia.	
Children	
Statistics	31,528,033 <sup>9</sup>
At risk urban youth are identified as a particularly (15-30) vulnerable to social exclusion. Key difficulties for youth include in making their voices heard, and perceptions of limitations in their ability to influence decision-making which contribute to a sense of social exclusion. This has a particular impact at the local community level, and in relation to neighbourhood committees. Furthermore, difficulties in accessing the education system were identified as key contributing factors to both vulnerability and exclusion of youth. <sup>10</sup>	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Malaysia has the following indexes;	
DAI Index	0.686
DAI Business Sub-index	0.548
DAI People Sub-index	0.642
DAI Government Sub-index	0.866

1.4 MALAYSIA (continued)
According to the World Bank Report, Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion in ASEAN, Malaysia has developed Financial Inclusion Strategy Framework. Malaysia has also adopted the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework and has made substantial improvements in digital integration. It is in an advanced stage in all aspects namely business ecosystem, financial ecosystem, digital connectivity and affordable access. <sup>11</sup> Financial inclusion has taken place and reflect high indicators as compared to other countries in the region,: financial institution account (85%), made of received payments in the past year (70%); paid utility bills using a mobile phone (22%); used a mobile phone or the internet to access an account (33%). Malaysia Well-being Index (MyWI) 2018 an overview of the people's well-being using 14 components covering economic well-being sub-composite and social well-being sub-composite. the components comprise of transport (134.7), communications (130.8) Housing (119.9), public safety (132.4), governance (121.5) social participation (128.6) amongst other components. MyWI increased 0.8 per cent to 122.4 index points in 2018 as compared to 2017. The economic and social well-being sub-composites grew 0.7 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively in 2018 as compared to the previous year. <sup>12</sup> According to a 2018 McKinsey report <sup>13</sup> the ratio of digital inclusion of women to men is 0.96 in the country (high level of inclusion).
Economic and Financial Inclusion
Malaysia's female labour force participation rate has risen significantly in recent years, from 46.8% in 2010 to 55.2% in 2018 but remains low given Malaysia's level of development and when compared to other countries in Southeast Asia. Housework is cited as the main constraint preventing women from participating in the labour force. <sup>14</sup>
COVID-19 Impact
Malaysia's economy is projected to contract by 3.1 percent in 2020 due to a sharp slowdown in economic activity caused by COVID-19 and measures to contain its spread. Petaling Jaya, the umbrella body for women's organization in the country predicts that the gender gap, particularly in the areas of economic participation and political empowerment, will continue to widen due to COVID-19.  However Malaysians has come up with innovations to ease the impact initiatives such as Biji-Biji initiative mobilized their network of makers to design, test and produce face shields needed for the medical fraternity and taking part in a movement called Social Textiles which aims to deliver 50,000 scrub sets medical staff by mid-June made by tailors from marginalised communities (known as "B40" – the bottom 40% – in Malaysia). <sup>15</sup>
Key Actors/Stakeholders
Penang Island City Council (MBPP): Projects within George Town World heritage Zone. Projects which include strengthening and upgrading the sea wall along Esplanade, backlane improvement project to turn these into pedestrian and cycling-friendly pathways within the heritage zone. <sup>16</sup>
Opportunities and Entry Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Capacity building and knowledge sharing to assist in shifting social norms and perceptions on GESI within government agencies.</li><li>Strengthening programs for at risk urban youth. These may help to: encourage entry to the labour market; and facilitate inclusion through spatial integration (e.g. housing, transport).</li><li>Deepen open data policies and using data to facilitate collaborative decision-making between government agencies and between the government and citizens, ultimately enhancing the competitiveness of cities.<sup>17</sup></li><li>Car Pool Schemes for PWDs working in Public Sector: Increase access for PWDs through car share schemes which would be integrated in a GIS based application for rides/ share.</li><li>Investing in safe neighbourhood programmes, including development of smart streetlights to enhance public safety.</li><li></li></ul>

4 Romlee, N. A. 2020. *What working Malaysian women need*. The Star. <https://www.thestar.com.my>.

5 Garcia, M., et al. 2015. *Women's workforce participation in Indonesia and Malaysia*. Nathan Associates Inc., prepared by the George Washington University Capstone Team. <https://elliott.gwu.edu>.

6 UNESCAP. 2019. *Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific — Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development*, 2019. <https://www.unescap.org>.

7 Ibid.

8 Tiun Ling Ta and Khoo Suet Leng. 2013. *Challenges Faced by Malaysians with Disabilities in the World of Employment*. <https://www.researchgate.net>.

9 UNICEF. 2020. Datasets. <https://data.unicef.org>.

10 The World Bank. 2017. *Achieving a System of Competitive Cities in Malaysia: Overview*. <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.

11 Hoppe, F., et al. 2018. *Advancing towards AESAN Digital Integration*. Bain & Company. <https://www.bain.com>.

12 Department of Statistics, Malaysia. 2018. *Malaysian Wellbeing Index 2019*. <https://www.dosm.gov.my>.

13 McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's equality in Asia Pacific*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.

14 The World Bank. 2019. *Breaking Barriers: Toward Better Economic Opportunities for Women in Malaysia*. <https://www.worldbank.org>.

15 Pybus, J. 2020. *Pandemic pivoting: how Malaysia's social enterprises are responding to the Covid-19 crisis*. <https://www.pioneerspost.com>.

16 Mok, O. 2019. *MBPP sets aside RM10m for George Town Heritage Zone projects in 2020 spending plan*. Malay Mail. <https://www.malaymail.com>.

17 The World Bank. 2017. *Achieving a System of Competitive Cities in Malaysia: Overview*. <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.



1.5 MYANMAR	
AASCTF Gold City:	Yangon
AASCTF Silver City:	Yangon
AASCTF Bronze City:	Yangon
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>Myanmar’s Constitution guarantees all person’s equal rights before the law and equal legal protection (Section 347) and does not discriminate against any Myanmar citizen on the basis of sex (Section 348). Myanmar is an active member of the ASEAN Committee on Women and the ASEAN Commission on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children, 2010. Myanmar has institutional mechanisms to implement its commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment, led by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. These include the Department of Social Welfare which is the government focal point on gender equality and women’s rights; the Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs, an inter-ministerial policy-related mechanism established in 1996 and re-established in 2012 under the new government to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action; the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, established in 2003 as a government-resourced and staffed nongovernment organization that assists the National Committee for Women’s Affairs to implement CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action nationwide; and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, which was established in 1991 to promote maternal and child health and well-being in remote areas.</p> <p>National Urban Policy (NUP) - led by the Department of Urban and Housing Development Framework (NSDF) is also being developed. It aims to aims to implement a comprehensive, long-term vision for urban development in Myanmar, with spatially integrated urban settlements, adequate infrastructure, and an enabling urban governance environment (UN Habitat, 2016).The National Land Use Policy (NLUP) policy includes a dedication section on gender equality, including among others equal heritance rights and land tenure to women.</p>	
Present State of Urbanization	
<p>Approximately 30% of its population living in cities in 2017, Myanmar is at an early stage of urbanisation. With approximately 15 million people now living in urban areas with Yangon and Mandalay accounting for 2% of the total urban population.<sup>1</sup> In Yangon, Matelski and Sabrie<sup>2</sup> note that while the city presents unique opportunities to Myanmar’s people, it also increasingly faces problems of marginalization, congestion, and gentrification that contribute to rising inequalities rather than inclusive development. One of the key problems identified is the lack of public consultation in the process of urban planning and decision-making. Policy decisions are taken in at three different levels – municipal, regional and national, with Matelski and Sabrie<sup>3</sup> further noting that urban planning seems disorganised, and the lack of official goals to achieve is reinforced by the influence of real estate investors and businesses men. In the city and on its outskirts, hardly any urban policy was applied during the military junta period, instead, inhabitants built their own city (Yangon) under the surveillance of the local authorities, and new migrants have continued to shape the city. No public facilities (such as roads, access to water and electricity, schools, hospitals, etc.) were provided by the government, while the current government is catching up slowly. They further note that in recent years, urban planning has been largely exogenously led by elites, real estate and construction companies, and investors from abroad, with Yangonites largely not participating in the development of the urban vision or having their interests and needs incorporated within urban planning.</p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	53.7 million
Women Population	27.83 million
Global Gender Gap Index rank	114 out of 153 countries
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.665
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	71.9%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	80%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	62%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	57.2%
Women in Labour Force	9.59 million
Seats in parliament held by women	12.5%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	250
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	33

1 The World Bank.2019. *Myanmar’s Urbanization, Creating Opportunities for All*. <https://www.worldbank.org>.

2 Matelski, M., and Sabrie, M. 2019. *Challenges and Resiliene in Myanmar’s Urbanisation: A Special Issue on Yangon*. Social Science Research on Southeast Asia. Vol. 33.

