



**POLICY
PULSE**

**NEWSLETTER
FOURTH
QUARTER
2019**

October-December

Policy Pulse is an initiative of The Asia Foundation, founded in 2015 and formerly known as the Reform Inventory Initiative. It aims to improve the public's understanding of important policy reforms in Cambodia through high-quality research. Policy Pulse promotes thoughtful and inclusive policy dialogue and analysis in order to establish a resource for evidence-based policy recommendations. It is a platform through which researchers and stakeholders can gather to organize policy forums at the national and provincial levels to disseminate research and facilitate broad policy discussions.

Policy Pulse Newsletter is a new medium to share with the public updates regarding recent policy developments in Cambodia.

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Government Ministry Updates



A farm growing peppercorns. Photo: The Asia Foundation

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries has launched a five-year strategic plan (2019-2023) that outlines a plan to improve and modernize farming, address climate change, and adopt new practices to increase yield and competitiveness. The ministry also notes that the plan will diversify crops, better meet the demands of the market, and forge relationships between farmers and the private sector. ([Khmer Times, December 26, 2019](#))

Ministry of Economy and Finance

The Cambodian government has allocated \$100 million to establish the small and medium enterprise (SME) Bank to support small businesses in Cambodia. SME Bank will focus on several sectors, including manufacturing, tourism, food processing, and tech startups. According to the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, Cambodia has about 520,000 SMEs; however, only about 150,000 of them are registered manufacturers. ([Khmer Times, December 17, 2019](#))

The Cambodian government has announced that Cambodia will spend about \$60 billion under the National Strategic Development Plan between 2019 and 2023, with about 75% of that sum coming from development partners. The Strategy aims at transitioning Cambodia from a lower-middle income country to an upper-middle income country by 2030 and to a high income country by 2050. ([Khmer Times, November 8, 2019](#))



The Cambodian government has formed a digital economy committee that will work to draft frameworks addressing the digital economy and digital government policies. ([Khmer Times, October 7, 2019](#))

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has launched a meal program for vulnerable children in schools and poor communities through 2020 and will target 217,900 children to promote food security and education. This program will be implemented in five schools in Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat and Oddar Meanchey provinces and is funded by Japanese Government and will be rolled out in partnership with the UN World Food Programme. ([Phnom Penh Post, October 17, 2019](#))

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport will teach students starting from grade seven lessons on LGBT+ issues, including sexual orientation and gender identity, as part of an effort to prevent bullying and discrimination. ([Reuters, December 10, 2019](#))

Ministry of Industry and Handicraft

The Ministry of Industry and Handicraft is working on drafting a Law on Clean Water Management that aims to improve clean water management and will stipulate penalties for violations, including unlicensed clean water supply businesses. According to the ministry, there are 280 clean water suppliers in Cambodia, with the vast majority (266) listed as private businesses. ([Phnom Penh Post, October 31, 2019](#))

Ministry of Interior

The National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) of the Ministry of Interior has launched the National Plan of Action 2019-2023 to address new forms of human trafficking. The newly identified forms include surrogacy and sex trafficking at nightclubs, as well as online pornography. This action plan is designed to prevent the trafficking of sex, organs and humans, and tackle labor abuse. ([Phnom Penh Post, October 24, 2019](#))

The Information Technology Department of the Ministry of Interior plans to establish a "Security Operation Center" to monitor online security issues. ([Khmer Times, October 11, 2019](#))



Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training

The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training has made amendments to ten articles in the 2016 Trade Union Law to promote workers' rights, ensure union freedom, and attract investment. According to the ministry, unions are not required to make and submit a copy of activities and finances to the ministry; yet the ministry has an obligation to demand those reports if requested by union members or donors. ([Khmer Times, November 27, 2019](#))

Ministry of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction

The Ministry of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction has issued Law on Construction that aims to regulate the construction sector. This law will also outline technical and safety standards on construction sites. The law contains 22 chapters and 111 articles that will ensure quality, security, safety, and will improve efficiency in the sector. ([DFDL, October 17, 2019](#))

Ministry of Mines and Energy

The Ministry of Mines and Energy has launched The National Geological Laboratory of Cambodia in Kampong Chhnang Province to analyze samples of mineral resources and to develop mining sector and to attract foreign investments in Cambodia. The Laboratory is funded through a grant from China. ([Phnom Penh Post, October 16, 2019](#))

Ministry of Public Works and Transport

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport is drafting a Port Law that will regulate activities within its ports, improve audit standards and management practices at all of Cambodia's ports, including security arrangements for ships, ports, and government agencies. To date, Cambodia has the Sihanoukville Autonomous Port (PAS), Cambodia's only deep water seaport, and a few other river ports in Phnom Penh, Takeo, and Kampong Cham. New seaports are being planned in Kep, Kampot, and Koh Kong provinces. ([Khmer Times, October 24, 2019](#))

Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation

The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation is implementing the National Strategic Plan for the Elderly 2017-2023 to promote and improve the wellbeing of senior citizens who account for 8.3% of the population. ([Phnom Penh Post, October 1, 2019](#))

Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism has launched an online system “e-certificate system” to verify the validity of certificates in the tourism industry that aims to strengthen the quality of service in the local tourism industry. According to the ministry, tourism professionals that receive training from the ministry, provincial department of tourism, and/or registered training schools will be issued a certificate with a QR code that customers can scan to access information when they visit a restaurant, hotel, or other tourism-related business. ([Khmer Times, September 25, 2019](#))

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Four-Strategic Plan for Tourism Development that aims to revive tourism in Cambodia’s northern provinces. The four-strategic plan includes strategies to increase the length of visits, introducing new tourism products, and crafting a ‘new identity’ for Siem Reap and Preah Vihear provinces. ([Phnom Penh Post, September 17, 2019](#))

The Cambodian government has established the National Tourism Development Committee. This new committee is tasked with drafting strategies and policies to regulate the tourism sector, to promote ways of increasing tourism, as well as to conduct research that can contribute to the sustainable development of this sector. ([Khmer Times, November 29, 2019](#))



Buyers and vendors at a local market. Photo: The Asia Foundation



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