

The women entrepreneurs who responded to this survey offered a number of policy and programmatic actions for consideration, including:

The women business owners interviewed in both the survey and focus group discussions indicate a strong desire for more policies and programs focused on business development. Indeed, the lack of formal programs may be limiting the growth of women-owned businesses. In Vietnam's impending Gender Equality Law, it is recommended that detailed consideration be given to promoting women's enterprise development - with special emphasis on access to entrepreneurial education and training, access to capital, and access to new markets.

- Throughout the survey, women business owners express a strong desire for formal education on business management issues - not only on general business management skills but in the areas of financial management and accessing new markets. Survey respondents suggest that development and funding of entrepreneurial education and training programs for women be a part of the new law.
- It is further recommended that business training that recognizes women's learning styles, with a greater need for relationship-based rather than transactional learning, be developed. So, too, some special programs focused on the owners of larger, more established firms should be considered, in addition to providing training and education to pre-start-up and start-up firms.
- Access to start-up and growth capital is another important element of governmental assistance. Survey respondents have suggested that either in the Gender Equality Law, or elsewhere, consideration to targeted loan or loan guarantee schemes for women entrepreneurs be established.

Women business owners in Vietnam need more opportunities for networking and forming mentoring relationships. Regular fora to create these opportunities should be established and supported.

- Women business owners surveyed are eager to meet more regularly with other women business owners, to share ideas and experiences and to learn from one another. The establishment and expansion of clubs or organizations specifically for women business owners should be encouraged, with some support from the Gender Equality Law.



- In other countries, there are often regional or national conferences for women business owners, with educational programming, and sometimes with awards recognizing business achievements. Women entrepreneurs suggested that a regular series of conferences, perhaps annually, would help develop a sense of community among women business owners in Vietnam, and raise public awareness of their achievements and contributions to the country.

Women's entrepreneurship in Vietnam needs a formal home, such as an office for women's business development programs, a women's business advisory council, or both.

- When programs are developed after the passage of the Gender Equality Law, consideration should be given to housing the responsibility and oversight for those initiatives in one office devoted to women's business issues, as opposed to being scattered throughout existing government offices. Such an office, with a programmatic portfolio, could possibly be established as a part of the Gender Equality Law.
- In addressing the special needs of women business owners in Vietnam, the women surveyed would strongly support the establishment of a special government advisory board for women's business development issues, so that their voices can be heard in ongoing policy deliberations. Such advisory groups have proven invaluable in other countries when developing and implementing policies to support women's entrepreneurship, and in establishing an ongoing dialogue as policies and programs are modified or expanded.