3 *Ibid*.

1.5 MYANMAR (continued)	
<p>Myanmar ranks 114th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 185 countries. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (71.9%) is below the men of the country (80%). In the last few years Myanmar has seen limited growth in the level of women’s participation in governance. Despite this significant upsurge in women’s participation in governance since 2015, gender equality of participation remains largely an aspiration rather than the reality. Women still face numerous obstacles to participation, including cultural norms, bias against female leadership, restrictions on time and travel, and the influence or lack thereof of other women leaders. Efforts to increase the gender equality of participation in governance would greatly benefit from increased collaboration, with civil society and international organizations sharing their technical expertise, and their ability to mobilize citizen inputs, with the government and political parties. An increasing number of Myanmar and international organizations are now providing leadership trainings for women, though there is a need to incorporate additional support with these trainings, such as mentoring or coaching.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>A 2017 survey on Myanmar’s MSME estimated that informal employment was the most common form of work in Myanmar’s manufacturing enterprises 90.7% of women who work are in the informal economy. With the COVID -19 pandemic, a study conducted by Care and UN Women on June 2020, CARE Rapid Gender Analysis of COVID-19 in Myanmar found that 50% of the 700,000 mainly women workers in the garment sector are at risk of either being suspended without pay or losing their jobs permanently, do not have access to social protections and are highly exposed to the economic downturn.</p> <p>Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 17.8 % of the total population. In the urban areas, overall employment levels are high estimated at 78.2 % for men and 53.5% for women. Almost 80% of the urban workforce is employed in Micro and Small enterprise. About 60% of the microenterprises are female owned. The most commonly cited obstacle by microenterprises is limited access to finance. Possible explanations were lack of proper collateral, limited or no credit history, informal connections and payment required to obtain a loan.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Regarding urban mobility, Yangon showed a greater dependency on public transport according to the In the City Life Survey conducted by The Asia Foundation. In Yangon, the vehicle fleet grew by 37% between 2012-2015. In comparison to males (2.199) women had considerably lower trip rate (1.904). A study by DIIS 2017 indicated women particularly single women and widows are afraid to walk the streets of informal settlements and are less likely than men to report crimes as they feel more vulnerable and fear revenge from criminals.</p>	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	50,279,900 <sup>6</sup>
<p>According to the 2014 Census, Yangon has a disability prevalence rate of 2.40. Nationwide, the prevalence of disability is higher in rural areas (5.0%) than in urban areas (3.6%). Dependency of disabled people and their reliance of government/community organizations support is high as it is noted that most persons with disabilities live in institutions, especially religious (66.1%). Documentation and registration of disabled persons in the public system is also a problem in Myanmar. In the 2016 study of UNICEF, it was found that 27% of children with disabilities did not have birth certificates which constrains their access to services. They are excluded in various ways as without registration documents they cannot access education, employment and health services. A study also found that children with disabilities were pushed out of school with one of the main reasons being accessibility such as difficulties with transport, access to bathrooms and long school commutes.</p> <p>According to the Census 2014,33% of PWDs have access bicycle transportation (33.7%), motorcycle /moped transportation 33.4% which are significantly lower than persons without disability which stands at 39.1% and 42.8% for bicycle and motorcycle/moped transportation respectively. 27.7% of PWDs have access to mobile phones, 2.5%(computer) and 4.4% (internet at home). The proportion of persons with access to a mobile phone among persons with disabilities (27.7 %) was found to be lower than among persons without disabilities (35.5%).<sup>7</sup></p>	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	3249 (thousands)
<p>The overall expenditure on social protection as a share of 0.1% of GDP (Myanmar) faring the worst amongst 25 countries studied in the ADB Social Protection Index study. The study states that 29.2 million of the elderly population were provided assistance which comprises of non-contributory transfer or social pensions. In Myanmar, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is the concerned ministry caring for the elderly. Home care-based services are provided for as an assistance.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>A study Assessment of quality of life among elderly in urban and peri-urban areas, Yangon Region<sup>9</sup> concluded that Peri-urban development, strengthening healthcare and social security systems, and encouraging social interaction and participation in group activities play critical roles in improving the quality of life for elderly residing in Myanmar.</p>	

4 Minoletti, P. 2016. *Gender (In)equality in the Governance of Myanmar: Past, Present, and Potential Strategies for Change*. The Asia Foundation.

5 *Ibid*.

6 Department of Population, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population. 2017. *Myanmar Population and Housing Census Thematic report on Disability, Census Report*. Volume 4-K. August 2017.

7 *Ibid*.

8 Department of Social Welfare, Myanmar. *Elderly Care Services*. <https://www.dsw.gov.mm/en/node/2204>.

9 Zin, P. E., et al. 2020. Assessment of quality of life among elderly in urban and peri-urban areas, Yangon Region, Myanmar. PLoS One, 15(10). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33119697/>.

1.5 MYANMAR (continued)	
Children	
Statistics	1.48 million child population <sup>10</sup>
Myanmar government has taken steps to reduce the vulnerability of all children and young people, particularly those facing the greatest deprivations, by developing national social protection policies and frameworks, implementing social protection programmes, including through individual cash grants or transfers, and by improving investment in children. In 2017, Myanmar began its first ever roll-out of a universal, systems-based maternal and child cash transfer scheme, which is reported to have reached over 100,000 beneficiaries in less than two years. Child poverty is known to affect millions of children in ASEAN, but exact figures are hard to come by. The most recent data indicate, that as many as 52% (under 9 years of age) and 37% (aged 10-17) live in multidimensional poverty in Myanmar. The risks to children of living in urban slums are numerous and include insecure housing, limited water and sewage infrastructure and increased risk of disease.	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Myanmar has the following indexes:	
DAI Index	0.259
DAI Business Sub-index	0.278
DAI People Sub-index	0.271
DAI Government Sub-index	0.228
Although the DAI index may be low (0.259) as compared to other countries in the region, Myanmar has adopted the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework and has made substantial improvements in digital integration. It is in an early stage in business ecosystem and financial ecosystem. It has progressed to an advance stage in digital connectivity and affordable access. <sup>11</sup> Myanmar has developed financial infrastructure, however the percentage of persons with bank/financial institution accounts stands at 26% and the percentage of people that made or received payments in the past year using mobile phones was 8%. There were no recorded payments of Utility Bills using a mobile phone (0%); and people using mobile phone or the internet to access an account was only at 1%. <sup>12</sup> This indicates that there is limited use of Digital Financial Services (DFS) in the country. As the infrastructure for DFC has been established in the country, there are opportunities to work with microfinance institutions, banks, mobile network operators, and payment service providers across the country to develop and test innovative business models for financial inclusion.	
An example of technology solutions to fast track economic and social development in Myanmar is The Asia Foundation's Urban Safety Program which works with townships to support the government to respond to resident's safety concerns. A local tech start-up developed a simple Geographic Information System mapping tool for this. By helping local civil servants in the township administration, including the local police, digitize hard-copy forms into electronic records, the tool provides authorities with a means of analysing their data and strategically targeting limited resources. Without having to collect any new data, the tool quickly identifies priority areas for response, such as traffic accident hotspots or high crime areas. It demonstrates visually the value of existing administrative data to those involved in its collection. Key successes of the project have been fostering improved coordination between government agencies, which is a broader challenge in Myanmar.	
Economic and Financial Inclusion	
Unlike most countries, Myanmar labour laws do not stipulate the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, and do not contain a provision of gender non-discrimination in hiring, which may contribute to the wage discrepancies. Although women own 60 % of the micro enterprises in Myanmar, the ratio of Financial Inclusion of women to men is 0.60. <sup>13</sup> According to the World Gender Gap Index Report, Myanmar holds the 102nd rank in the economic participation and opportunity index of women and the value for women to hold a bank account is 0.00 (0-1 worst) and women's access to land use, control & ownership is 0.50. The challenges towards economic inclusion and financial inclusion are many. The gender gap between men and women in formal financial product usage stands at 12% points (at 20% of women vs. 32% of men accessing formal finance). Women are also more likely to use informal products compared with men by 5% points. The main challenges noted are access points across delivery channels are extremely limited in Myanmar, with mobility constraints and limited phone ownership exacerbating this issue for women. <sup>14</sup> In order to increase financial inclusion amongst women, an enabling environment is required policy formation and laws related to improved financial access, literacy and management.	

