



Role of the Private Sector

THANK YOU

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

GUIDE TO CONSUMER PROTECTION II



Role of the Private Sector



PREPARED AND PUBLISHED BY:

Ministry of Commerce
Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate-General
"CCF"



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9.5 Further Reading

TIP BOX: Curious to Learn More ?



The ASEAN Secretariat is working to promote consumer protection across the region.

Efforts at the ASEAN level are led by the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection [ACCP], founded in 2007.

The ASEAN Strategic Action Plan on Consumer Protection [ASAPCP] 2016-2025 charts the course of ACCP activities.

All ASEAN member states have committed to this plan, which aims to establish a common ASEAN Consumer Protection Framework.

Feel free to visit the ASEAN Consumer Official Site for updates on what each ASEAN member state is doing to improve their consumer protection measures: <http://aseanconsumer.org/>

To see the ASEAN High-Level Principles on Consumer Protection, which form the basis for Cambodia's own consumer rights, visit: <https://www.aseanconsumer.org/cterm-consumer-protection/consumer-rights-and-responsibilities>.

The ACCP Handbook on ASEAN Consumer Protection Laws and Regulations can be found here: <https://www.aseanconsumer.org/read-publication-handbook-on-asean-consumer-protection-laws-and-regulations>.

The efforts of the ACCP were influenced by the United Nations' Guidelines for Consumer Protection [UNGCP], which can be downloaded here: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditccplpmisc2016d1_en.pdf

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INTRODUCTION

The Royal Government of Cambodia enacted the Law on Consumer Protection [Consumer Protection Law] on November 2, 2019.

This law fundamentally aims to ensure consumer protection and contribute to fair competition in business.

The law sets rules to guarantee the rights of consumers, and to ensure that businesses act fairly and ethically



1. The rights of consumers are protected



2. Businesses are conducted with fair competition



3. Consumers and businesses can interact with trust and confidence

The Consumer Protection Law applies to any person who trades with consumers in Cambodia, regardless of whether the trading activities are for profit or not.

The law applies to the sale of all goods, services, and real rights over immovable property. The purpose of this booklet is to:

- 1. Explain the concept of consumer protection**
- 2. Explain why consumer protection is important**
- 3. Explain what your rights are as a consumer**
- 4. Explain whom to talk to if you have a complaint as a consumer**

Implementing consumer protection measures is an important step towards the establishment of responsible, ethical, and safe business practises in Cambodia. It is also an important step towards a more integrated ASEAN Economic Community [AEC].

We have developed two booklets to share information related to consumer protection.

- 1.** The objective of the first booklet was to support Cambodian **consumers** understand their rights as consumers. This is achieved in part through case studies that showcase why consumer protection is important.
- 2.** The objective of this second booklet is to support **companies** become aware of their responsibilities under the new consumer protection law, particularly by proactively developing their own internal dispute mechanisms.

Please share these booklets and its key messages with your family, customers, and the businesses you interact with, for the sake of information sharing and extensive knowledge.



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9.4 The Law on Consumer Protection

Khmer

<https://www.ccf dg.gov.kh/laws-regulations/laws/>

English





<https://www.ccf dg.gov.kh/en/laws-regulations/laws/>

9.3 Government Entities

As a consumer in Cambodia, you have been protected by the Law on Consumer Protection and the competent authority in enforcing the law is the Consumer Protection, Competition, and Fraud Repression Directorate-General [CCF].



The Consumer Protection Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate-General [CCF].

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1. WHAT IS CONSUMER PROTECTION?

Consumer protection is the practice of safeguarding consumers of goods and services against unfair practices in the marketplace. This in turn protects the physical and financial wellbeing of those consumers.

Consumer protection affects all goods and services:



Transport



Alcohol &
Tobacco



Clothing &
Footwear



Communication



Recreation
& Culture



Furnishings, household
equipment & services



Food & Non-Alcoholic
Beverages



Insurance &
Financial Services



Housing



Health



Education

Consumer protection measures are often established by law. In Cambodia, they are established under the November 2, 2019 Law on Consumer Protection.

The Consumer Protection, Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate General [CCF] is responsible for implementing this law in Cambodia. The CCF is part of the Ministry of Commerce.

1.1 What is a Consumer?

A consumer is any person who acquires a good or a service from a business or individual.



TIP BOX:

Have you ever bought anything from a business or seller?
If yes, you are a consumer of their good or service!

1.2 What Does Effective Consumer Protection Look Like?

Effective consumer protection measures involve six key factors and require ongoing collaboration between the government, consumers, and businesses.



