

BRINGING STRUCTURED BUSINESS SUPPORT TO CAMBODIA'S PROVINCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurial ecosystems are complex networks that support enterprises from ideation to growth, yet they take decades to build particularly in emerging markets. Support programs, especially accelerators and comprehensive business resources, remain concentrated in the capital, and urban curricula rarely replicate well in provinces, where Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) face distinct economic realities.

To bridge this divide, the Enhancing Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Investments (3Ei) initiative implements the Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Innovation (SEI) brand to expand access to high-quality entrepreneur support in the provincial areas.

The initiative creates an inclusive accelerator curriculum and practical tools through the strategic partnership with a local Entrepreneur Support Organization (ESO), supported by the technical expertise of the University of St. Gallen, to better equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge, and resources needed to grow their businesses.

Building a Provincial Curriculum

2025

Curriculum Pilot

SEI successfully piloted an inclusive accelerator curriculum virtually with 12 SGBs across five provinces, backed by technical expertise from the University of St. Gallen.

2026

Refinement and Scale

Drawing on participant feedback and lessons learned from the pilot, the curriculum was further enhanced in 2026 to strengthen its relevance, practicality, and impact. The refined curriculum incorporates more hands-on business knowledge, tools, and resources that enable SGBs to overcome growth barriers and strengthen their capacity to scale sustainably.

Inside the Masterclass 2026

SEI works with Impact Hub Phnom Penh (IHPP) to pilot the refined curriculum through "SMEs Acceleration Programme".

12

Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) supported

03

Provinces reached
(Kompong Cham, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Thom)

13

Sessions delivered

03

In-person bootcamps

09

Online masterclasses

12

dedicated one-on-one mentoring sessions tailored to each business



Testimonials



"This program was excellent for helping me organize and strengthen my business. I have applied what I learned by refining our Business Model Canvas with clear goals, creating SOPs, and building financial reports for future expansion and seek partners or investors. I also have better understanding of branding, especially 'ethical business' branding, which added real value to my marketing. I especially loved hearing directly from mentors and fellow business owners—sharing real-world experience like that is something money can't buy in a classroom. I'd rate this program a 5 out of 5 and strongly recommend it to other SMEs." **Mrs. Has Solinda, General Manager & Co-founder, BeesCambo, Kampong Cham**



"The SOP topic helped me the most. Before the program, everything was just in my head, so it was hard for my team to work without me being involved in every step. Now we have it written down and organized, and my staff can handle things on their own more. I also learned a lot about how to prepare my business to get a loan from the bank. I also really valued hearing from the mentors and other business owners. That kind of real experience is hard to get anywhere else. This program gave me practical tools I can actually use, and I'd tell any SME owner it's worth their time." **Mr. Vat Sivan, Founder, Tao Kea Vann Cashew, Kampong Chhnang**

Lessons Learned

1 Optimizing the Blended Delivery Model for Maximum Engagement

By having online sessions for core concepts while anchoring the program in dynamic, face-to-face modules, such as founder psychology, business diagnosis, and practical pitch practices, the initiative successfully balances operational flexibility with deep, interactive engagement.

2 Prioritizing Technical Execution Over Theory

Provincial founders highly value technical execution modules over high-level theory. Practical, hands-on toolkits are essential because they can be directly and immediately applied to solve active business bottlenecks.

3 Navigating the Provincial Cohort Diversity

Sourcing and selecting participants at the provincial level reveals a dynamic spectrum of business maturity – from early-stage alongside established enterprises with substantial market traction. Embracing this diversity in business maturity, business literacy, and founder expectations highlight a need to deploy highly segmented cohort tracks in future iterations, aligning directly with each specific growth stage.

4 Sector-Specific Contextualization and Tailored Toolkits

Moving toward tailored, sector-specific programming allows acceleration models to better serve the dynamic realities of provincial markets. Targeted toolkits designed for these unique operational dynamics ensure higher engagement and sustained business impact.

Impact at a Glance



Satisfied with the programme



Women entrepreneurs confident in business decisions



Applied learning in daily operations



Improved understanding of access to finance



Reported good knowledge improvement



Reported moderate to significant business capacity improvement



Improved leadership and decision-making skills