1.5 MYANMAR (continued)
Recent years have seen a few limited attempts by the government to use policy to promote gender equality, but gender considerations are still typically ignored in policymaking, budgeting, and the design and management of public service delivery. Government budget allocations appear to be quite heavily skewed towards sectors that are prioritized more highly by men than women. In general, Myanmar's budgeting and public service delivery systems are badly in need of improvement, suffering from a disconnection between policymaking and budgeting, many budget items being "off budget," inadequate data collection, low government capacity to analyse data, and poor transparency and accountability. There is potential to work with ministries and subnational bodies that show an interest in improving their policymaking, budgeting, and delivery of public services by accounting for gender considerations. There is also a need to raise awareness of the benefits of such an approach among political parties, ministries, and subnational bodies. <sup>15</sup>
COVID-19 Impact
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic growth in Myanmar was projected to pick up to 6.3% in FY2019/20 and 6.4% in FY2020/21. However, Myanmar's economy is now expected to decline sharply due to direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. Myanmar's economy has suffered as a result of COVID-19-related restrictions on movement in other countries because its economy relies primarily on exports. As of 29 April 2020, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population reported that 60,000 people had been let go from factories. In-country movement restrictions and a sudden shift in the country's economic need has disproportionately impacted people who are less resilient, such as migrant workers.
However, COVID-19 pandemic accelerated Myanmar's transition to digital financial services despite Myanmar's popular culture of cash reliance, the government's main strategy in disbursing stimulus payments is through digital platforms, using fintech start-ups like Wave Money and OnePay. Myanmar saw a spike in digital payment use as citizens opted out of cash to minimize physical contact. In addition to Wave Money, OnePay, a mobile application launched in April, is providing interbank digital services and cash-in services that do not require physical contact with bank associates or anyone else. <sup>16</sup>
Key Actors/Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Asian Development Banks (ADB) Yangon City Water Resilience Project. The project will address urgent water infrastructure needs associated with bulk water supply in Yangon City. It will support the government's strategies to make its cities more liveable through the provision of better and more widespread urban water services. As the first of a series of phased interventions, the project will deliver a water-secure future for Yangon City.<sup>17</sup></li><li>Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA): Yangon Urban Development Projects. The objective of the Project is to mitigate traffic congestion and improve urban environment of Yangon city by rehabilitating drainage facilities, removing bottlenecks on major roads, improving street scape in central business district thereby contributing to social and economic development of Yangon City.<sup>18</sup></li><li>New Yangon Development Company Limited (NYDC) was established to undertake the development of the New Yangon City. NYDC is 100% owned by the Yangon Regional Government and tasked to develop 20,000 acres of land west of central Yangon across from Kyeemyindaing as a Phase I into an urban industrial district that will initiate creation of 2 million jobs.<sup>19</sup></li><li>The Asia Foundation: TAF works with partners in government, the private sector, and civil society to address Myanmar's critical needs. TAF work includes building the country's capacity for regional and global integration; strengthening institutions and processes of democratic governance; contributing to informed dialogues on the peace process; supporting initiatives for inclusive economic development; promoting women's empowerment and political participation; and increasing public access to information.</li><li></li></ul>
Opportunities and Entry Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There is potential to work with ministries and subnational bodies that show an interest in improving their policymaking, budgeting, and delivery of public services by accounting for gender considerations. There is also a need to raise awareness of the benefits of such an approach among political parties, ministries, and subnational bodies.</li><li>Efforts to increase the gender equality of participation in governance would greatly benefit from increased collaboration, with civil society and international organizations sharing their technical expertise, and their ability to mobilize citizen inputs, with the government and political parties.</li><li>Online platform for e-learning opportunities: Provide online e-learning opportunities targeted at women to increase financial literacy and management.</li><li>Assessment of PWD friendly accessible buildings data collection and analytics on buildings which are accessible for PWDs.</li><li></li></ul>

10 Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population. 2014. *Yangon Census 2014*. <https://www.dop.gov.mm>.

11 Hoppe, F., et al. 2018. *Advancing towards AESAN Digital Integration*. Bain & Company. <https://www.bain.com>.

12 The World Bank & ASEAN. 2020. *Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion in ASEAN – Policy and Regulatory Enablers*. <https://afcwpa.asean.org>.

13 McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's equality in Asia Pacific*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.

14 Dalberg Global Development Advisors. 2017. *PoWER Women and Girls Financial Inclusion Country Assessment*. United Nations Capital Development Fund. <https://www.uncdf.org>.

15 Minoletti, P. 2016. *Gender (In)equality in the Governance of Myanmar: Past, Present, and Potential Strategies for Change*. The Asia Foundation.

16 Kerr, H. 2020. *COVID-19 is boosting fintech and mobile money in Myanmar, but what's next?* ASEAN Today. <https://www.aseantoday.com>.

17 ADB. 2020. *Projects*. <https://www.adb.org>.

18 Japan International Cooperation Agency. *Yangon Urban Development Project*. <https://www.jica.go.jp>.

19 The New Yangon Development Company. 2020. *About Us*. <https://www.nydc.com.mm/rh-company-profile/>.



1.6 PHILIPPINES	
AASCTF Gold City:	Baguio
AASCTF Silver City:	Baguio
AASCTF Bronze City:	Baguio; Coron; El Nido; Metro Manila
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>In order to ensure social protection for its socially vulnerable groups, Philippines has signed numerous laws and programmes to for Prohibition on Discrimination Against Women, Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, The Anti-Rape Law of 1997, Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998 and Magna Carta of Women.</p> <p>Philippines Commission on women has been formed to take forward the women agenda in the country. Programs related to inclusiveness, empowerment are conducted and supervised by the commission. Department of Social Welfare and Development is responsible for the social rights and development of the Filipino people. Philippine Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and the Philippine constitution stipulate the need for the development of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Although Philippines has historically lacked an effective and comprehensive policy that denies a vision for urban development that is supported by strategies and linked actions to realize the potential and to tackle the problems arising from the concentrated growth of population and economic activity, a number of existing national planning frameworks, such as the National Urban Development and Housing Framework and the National Framework for Physical Planning, attempt to address specific dimensions of urban development.</p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
<p>Although the level of urbanization has been relatively steady with some fluctuation, there has been a steep increase in total urban population during the last decade. In merely two (02) decades, the national urban population grew from 60 million in 1990 to 94 million by 2010.<sup>1</sup></p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
<p>The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:</p>	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	106.7 million
Women Population	53.05 million
Global Gender Gap Index rank	16
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.781
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	98.2%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	98.1%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	71.3%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	60.2%
Women in Labour Force	15.36 million
Seats in parliament held by women	29.17%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	121
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	16.9
<p>Philippines ranks 13th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 185 countries. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (98.2%) is at par with the men of the country (98.1%). Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 14.3 % of the total population. This indicates low level of women are participants of the formal workforce. As with women in the South east region, it can be attributed to their participation in the informal workforce. However, the involvement of women in legislation and governance is high (29.17%) in the country. In the city of Baguio, women now dominate the Baguio City government, with 56% of the department heads women, 42% of the total city workforce women, and three (03) members of the local legislative body women.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>In the Philippines, the employment gap between women and men is 26%. Furthermore, women’s annual earnings are only an estimated 60% of men. Challenges for women in the labour market include (i) unpaid domestic work and care burden; (ii) limited access to resources, including credit and financial services; (iii) inadequate education and lack of training programs; (iv) access to government services; (v) disadvantages in social protection coverage; and (vi) pervading discrimination. Despite economic and employment growth, gendered employment indicators suggest that gender equality in the labour market remains a goal rather than a realized objective.<sup>3</sup></p>	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	1.4 million or 1.57 percent <sup>4</sup>