Source: Adapted from the ASEAN Secretariat

TIP BOX: Roles to Play

Government stakeholders establish and implement the legal framework for consumer protection.

Businesses should refrain from fraudulent or unfair conduct that negatively affects consumers.

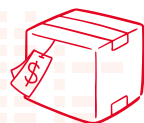
Consumers should be informed about their rights and be able to proactively assert them. Globally, consumer associations play an important role in achieving this.

Want to Get Involved?

Use the contacts section at the end of this booklet to register your interest! For example, a key next step in the establishment of effective consumer protection measures in Cambodia is the formation of Cambodia's first consumer association.

1.3 What is Fair Competition?

If the conditions are right, fair market competition allows better choices for consumers. This not only results in more innovation and better products at cheaper prices, but also in higher standards of consumer protection, as companies compete to win over new consumers through original schemes



Fair competition results in better, cheaper, more innovative products for consumers



It also results in higher consumer protection standards, as companies compete to stand out

5

Facilitate cooperation and sign agreements with competent regulatory bodies within the sector and other development partners in the field of consumer protection in both national, regional, and international frameworks.

6

Examine and resolve complaints or cases initiated by the NCCP itself related to the consumer protection.

7

Issue a decision to publicise, re-publicise the information, and/or prohibit the management function of the individuals who violate the law, and impose other administrative sanctions at the request of the key authorities or the Consumer Protection, Competition, and Fraud Repression Directorate-General.

CASE STUDY 5: Role of the CCF During Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic there was an urgent need for alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Many shops started to sell hand sanitiser at high prices.

Some companies attempted to increase the volume of their sanitiser stock by adding water or other ingredients. This weakened the sanitiser, and deceived consumers. A key role of the CCF was to inspect the hand sanitiser on sale to ensure it contained the minimum alcohol content of 60%.

This is a key example of how consumer protection measures, and the CCF can safeguard consumers.



9. WHO ARE THE KEY AUTHORITIES?

9.1 Consumer Protection, Competition & Fraud Repression Directorate General (CCF).

As a consumer in Cambodia, you are protected by the Law on Consumer Protection and its implementing body, the Consumer Protection, Competition and Fraud Repression Directorate General [CCF].

TIP BOX: Responsibilities of the CCF

- 1 Protect consumers and promote competition
- 2 Prevent and suppress trade fraud
- 3 Research and develop policies related to product quality and safety
- 4 Act on agreements and activities that suppress competition
- 5 Inspect goods and services within its jurisdiction
- 6 Ensure the quality, safety and compliance of products and protect the rights of consumers

”

9.2 National Commission for Consumer Protection (NCCP).

The government has also established a National Commission for Consumer Protection [NCCP].

The NCCP is the primary institution for receiving complaints and investigating consumer protection cases.

TIP BOX: Responsibilities of the National Commission for Consumer Protection

- 1 Develop and disseminate the policies and strategic plans related to consumer protection
- 2 Examine and find a solution in case the regulations prepared by one competent authority overlapping with the other competent authority.
- 3 Provide consultation to consumer association and non-profit organisations involved in the consumer protection.
- 4 Review and make decision on the rules and procedures that are necessary for the implementation of the law on consumer protection.

In a competitive market, consumers have choices regarding which seller to purchase from - for example, do you buy a Samsung, Huawei, Redmi, or an Apple phone? In a competitive market, consumers have choices regarding which seller to purchase from - for example, do you buy a Samsung, Huawei, Redmi, or an Apple phone?

In turn, fair competition pushes each seller to try their best to satisfy consumer preferences at reasonable prices. If they do not, consumers will simply choose their competitors product.

2. WHY IS CONSUMER PROTECTION IMPORTANT?

Consumer protection measures will make Cambodia a safer place to live, trade, and do business.

As stated by the ASEAN, consumer protection measures “make markets work for both businesses and consumers.”

Three key reasons why consumer protection is important are detailed below:



2.1 Consumer Welfare

Consumer protection measures help consumers in several ways. They facilitate obtaining accurate, unbiased information about the goods and services that are purchased.

They enable consumers to make the best choices based on their needs, and with trust that they are not being misled by the seller.

They also protect them from the health-related hazards of unsafe products.

2.2 Economic Competitiveness

Consumer protection measures encourage businesses to treat consumers fairly and with respect, and they allow for consumer demands to drive good business practises and innovation.

Businesses that do so will gain a good reputation and their products will be more sought after. In turn, their businesses will be more profitable, competitive, and sustainable.

Those businesses that do not treat consumers fairly will in turn be punished by the market and the law. Their negative reputations will eventually result in decreased sales and competitiveness.

