

Report of the online Training workshop “Women entrepreneurship in natural resource management: Challenges and opportunities for the micro-, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery”

The online Training workshop “Women entrepreneurship in natural resource management: Challenges and opportunities for the micro-, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery” was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on 17 December 2020. The workshop was attended by 93 participants, of which 65 women, from the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan (UNECE member States and RPTC programme countries); Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States (UNECE member States); Australia, Barbados, Cameroon, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Timor-Leste, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; as well as a number of national and international organizations, associations, companies, and institutions.

The study [*Women entrepreneurship in natural resource management: Challenges and opportunities for the micro-, small, and medium enterprises \(MSME\) sector in the post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery*](#) served as a basis for this training workshop. It highlights the pervasive gender diversity problem in natural resources management. However, certain areas of natural resource management may have low barriers to entry for women. Environmental management, supply-chain management, digital transformation, and other similar sectors have relatively low capital requirements while relying on technological advancements. [*Application of UNECE tools such as the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources \(UNFC\) and the United Nations Resource Management System \(UNRMS\)*](#) could provide valuable entry points for women. The study suggests several policy initiatives, including providing an enabling business environment, pro-growth tax systems, and labour market flexibility. By helping them develop skills to build confidence to address cultural norms, empowering women is essential to higher women participation. A focus on networking and mentoring, affordable childcare and healthcare, and capacity development will be crucial to increasing women’s participation in MSMEs. The study includes case studies from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. These case studies provide a brief summary of key natural resources, Covid-19 impact, opportunities, government- and international-led initiatives, and country-specific recommendations. The study also recommends creating a platform for MSMEs, policymakers, and financial institutions to support the resilience of resource supply chains in the UNECE region.

The workshop was opened by Harikrishnan Tulsidas, UNECE Economic Affairs Officer. He moderated the workshop. Cristina Robinson, Co-chair of the Women in Resource Management Task Force, made welcoming remarks and introduced the main activities of the Task Force. Oleg Dzioubinski, UNECE Regional Adviser for Energy, provided information on the Regular Programme on Technical Cooperation (RPTC) (the study and the training workshop have been implemented under its framework) and activities of the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division (SED) in support of MSMEs in their recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Scott Foster, Director of SED, welcomed the participants and provided introductory remarks. The training course was presented by Kankana Dubey (UNECE consultant). The presentation was followed by an extended discussion among participants with answers provided by Kankana Dubey, Harikrishnan Tulsidas, Oleg Dzioubinski, and Co-chairs of the Women in Resource Management Task Force Cristina Robinson and Maria Angello Capello.

All workshop materials are posted at <https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/events/online-training-workshop-women-entrepreneurship-natural-resource>, including the recording of the workshop, the presentation, and the study. The press release on the study is available at <https://unece.org/gender/press/unece-suggests-policy-initiatives-foster-women-entrepreneurship-natural-resource>.