1 ADB. 2014. Republic of the Philippines - National Urban Assessment. <https://www.adb.org>.

2 Agoot, L. 2018. *Women Dominate Baguio City Government Workforce*. Philippine News Agency. <https://www.pna.gov.ph>.

3 ADB. 2014. Republic of the Philippines - National Urban Assessment. <https://www.adb.org>.

4 Philippine Statistics Authority. 2010. 2010 Census of Population and Housing, Philippines. <https://psa.gov.ph>.

1.6 PHILIPPINES (continued)	
<p>Persons with disabilities can avail insurance coverage through organizations accredited by the Government and premium is paid for by Government for those who cannot afford to shoulder the cost. They become beneficiaries of the Philhealth’s indigency program. People with employment are provided access to housing loans. However, there is little awareness of existing housing programs and how to access them, and high transaction costs are among other factors that contribute to a lack of access for PwDs.<sup>5</sup> Despite efforts to equalize opportunities and improve their positions, persons with disabilities in the country continue to suffer exclusion from social and economic opportunities due to systemic barriers to their participation, such as their exclusion from decision-making processes, negative attitudes about disability that perpetuate marginalization, and discriminatory legislative frameworks that have not only excluded the disabled but have also contributed to the creation of barriers to their participation. Studies indicate that persons with disabilities living in urban areas face problems of accessibility. Although there might be ramps and assistive devices present in the country mobility was a major concern. As a study in Baguio city suggests that although in accordance with the disability law present the city has developed ramps and PWD friendly infrastructure. However, the PWDs of the city are not satisfied and consider it to be unaligned to their needs of accessibility.<sup>6</sup></p>	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	5746 thousands
<p>The overall expenditure on social protection as a share of 2.9 % of GDP in the ADB Social Protection Index study. The study states that 12.3% million of the elderly population were provided assistance which comprises of noncontributory transfer or social pensions. Social pension in the Philippines was introduced 2011 to provide Php500 per month (\$10) to indigent senior citizens. Initially, due to its limited budget, it covered indigent senior citizens aged 77 and above which was later reduced to 65 in 2015.</p> <p>According to a study ,The Quality of Life of the Filipino Elderly in Selected Cities and Provinces, conducted in September 2014, elderly people in Philippines identified the following issues affecting the senior citizens in their area: limited availability and accessibility of health services and medicines (15.68 percent), need for broader coverage of subsidies for the elderly (13.54 percent), problems related to access of mandated senior citizen benefits such as pensions (9.74 percent), lack of economic opportunities and financial difficulties of senior citizens (8.78 percent), issues related to community dynamics (problems with neighbours, peace and order, cleanliness; 5.46 percent) and inadequate public infrastructure and services for the elderly (5.46 percent).</p>	
Children	
Statistics	106,651,394 <sup>7</sup>
<p>Social protection coverage for children in the country is relatively low. Philippines has established conditional cash transfer programmes targeting families with children, but the coverage is merely 14 percent.<sup>8</sup> Although, Philippines does not yet have universal access to WASH. It recorded an increase of more than 10% in the coverage of safely managed sanitation from 78 to 89 percent in 2017.</p>	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
<p>According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Philippines has the following indexes:</p>	
DAI Index	0.491
DAI Business Sub-index	0.568
DAI People Sub-index	0.436
DAI Government Sub-index	0.469
<p>Use of internet has expanded rapidly in the Philippines over the past decade. From 23 million in 2010, the number of Filipino internet users has more than tripled to 73 million in 2020. Limited digital infrastructure has generated a digital divide, contributing to an unequal access to services delivered via the internet. In 2018, about 40% of the Philippines’ total population of 103 million and about 57% of the country’s 23 million households did not have internet access. The Philippine economy is largely cash-based, with digital payments growing, but still in their infancy. Low transaction account ownership, lack of a national ID, nascent payment infrastructure, and the perceived risk of digital transactions restrict the wider adoption of digital payments.</p>	
Economic and Financial Inclusion	
<p>A new study released by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in the Philippines, has identified the following reasons for the decreased participation of Filipino women in the local workforce. Culture reflects the patriarchal family structure, stereotyped gender roles and religion; the high cost of commuting that reduces take-home pay; and heavy traffic, which lessens time available for family and home care.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>The banking sector in the Philippines is stable but it provides limited financing to micro, small, and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs). As across South East Asia region, Filipino women are also increasingly engaged in small and micro enterprises. However, limited financing poses a serious challenge to financial inclusion and equality. The value for women to hold a bank account is 0.25 (0-1 worst) and women’s access to land use, control &amp; ownership is 0.50 as indicated in the World Gender Gap Index Report. In order to boost entrepreneurship, assistance for small-scale women entrepreneurs’ program has been introduced by the Government. This law seeks to provide all possible assistance to Filipino women in their pursuit of owning, operating and managing small business enterprises.</p>	

5 ADB. 2005. *Disabled people and development – Philippines Country Report*. Foundation for International Training and Regional and Sustainable Development Department. <https://library.pcw.gov.ph>.

6 Fontanilla, G., J. 2015. *Baguio Eyed as PWD Friendly City*. Sun Star Reporter. <https://www.pressreader.com>.

7 UNICEF. 2020. *Country Profiles: Philippines*. <https://data.unicef.org/country/ph/>.

8 The World Bank. 2018. *Republic of the Philippines: Philippines: Social Protection Review and Assessment*. <http://documents1.worldbank.org>.

9 National Economic and Development Authority, Republic of the Philippines. 2019. *Determinants of Female Labour Force Participation in the Philip-*