Consumer protection measures therefore contribute towards dynamic, effective, and innovative markets for businesses to grow.

2.3 Regional and Global Integration

Consumer protection measures in Cambodia also contribute to increased integration at the regional and global level.

ASEAN is pushing for tighter economic integration, symbolised by the creation of the ASEAN Economic Community [AEC] and the adoption of a Blueprint 2025. One of the Blueprint principles is to make this community more people-oriented and people-centred, by harmonising consumer protection frameworks across member states. This is increasingly important with the emergence of digital trade and e-commerce. For example, consumers need to know that a product produced in Thailand, will be safe to consume in Cambodia.

More specifically, the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for Consumer Protection [ASAPCP] 2025 aims to create a common regional consumer protection framework, ensure a high common level of consumer empowerment and protection, high consumer confidence in AEC and streamlining consumer concerns across national policies. As Cambodia trades more with its fellow ASEAN member states, cooperation on consumer protection becomes a necessity, for the country to play its part in the achievement of the ASAPCP 2025.

As Cambodia also increases its connectivity with world markets, adopting higher standards of consumer protection will also facilitate this process. Cambodian products are expected to be more and more consumed in faraway markets, and having local producers adhere to stricter requirements will make these products more competitive globally.

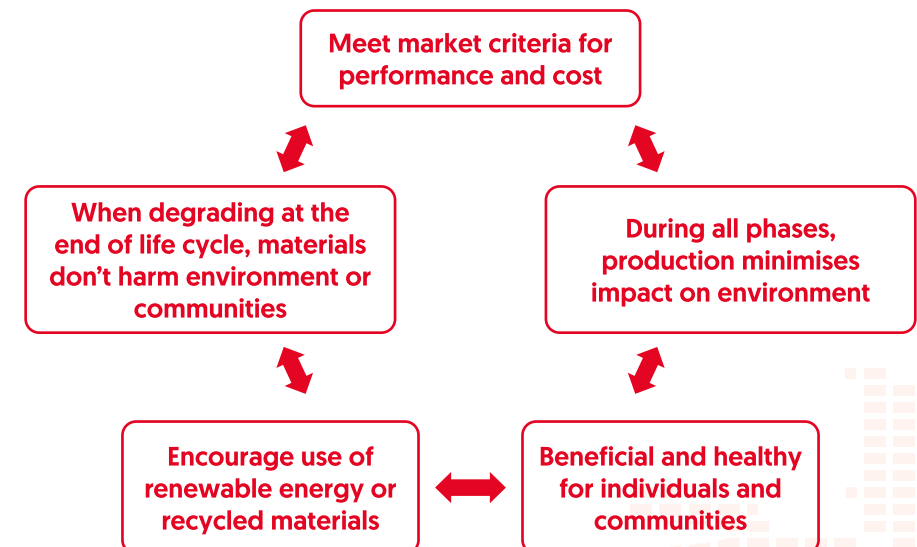
8. RESPONSIBLE PACKAGING FOR BUSINESSES

8.1 Compliant Packaging

The essence of packaging is not only to protect the product as it gets from the factory to the consumer, but also to help the consumer make an informed choice in purchasing it. Therefore, displaying the right information on the label is essential, as it is the main way for the consumer to receive information on the product. Labels on Cambodian products should comply with national labelling and marking regulations, which include minimum requirements on information to display (eg. weight, name of the company, ingredients used and in what quantity). If the product is food, calories should be displayed; if it is potentially hazardous (such as household bleach), then warning signs should be visible. It is important that such information should be displayed clearly, in a user-friendly manner.

8.2 Eco-Friendly Packaging

Packaging is a key process of product manufacturing. If left unregulated, harmful practices – such as using unhealthy materials or costly production methods - can significantly harm the environment and waste precious resources. Eco-friendly packaging is meant to reduce as much as possible the burden on the environment, whilst upholding the safety of consumers and market criteria. The following tips exemplify such packaging practices.



Keeping proper records of purchases Commitment 8

"We provide complete records of the goods purchased, and have them delivered in the promised time and described condition."

Offering options for cancellation Commitment 9

"We allow consumers to review their transaction before making the final purchase, and to withdraw from a confirmed transaction in appropriate circumstances."

Taking consumer complaints seriously Commitment 10

"We have a fair and transparent system to address complaints, and provide appropriate compensation, such as refund, repair, replacement, as described in the warranty."

Keeping private information private Commitment 11

"We actively protect the privacy of consumers, and ask for permission if we collect, use or share personal data."