1.6 PHILIPPINES (continued)
<b>COVID-19 Impact</b>
<p>In the Philippines, COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption and use of digital technologies. However, digitalization is largely constrained by the country's low high-speed broadband penetration, which lags behind neighboring middle-income countries. The digital divide in the Philippines is large. It has increased amongst Filipino children. A report suggested that as the children went back to virtual school data from the education department showed that 22.74 million students had enrolled in public and private schools this year – a significant decrease from last year's 27.7 million turnout.<sup>10</sup> It was attributed to shortage and sharing of devices amongst children from economically disadvantaged families and hence their withdrawal.</p> <p>Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (Pcieerd), an attached agency of the Department of Science and Technology (DoST), has provided financial incentives to a number of locally developed, technology driven tools that keep Covid-19 at bay. Various Apps such as ENDCoV. This is a community-driven medical information app that checks for symptoms identifies the health condition of a user and provides the corresponding recommendation as it also provides mass notification to persons with whom a Covid-19 positive patient had made prior contact with and WeTrace application which is used for patient mapping, case reporting and location tracking.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>A key impact of COVID-19 in the Philippines has been on delivery of reproductive health services, including suspension of family planning services by over 50% in March 2020 as resources were directed to COVID-response and away from sexual and reproductive health services, and mobility challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions affected women's ability to access services. Indeed, even before COVID-10, the state of sexual and reproductive health of women and girls was already identified as a public health challenge. Approximately 196,000 girls and young women between the ages of 15 and 19 years old get pregnant each year, which led the Commission on Population and Development to declare a "national social emergency" in 2019. Data from the 2017 National Democratic Health Survey showed that one in five girls is a mother by age 19, and two thirds of women are not using any form of birth control. It added that 24 % of women with little or no education have unmet need for family planning, leading to a lot of unplanned and even forced pregnancies.<sup>12</sup></p>
<b>Key Actors/Stakeholders</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Asian Development Bank (ADB) Baguio City Sanitation Improvement Project (Proposed): Areas of intervention Water and other urban infrastructure and services, Urban policy, institutional and capacity development and Urban sanitation and sewerage.<sup>13</sup></li><li>UNESCO's Creative Cities Network : The project envisages initiating the development of Creative Centres dedicated to supporting crafts and folk art, offering workshops, studios, design laboratories, exhibit areas as well as open collaborative spaces for creators and the general public, thus strengthening Baguio City's creative ecosystem, setting up the Baguio City Creative Circuit (BCCC) that will physically link existing buildings and venues to showcase Baguio City's creative spirit, directing the general public towards creativity as an essential element for sustainable urban development involving Creative Cities of Crafts and Folk Arts, as well as members from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (or ASEAN), to take part in the festivals and activities, and providing them dedicated spaces to display creative crafts and folk artworks; and developing partnerships with members of the Network in order to share best practices and promote mutual understanding.<sup>14</sup></li><li>The City Government of Baguio: Some PHP 409 million worth of projects covering eight projects are expected to start in October 2020.The projects cover upgrade of drainage systems, sidewalks at Gov. Pack Road and Leonard Wood Road; expansion Marcos Highway and Naguilian Road.<sup>15</sup></li></ul>
<b>Opportunities and Entry Points</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Smart Cards for Public Transportation: Smart Travel cards with subsidized rates for women, elderly, and Persons with disabilities.</li><li>Collaboration with banking sector and development of applications/services targeted at women to increase their financial management and literacy.</li><li>Mobility Support: GIS based application with real time location service to provide information on local assistive services, accessible and barrier free spaces for PWDs.</li><li></li></ul>

pines. <https://investinginwomen.asia>.

10 Balagtas, A., et al. 2020. *Philippines: Classes Resume Virtually for Millions of Children*. <https://www.benarnews.org>.

11 Maghirang, T. 2020. *PH innovations in the Covid-19 fight*. The Manila Times. <https://www.manilatimes.net>.

12 Oxfam Philippines. 2020. *Women's groups call for unhampered delivery of reproductive health services*. Media Release. <https://reliefweb.int>.

13 ADB. 2020. *Projects*. <https://www.adb.org>.

14 UNESCO. 2020. Baguio City. <https://en.unesco.org>.

15 Lobien, P, 2020. *Baguio to start 8 projects worth P409-M in October*. Philippine News Agency. <https://www.pna.gov.ph>.

1.7 THAILAND	
AASCTF Gold City:	None
AASCTF Silver City:	Chonburi
AASCTF Bronze City:	Chonburi
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
Thailand has made significant efforts to integrate the international principles and instruments into legislation and policy, evident in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 (2017), which clearly specifies that ‘men and women shall enjoy equal rights. The Gender Equality Act 2015, which was enacted in 2015, established a Committee to Promote Gender Equality (CPGE) to enact the Act’s legal policies and mechanisms to advance gender equality. In addition, the Women Development Strategy (2017-2021), developed by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, sets out goals, objectives and targets in the area of gender equality which will be steering tools for effective budget allocations.	
Present State of Urbanization:	
Thailand’s urban area grew from about 2,400 square kilometres to 2,700 between 2000 and 2010, an average annual growth rate of 1.4%. This growth rate was slower than the average for the region (2.4%). Its urban population (the population living in urban areas of more than 100,000 people) increased during this period from 9.3 million to slightly less than 11.8 million. Urbanization in the country is dominated by the Bangkok urban area, which at 9.6 million people in 2010 almost joined the ranks of the megacities of the region. <sup>1</sup>	
GESI Focus Groups	
The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	69.40
Women Population	35.60
Global Gender Gap Index rank	75
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.708
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	91.2%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	94.7%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	77.5%
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	77%
Women in Labour Force	16.60 million
Seats in parliament held by women	10%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	37
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	44.2
Thailand ranks 75th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 153 countries. It is noted that the literacy rate amongst women (91.2%) is below the men of the country (94.7%). Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 23.9% of the total population. According to the Mckinsey report Thai women contribute 40% to the national GDP. Thailand has transitioned to an upper-middle-income country where gender equality and women’s empowerment challenges remain, particularly for certain groups and geographical regions including women from ethnic minorities, migrant women and women in the southern border provinces of Thailand in which violent conflicts have hindered human development leading to serious human insecurity, inequality, deprivation, and socioeconomic disparities. Violence against women and girls remains prevalent in Thailand and acts as a barrier to women’s empowerment. Thailand has a greater percentage of women in senior leadership positions than both the Asia-Pacific region and the global average. <sup>2</sup> In Thailand’s mid-market companies, women hold 32% of senior leadership positions, is higher than the global average of 27% as well as the Asia-Pacific average of 26%. <sup>3</sup>	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	2,041,159
There are various policies in place in Thailand to encourage inclusiveness amongst the Thai people. Some of them are Section 33 of the Persons with Disabilities Quality of Life Promotion Act BE2550 (2007) requires private and public businesses to hire one disabled person for every 100 able-bodied employees. There are also incentives to encourage inclusive business practices such as tax exemption. If more than 60% of a firm’s workforce are registered as disabled, the firm can qualify for such exemption. <sup>4</sup> In Thailand, there are mandates in national laws and/or regulations for access audits government buildings. However, Thailand did not report fully accessible government buildings.	

1 The World Bank. 2015. *Urbanization in Thailand is dominated by the Bangkok urban area*. Feature Story. <https://www.worldbank.org>.

2 Grant Thornton Services Ltd. 2020. *Women in Business Report 2020*. Thailand. <https://www.grantthornton.global>.

3 UN Women. 2020. *Thailand*. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org>.

4 Gambles, A. 2019. *Disability Inclusive Employment Policies: an opportunity not a handicap for employers*. Bangkok Post. <https://www.bangkokpost.com>.