Ensuring online payments are safe Commitment 12

"We safeguard sensitive data by choosing the appropriate secure technology and protocols, such as encryption or SSL, and display trust certificates to prove it."

Avoiding online spamming Commitment 13

"We allow consumers to choose whether they wish to receive or opt out from commercial messages by e-mail or other electronic means."

Avoiding producing fake online reviews Commitment 14

"We do not restrict the ability of consumers to make critical or negative reviews of our goods or services, or spread wrong information about our competitors."

Educating consumers about (online) risks Commitment 15

"We help consumers in understanding the risks of online transactions, and provide competent guidance if needed."

Source: ASEAN Online Business Code of Conduct, 2020.

3. WHAT ARE YOUR CONSUMER RIGHTS?

3.1 Consumer Rights

Knowing your consumer rights can help stop disreputable traders operating and can ensure that you get a fair deal. Consumer rights protect customers and empower them to speak up when wronged.

As a Consumer in Cambodia, your rights are laid out in the Law on Consumer Protection. You have:

1. The right to receive information and education to be able to identify the difference between goods or services and to be protected against false and misleading representation by advertisement.
2. The right to choose goods or services which are competing on price and on quality.
3. The right to be heard regarding consumer concerns and to receive settlements from the competent regulators and the government.
4. The right to demand compensation under the Law on Consumer Protection or by other laws.

3.2 Consumer Associations

Under the Law on Consumer Protection, consumers also have the right to establish their own consumer associations.

A consumer association can be established by getting approval from the key authorities, then obtaining the registration at the Ministry of Interior.

Consumer associations play a pivotal role in defending consumer rights. They are created to represent the interests of consumers. They do this by sharing information and advocating for policy changes that protect against unfair practises.

A consumer association in Cambodia may have the following goals:

1.

Provide independent counselling to consumers and facilitate the resolution of consumer complaints.

2.

Act as a representative on behalf of any consumer whose rights have been violated.

3.

Represent the opinions and interests of consumers in public forums or press conferences.

4.

Receive counselling from any competent regulator concerning the regulations or information standards to be provided to consumers.

5.

Establish a working group for consumer protection in key sectors.

6.

Implement other duties delegated by the National Commission for Consumer Protection.

3.3 ASEAN Consumer Associations

Currently, 7 of the 10 ASEAN Member States have a Consumer Association in place.

Cambodia now aims to do the same!



Not Yet Established



Established

7. CONSUMER PROTECTION IN THE AGE OF E-COMMERCE

E-commerce is rising in Cambodia and other Asian countries, facilitated by wider mobile usage and higher consumer spending power. Successful e-platforms are emerging, such as Taobao. With greater opportunities awarded to consumers also come risks, such as fraud and data theft.

The ASEAN Online Business Code of Conduct is a tool to promote healthy e-business practices. It features 15 commitments for online businesses towards consumers. We recommend all companies in Cambodia try to follow these 15 commitments.

Treating consumers fairly

Commitment 1

"We do not engage in illegal, fraudulent, unethical or unfair business practices that can harm consumers."

Upholding responsibilities

Commitment 2

"We value consumer rights to the same extent as traditional bricks-and-mortar businesses."

Complying with laws and regulations

Commitment 3

"We respect the policies, laws and regulations in the countries where our goods and services are marketed."

Conforming to local standards

Commitment 4

"We apply the necessary standards and provide accurate information in the local language of the countries where our goods and services are marketed."

Ensuring quality and safety

Commitment 5

"We make no compromises about product and food safety, and do not offer products which have been recalled, banned or prohibited. Similarly, we make sure our services are of high quality. This is considered a shared responsibility along our entire supply chain."

Communicating honestly and truthfully

Commitment 6

"We provide easily accessible, complete and correct information about our goods and services, and adhere to fair advertising and marketing practices."

Transparency about customer costs

Commitment 7

"We are open about the prices we charge and do not hide any additional costs [such as customs duties, currency conversion, shipping or delivery]."

Privacy declaration and Terms of Service. The company also states it is the first in the ride-hailing industry to have its quality management system certified under ISO 9001:2015. Operations-wise, Grab conducts background checks on its drivers, hides the personal contact numbers of both passengers and drivers, and asks drivers to verify their identity at least once a day by taking a selfie. It also protects personal

data from 3rd-party vendors, prevents illegal cyber activities through numerous security layers, and performs security checks on user accounts to prevent unauthorized takeovers. Finally, Grab lists a comprehensive Help Centre for consumers, with practical solutions (and clear telephone hotlines) for numerous bad situations (ranging from wrong drop-off locations to vehicle accidents).