1.7 THAILAND (continued)	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	8,638
The overall expenditure on social protection as a share of 4.1% of GDP (Thailand) in the ADB Social Protection Index study. Approximately 1.797.85 million was spent on elderly population who were provided assistance which comprises of non-contributory transfer or social pensions. While 75% of older Thais report that they are satisfied with their financial status, older people face a higher risk of poverty than average because of being unable to work and earning a lower income. In 2010, 10.9% of older people in Thailand were poor compared with 7.7% of the general population. An additional 7.1% of older people are near poor; vulnerable to become poor in the event of even a small economic shock like a medical bill. The National Statistical Office report on Survey for working in Old Age (2011) shows that about 33% of older people still work daily and 90.3% of them are working in informal sectors. <sup>5</sup>	
Children	
Statistics	69,428,453
Social protection schemes such as Cash benefit schemes for families with children is being implemented in, Thailand. The cash transfer program is directed at infants or young children in the country. However, as with many south-east Asian states, accessibility to these is restricted as a high number of children are left out of the formal birth registration process.	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Thailand has the following indexes:	
DAI Index	0.619
DAI Business Sub-index	0.567
DAI People Sub-index	0.676
DAI Government Sub-index	0.615
Thailand has adopted the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework and has made substantial improvements in digital integration. It has progresses to a nearly advanced stage in all aspects namely business ecosystem, financial ecosystem, digital connectivity and affordable access. <sup>6</sup> According to the World Bank Report, Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion in ASEAN, some indicators of final inclusion are demonstrated are as follows: financial institution account (81%), made of received payments in the past year (62%); paid utility bills using a mobile phone (5%); used a mobile phone or the internet to access an account (17%). It is noted that Thailand is at an advanced phase in the digital financial inclusion sphere, however the report states that there is a lack of financial inclusion strategy in the country. Although country level data indicates high digital integration, however the digital gender divide is widening in the region with the ratio of digital inclusion of women to men is 0.98 in the country and early indications from Covid-19 research, as well as evidence from past epidemics, suggest that women, on average, are likely to suffer greater economic and social impact during the crisis caused by the pandemic. <sup>7</sup>	
Economic and Financial Inclusion	
Thailand is performing comparatively well when it comes to having women in the highest positions of power: 24% of CEOs / Managing Directors in Thailand are women, compared to 20% worldwide and only 13% in Asia-Pacific. The senior leadership position held by women in Thailand the most is Chief Financial Officer which contributes to fully 43%, making Thailand the world's highest percentage of female CFOs and the third-highest percentage of female CEOs. Many mid-market businesses in Thailand are looking to build on this trend towards equality. However, women are generally still underrepresented, especially in the parliament, government, judiciary and administration both at national and local levels. Women account for only 23.9 % of high-ranking civil servants, and gender equality in senior leadership positions has risen by just 3% in the last fifteen years. Although the participation of women in the workforce is high, even in the formal sector, the ratio of Financial Inclusion of women to men is only 0.84. <sup>8</sup>	
COVID-19 Impact	
Thailand's economy is expected to be impacted severely by the COVID-19 pandemic, shrinking by at least 5% in 2020 and taking more than two years to return to pre-COVID-19 GDP output levels, according to the World Bank's latest Thailand Economic Monitor. As of June 2020, 70% of small and micro manufacturing businesses were making half, or even less of their pre-COVID earnings. <sup>9</sup>	
Thailand Covid-19 Digital Group (TCDG) as a social media community page for tech fellows willing to collaborate to combat the outbreak using technology. Many are working on a platform to track infected people or those requested to self-quarantine to allow health authorities easier monitoring, handling chatbots for Covid-19 consultation with the public, technology that can identify the location of drugstores, a tool that can gauge the volume of available masks and alcohol-based gel, as well as communication channels for ways to combat the disease, promoted by influencers. <sup>10</sup>	

5 HelpAge International. 2020. *Ageing population in Thailand*. <https://ageingasia.org>.

6 Hoppe, F., et al. 2018. *Advancing towards AESAN Digital Integration*. Bain & Company. <https://www.bain.com>.

7 Marsan, G. A., & Ruddy, L. 2020. '*Digital gender divide*' is getting wider. <https://www.bangkokpost.com>.

8 McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's equality in Asia Pacific*. <https://www.mckinsey.com>.

9 Parks, T., Chatsuwana, M., & Pillai, S. 2020. *Enduring the Pandemic: Surveys of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Livelihoods of Thai People*. The Asia Foundation. <https://think-asia.org/handle/11540/12528>.

10 Sharon, A. 2020. *COVID-19 pushes digital transformation across Thailand*. OpenGov. <https://opengovasia.com>.

1.7 THAILAND (continued)	
Key Actors/Stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Thailand Board of Investment (BOI) Digital park Thailand: Digital Park Thailand is a 115-hectare site strategically located within the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The EEC covers the eastern provinces of Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong, an area of more than 13,000 Km2. The tech-friendly plan is intended to transform the region into a global destination for digital innovators.<sup>11</sup></li><li>• Amata Smart City, Chonburi: The project is in Chonburi, within Thailand's Eastern EEC, Amata's 42-square kilometre Amata City Chonburi industrial city provides manufacturing, energy, and transportation services to both domestic and international clients. It is presently working on the next phase Smart City which will introduce smart manufacturing and smart energy processes, as well as an EduTown and MediTown.<sup>12</sup></li><li>• Thai Intelligent Transport Systems Association or ITS Thailand: Officially authorized organization to promote ITS in Thailand. It is a knowledge centre on ITS and has interdisciplinary stakeholders Transport, Automotive, IT, Computer, Electrical, etc.). It develops strategic plans, technologies and researches to boost ITS implementation in Thailand.<sup>13</sup></li><li>•</li></ul>	
Opportunities and Entry Points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digitization of Government services in one portal: Collaboration with Mobile Network Operators and Government to develop applications which would integrate citizen services such as electricity registration, tax filing etc.</li><li>• Online platform to identify elderly care homes and support services: Development of application which would help identify care homes and services targeted especially towards the elderly.</li><li>•</li></ul>	

11 SmartCitiesWorld News Team. 2018. *Private-public partnership plan for Digital Park Thailand*. <https://www.smartcitiesworld.net>.

12 AMATA. *Smart Cities – Toward the Future of Manufacturing*. <https://www.amata.com>.

13 Intelligent Transport Systems Association of Thailand. *About ITS Thailand*. <https://its.in.th/about.html>.



1.8 VIET NAM	
AASCTF Gold City:	None
AASCTF Silver City:	Hue
AASCTF Bronze City:	Gia Nghia; Ho Chi Minh City; Hue; Phan Rang; Phan Thiet
Country Profile	
Institutional Framework and Policy Context for Gender and Social Inclusion	
<p>Viet Nam’s political and economic reforms that started in the mid-1980s contributed to impressive socio-economic progress. Viet Nam managed to reduce the poverty rate from 58.1% in 1993 to 9.6% in 2012 and the country transitioned to lower Middle-Income status in 2010. The Government has made significant progress in promoting gender equality. In addition to gender equality guarantees in the Constitution, milestone legislations introduced include the Law of Gender Equality (2006) and the Law on Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence (2007).<sup>1</sup> With support of UN Women and Australian Embassy, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) has started the development of the new National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030. While, Vietnam has important laws and policies in relation to gender equality and an extensive gender machinery, turning laws into practice presents considerable challenges. The reasons for this are varied and include a very limited knowledge of the laws among the wider public and a lack of capacity on the part of those responsible for implementing laws and programmes.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>As noted by The World Bank (2016),<sup>3</sup> Vietnam’s political system has adapted to create space for informed discussion of policy issues and assessment of government performance. But Vietnam does not yet have a robust accountability system that can strengthen the state’s effectiveness. A major constraint is the limited voice and participation of citizens. Vietnam has thousands of citizen organizations, and more than a third of the population is a member of one or more socio-political organizations. But they are not given the chance to participate in the same way as state sanctioned organizations. So, the system is not inclusive enough. Furthermore, access to information, key to citizens</p> <p>exercising citizen voice to hold the state accountable, is still lacking. The country’s governance practices have neither encouraged openness and transparency nor promoted public discussion of the state’s actions. Information and data are difficult to acquire, even when public officials are required by law to provide them. Working to create and augment innovative mechanisms for more effective and inclusive public participation and engagement is an entry point for AASCTF in Vietnam.</p>	
Present State of Urbanization	
<p>After reaching an urban proportion of the population at 10% in about 1950, the speed of urbanization increased, thus by 1975, 21.5% of the population lived in urban areas. However, in that period, there were strong differences between the North and the South. The level of urbanization decreased slightly in the North, while it increased substantially in the South. After the country was reunified, there was a substantial decline in the urban proportion of the population throughout the country until 1982, when it had fallen to 18.4%. Since then, the level of urbanization has increased gradually to 20% and by 2009 it had reached 29.6%.<sup>4</sup></p>	
GESI Focus Groups	
<p>The following sections provide an overview of the GESI Focus Groups:</p>	
Women and Girls	
Total Population	95.50
Women Population	47.87
Global Gender Gap Index rank	87
Global Gender Gap Index score	0.700
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 years & older)	93.6%
Adult literacy rate, male (aged 15 & older)	96.5%
Enrolment in secondary education (Female)	n/a
Enrolment in secondary education (Male)	n/a
Women in Labour Force	25.37 million
Seats in parliament held by women	n/a
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	43
Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women	34.4

1 UN Women. *UN Women Vietnam*. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org>

2 Fontana., M. 2018. *Investing in Women – Vietnam Country Context Paper*. (Funded by Australian DFAT).

3 World Bank and Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam. 2016. *Vietnam 2035: Toward Prosperity, Creativity, Equity, and Democracy*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0824-1. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

4 Ministry of Planning and Investment – General Statistics Office. 2009. *Migration and Urbanization: Patterns, Trends and Differentials*. <https://nguyenthanhmy.com>.

1.8 VIET NAM	
<p>Vietnam ranks 87th in the Global Gender Gap Index amongst 185 countries. Vietnam has made impressive achievements in gender equity. Differences in school enrolment and attainment by gender are minimal, and the gender wage gap is modest by global standards. However, in business and particularly in government and political spheres, the leadership is overwhelmingly male. In the last decade and a half, the share of women in the National Assembly has been declining and was at 24% (as of 2015). Few chairs of National Assembly committees are female.</p> <p>The civil service has a large share of women, but their representation in leadership positions is low, mostly at lower levels. There is a target that all ministries should have at least one female vice-minister, but the system for that is yet to be developed. Women’s representation also remains low in key bodies of the Communist Party: The Politburo, the Central Committee, and the Secretariat. Women constitute only 18% of party leadership in communes, 14%in districts, and 11% in provinces. Measures to boost women’s leadership are needed to address gender stereotypes that limit women’s career choices. This demands a long-term approach to update the education system and to promote healthier views of masculinity and gender roles in the media, and perhaps social media. Fontana<sup>5</sup> points out that many of the barriers that women face higher up in the public sector are also encountered by women taking up leadership positions at lower levels and that participation often occurs on clearly gendered lines. Women participate primarily in meetings organized by the Viet Nam Women’s Union or associated with family planning and population, while men participate on a wider range of issues, including law, security, and agriculture/forestry extension.</p> <p>Participation of women in the workforce comprises of 26.5% of the total population. Although economic growth has improved economic opportunities for men and women, the playing field is not level, and women are not yet able to compete on equal terms with men. Women are over-represented in some sectors and occupations and men in others. Men benefit more from jobs with decision-making power and status. With a projected shift of the workforce from agriculture to wage labour and from the public to the private sector, some issues, such as the relatively lower wages and higher wage gaps in the private sector, will impact more and more women in the future and take on greater importance.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>Overall, women in Viet Nam are responsible for approximately half of all unpaid and paid work hours annually, but they receive only 41 % of total earned income. Thus, women not only earn at lower rates than men, but also have less time for paid work. As a result, women’s access to transport is more constrained than men’s while they also have a lower ability to pay for it. Not surprisingly, nearly 60 per cent of people walking are women, while men account for nearly 90 per cent of people using bicycles and over 70 per cent of people using motorbikes. Overall far more women walk or carry, push and pull loads, while far more men have access to another mode of transport.<sup>7</sup></p>	
People with Disabilities	
Disability Statistics	5,203,180 (5.8%) <sup>8</sup>
<p>Vietnam has many people with disabilities, in part a legacy of conflict. Their number is likely to increase rapidly as the old-age population expands, by one projection to more than 12 million by 2035. On paper, Vietnam’s policies for people with disabilities are highly inclusive. But there are substantial shortcomings in implementing a broad agenda. More than half the children with severe disabilities never pass through the doors of a schoolroom. Getting them into schools is crucial to provide them with basic opportunities to participate in society and to engender attitudes of inclusion among others.<sup>9</sup> One step would be to better create and support spaces for social organizations for people with disabilities. Some examples of innovative intervention include through the Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), under the project “Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities” (IVWD), which has included the Disability Information System/Software DIS into the government’s National Target program under the Ministry of Health. DIS helps the health staff enter data into the software and submit data to the district health centre. DIS also helps the MOH to identify people with disabilities who need rehabilitation program, and the progress of the patient.<sup>10</sup></p>	
Older Persons	
Data on population / aging	7286 thousand
<p>According to United Nations figures, more Vietnamese than ever are now working into their sunset years. Around 40 per cent of those aged 70 to 74 are still employed in some way. Roughly seven in 10 of the working seniors in Vietnam’s urban areas work in the informal sector – as market vendors, taxi drivers, waste collectors, scrap pickers, and street vendors.<sup>11</sup></p>	

5 Ibid.

6 ADB. 2006. *Vietnam - Country Gender Assessment*. <https://www.adb.org>.

7 ADB. 2019. *Gender Responsive Budgeting in Viet Nam: Gender Equality in Transport*. <https://www.adb.org>.

8 Global Disability Rights Now. 2020. *Disability in Vietnam*. <https://www.globaldisabilityrightsnow.org>.

9 World Bank and Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam. 2016. *Vietnam 2035: Toward Prosperity, Creativity, Equity, and Democracy*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0824-1. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

10 Viet-Nam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH). *Disability Information System/Software (DIS) – After Successful Pilot, VNAH Data System to be Implemented Nationally*. <https://www.vnah-hev.org>.

11 Wong, K. 2017. *Vietnam’s ticking time-bomb of elderly poverty*. CAN Insider. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com>.

1.8 VIET NAM	
Children	
Statistics	26.2 million
Nearly 5.5 million children in Viet Nam experience at least two deprivations in education, health, nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation, or social inclusion. <sup>12</sup> This means many children still fail to get the best start to life and access to quality health care, with 100 children under-5 dying each day of preventable causes – a figure 3.5 times higher among ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas. Social exclusion and an inability to access services and support when they are needed most prevents vulnerable and disadvantaged children from living safe from harm and having the best start in life. The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting social distancing measures hindered the access of families with children to routine maternal and child healthcare services, meanwhile some healthcare facilities became overwhelmed with work to control COVID-19 transmission. Routine immunization services in Viet Nam were temporarily suspended during the social distancing period between 1 and 22 April 2020.	
Other Marginalized Groups	
Urban migrants are a group lacking equality of opportunity, due to the hộ khẩu system. More than 5 million Vietnamese do not have permanent registration where they live. Although the registration system has less force than it once did, it perpetuates inequality of opportunity. Citizens in major urban centres without permanent registration face difficulties in access to services for health, schooling, social protection, and utilities as well as challenges in employment and social connections. Applicants for permanent registration face steep hurdles, including large unofficial payments to local officials, such that some people live in major cities as temporary residents for several years. There is a need to foster policy reforms to further loosen the link between service access and permanent registration status. Opportunities for AASCTF may lie in making it easier to obtain permanent registration. <sup>13</sup>	
Technology/Digital Inclusion	
According to the World Bank Digital Adoption Index (DAI) 2016, Vietnam has the following indexes:	
DAI Index	0.521
DAI Business Sub-index	0.593
DAI People Sub-index	0.431
DAI Government Sub-index	0.538
Vietnam in comparison to the countries of the region has higher DAI index. The lowest index is in the DAI People sub index (0.431). In order to increase usage, the adoption of high-speed Internet services, smart devices and mobile phones in Vietnam has been comparatively high since 2003, outstripping adoption in countries such as Pakistan, India and Indonesia. The digital economy is booming in Vietnam. Emerging sectors include finance technology (fintech), telecommunications, electronics and computer manufacturing, and information and communications technology (ICT) services. However, the lack of digital skills (see DAI people sub-index) threatens Vietnams long-term prospects for digital transformation. It is noted that to create inclusive growth from digitalisation, it will be important for focus to be placed on digital skills development, particularly among women and marginalised groups. This includes through targeted digital education programs, promoting lifelong learning (focus on digital skills), among others. <sup>14</sup>	
Economic and Financial Inclusion	
Viet Nam requires that budgeting consider the impact on gender equality goals. The Gender Equality Law calls for the use of the budget as a financial source for ensuring gender equality. A National Financial Inclusion Strategy has been developed and approved in 2020. Some indicators of financial inclusion are as follows: Financial institution account (30%), made or received payments in the past year (23%); Paid Utility Bills using a mobile phone (2%); Used a mobile phone or the internet to access an account (9%). Although it is noted that there is high percentage of financial institutional accounts, however, the utilization of the mobile phones for payments of utility bills is very low. According to World Bank projections, many Vietnamese who are excluded from the formal financial sector do in fact have active financial lives. For example, 39% of adults save outside the formal sector, “under the mattress” or using informal means including savings clubs; 65% send or receive remittances outside the formal system or pay school fees or utility bills in cash. Some of the most important barriers to accessing and using formal financial services are noted to include: Financial services are too far to access; Financial services are too expensive to use; Documentation requirements are prohibitive to open an account; and Lack of trust in the financial sector. <sup>15</sup> Economically, women are over-represented in low-skilled employment with poor pay, particularly in the informal sector (Kabeer et al., 2005). Unskilled women employed in wage labour, typically on the production line, also receive few opportunities for skills development and remain “stuck” in poorly paid jobs (Mekong Economics, 2004b).	

12 UNICEF. 2020. *Children in Vietnam*. <https://www.unicef.org>.

13 World Bank and Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam. 2016. *Vietnam 2035: Toward Prosperity, Creativity, Equity, and Democracy*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0824-1. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

14 Cameron A, Pham T H, Atherton J, Nguyen D H, Nguyen T P, Tran S T, Nguyen T N, Trinh H Y & Hajkowicz S. 2019. *Vietnam’s future digital economy – Towards 2030 and 2045*. CSIRO, Brisbane.

15 The World Bank. 2020. *Universal Financial Access 2020*. Vietnam. <https://ufa.worldbank.org>.

1. 8 VIET NAM
COVID-19 Impact
According to World Bank’s latest Taking Stock report, titled “What will be the new normal for Vietnam? The economic impact of COVID-19”, although the Vietnamese economy suffered from COVID-19 in the first half of 2020, prospects remain positive for both the short and medium term. Innovations that have emerged in response to the pandemic include BusMap which has worked with the authorities to create an infection map to help locals avoid hotspots and to find the nearest medical facility. <sup>16</sup> The National Digital Transformation Roadmap 2025 (with a vision toward 2030) sets additional targets and guidelines to help Vietnam reaching its digital transformation goals with a focus on three pillars: E-government, e-economy and e-society has been approved in June 2020 to accelerate the digital transformation post Covid-19. <sup>17</sup>
Key Actors/Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ADB Secondary Green Cities Development Project –Hue City Sub Project. The ADB has approved \$170 million in loans to help the Government of Viet Nam upgrade urban infrastructure and address climate change, benefiting about 116,000 households in Hue, Vinh Yen, and Ha Giang. In Hue, the project will upgrade 21.9 km of drainage pipelines, rehabilitate 15.9 km of road surface and drainage, and develop 17.2 ha of green spaces, among others.<sup>18</sup></li><li>• The Vietnam’s Future Digital Economy Project is an innovative joint venture between Vietnam’s Ministry of Science and Technology and CSIRO’s Data61 from Australia. This venture aims to identify significant trends, drivers of change, future scenarios and helpful actions to guide Vietnam’s decision makers through the next wave of digital innovation and industrial transformation.</li><li>• Government of Australia: Aus4Innovation Program, in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Technology. It will provide both short-term funding for innovative AI solutions to deal with the consequences of the pandemic and serve longer-term priorities, including technical support for the implementation of Vietnam’s future AI strategy and training courses for stakeholders in the AI ecosystem.<sup>19</sup></li><li>• USAID is presently implementing programs<sup>20</sup> across Vietnam for inclusiveness of persons with Disabilities into mainstream society. In Hue city, Moving Without Limits (2015 – 2022) which aims to provide assistive devices to improve mobility functions of persons with disabilities, and enhances the capacity of health practitioners to produce devices and families’ maintenance of these devices.</li><li>• Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) has supported the Ministry of Construction (MOC) to revise the accessibility codes and standards. Barrier free access have been complied in many major public facilities such as airports in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang; downtown sidewalks in larger cities and major public transport systems amongst others.<sup>21</sup></li><li>• The HCMC Peoples Committee, in collaboration with UNICEF Vietnam, committed to creating Vietnam’s first Child Friendly City and joined the UNICEF-supported global Child Friendly Cities Initiative. In the coming years it is envisaged that Ho Chi Minh City. Evidence-based planning and monitoring, expanded partnerships, meaningful participation and strengthened coordination with children, government institutions, the business community, the innovation eco-system, civil society, child- and youth-led organizations and academia are core strategies for achieving results for children and adolescents in the city.<sup>22</sup></li><li>•</li></ul>
Opportunities and Entry Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capacity development on the part of those responsible for implementing laws and programmes for GESI.</li><li>• Working to create and augment innovative mechanisms for more effective and inclusive public participation and engagement.</li><li>• Digital skills development, particularly among women and marginalised groups. This includes through targeted digital education programs, promoting lifelong learning (focus on digital skills), among others.</li><li>• Mobile Payments for Government Utility Bills: Development of applications for government departments and integration to enhance digital payments of utility bills.</li><li>• Development of Urban Design for safe spaces for elderly employed population: Development and integration of rest spaces catering to the elderly working population of the city.</li><li>• Expand research on the gender impacts of existing and potential transport programmes to provide qualitative and quantitative data needed for effective development planning.</li><li>• Identify specific gender issues to include in gender responsive budgeting of transport planning and implementation in all contexts: Gender issues that need to be addressed include hiring, serving and supporting women in all types of projects and documenting women’s needs regarding short trips and trip chaining, schedules, intermodal links, lighting, toilet and waiting areas, employment quotas, support for women’s shops, and gender training and monitoring indicators.</li><li>•</li></ul>

16 Tan, B., & Klingler-Vidra, R. 2020. *Good news stories from Vietnam’s second wave – involving dragon fruit burgers and mask ATMs*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com>.

17 Ly, T. 2020. *Vietnam in the Post-COVID Era: Realizing a ‘Digital Country*. Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. <https://www.asiapacific.ca>.

18 ADB. 2017. ADB to Support Development of Green, Resilient Urban Infrastructure in Viet Nam’s Secondary Cities. News Release, <https://www.adb.org>.

19 CSIRO. 2020. *Australia kicks off new initiative assisting Vietnam to apply Artificial Intelligence in post COVID 19 economic recovery*. News Release. <https://www.csiro.au>.

20 USAID. 2020. 2015 – 2023 Disability Projects in Vietnam. <https://www.usaid.gov>.

21 <https://www.vnah-hev.org/projects/inclusion-of-the-vietnamese-with-disabilities/>

22 UNICEF. *Situation Analysis of Children in Ho Chi Minh City – Viet Nam*. UNICEF Vietnam Report. <https://childfriendlycities.org/vietnam/>.

# APPENDIX 2: GESI ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE<sup>1</sup>

Task Order/City Intervention Outcome:			
Actions/Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicators/Targets
Output 1:			

<sup>1</sup> Asian Development Bank. 2012.Tip Sheet No.2.: Preparing a Gender Action Plan. [www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org).



## **ABOUT THE ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND**

The ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) assists ASEAN cities in enhancing their planning systems, service delivery, and financial management by developing and testing appropriate digital urban solutions and systems. By working with cities, AASCTF facilitates their transformation to become more livable, resilient, and inclusive, while in the process identifying scalable best and next practices to be replicated across cities in Asia and the Pacific.



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