6.3 Coca-Cola Cambodia

The famous beverage multinational, which operates in more than 190 countries worldwide, has a factory in Cambodia. They've established a Customer Information Centre, thanks to which customers can send queries online or by phone. Complaints are handled within 2 to 3 days.

The labels of each of Coca Cola's products meticulously include relevant product information such as calories and ingredients.

Their marketing policy is also arguably fair, with no ads targeting children below the age of 12, and promotions having specific time frames to avoid unfair competition.



6.4 jetBlue

Jetblue is an American low-cost airline with more than 40 million customers. It was named top airline in the 2019 America Airline Satisfaction Survey for Customer Satisfaction. It has, incidentally, won this award 13 more times. Jetblue is a good example of having a responsive customer complaint mechanism. The company understands the notion that sometimes, small gestures matter as much as the big ones in making consumers feel appreciated and valued.

A notable anecdote, which has gone published, states that a Jetblue passenger complained about being unable to bring his Starbucks coffee onto the plane from the airport terminal. Within minutes of the tweet being posted, company representatives got in touch with the passenger, ordering him a replacement Starbucks coffee and delivering it to him straight on the plane. Feeling elated, the customer took to Twitter to publicly thank the company.

4. WHAT IS UNFAIR CONDUCT AND UNFAIR PRACTICE?

The Law on Consumer Protection defines unfair conduct and unfair practice as any act "committed by a person or business which may mislead or deceive a consumer".

The key difference between unfair conduct and unfair practice is that the former can be committed both intentionally and unintentionally by a business, whilst the latter is always intentional.

Unfair practice is usually punished more severely.

It is therefore very important that any person or business selling to consumers thinks carefully about how their products are advertised.

There are now strict penalties for taking part in any form of unfair conduct and unfair practice. For the most serious breaches, these penalties can include fines of up to **80,000,000** riel, and jail terms of two to five years.

4.1 Unfair Conduct

Unfair Conduct in businesses are all the acts of misleading or deceiving the public and consumers, related to their goods and services selling in the marketplace.

TIP BOX: Unfair conducts happen in Cambodia's e-commerce market

E-commerce provides opportunities for SMEs (small and medium enterprises), family businesses, informal and formal businesses in Cambodia to interact with consumers through a new digital market platform. Buying and selling moves online, making transactions easy and accessible anywhere, anytime, particularly through social media like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

In the newspapers today, there are also reported cases of some online scams that are ongoing but not as widespread as in other countries.

In Cambodia, consumers are at risk when purchasing via online platforms. They may receive goods that are substantially different, particularly of less quality, than what was advertised on the platform. These products may even be harmful to the consumer. In Cambodia, this is particularly true at the moment for body lotions, health, and nutritional products.

There are also cases of fraudulent online sales, wherein the seller convinces the would-be buyer to provide their contact details and pay in advance, using emails, social media, or text messages. The buyer then never sees the product delivered to them.

Previously, consumers in Cambodia who were scammed online and did not know where to file their complaints. But now, all consumers can contact direct to the Directorate-General of Consumer Protection, Competition and Fraud Repression [CCF] through social media or website to file their complaints.

CCF will help resolve these issues in accordance with the law on consumer protection.

”

4.2 Unfair Practice

The Law on Consumer Protection describes the following types of unfair practices, which can take several forms:



Unfair or Misleading Sales

A sale which misleads or deceives a consumer of a good or service. For example, by including very small text that is too small to read.



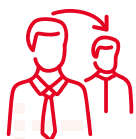
False Promises to Offer Gifts and Prizes

Promising to offer a certain gift or prize if a consumer makes a purchase, with no intention of honouring that gift or prize.



Bait Advertising

Advertising a good or service at a particular price, when there is no intention, or possibility to honour that price.



Referral Selling

Persuading a consumer to buy products or services through promises of a rebate, commission, or other benefit for supplying information that helps the business sell to other consumers, and where the consumer does not get the promised benefit unless some other event happens after the agreement is made.

6. WHAT DOES AN EFFECTIVE INTERNAL DISPUTE MECHANISM LOOK LIKE?

For companies, setting up an internal dispute settlement mechanism can be difficult and costly, but the investment often pays off in the long run, by making customers feel more valued, increasing brand and reducing the risks of legal action. Here are some examples from Cambodia and abroad to show how it's done.



6.1 Wing Cambodia

Wing is a Cambodian mobile finance services company with more than 5 million customers. In the absence of consumer protection guidelines for the digital sector, the company had to come up with creative ways to protect the data of their customers engaging in digital transactions.

They've established an internal legal compliance team, which ensures that all communication and contracts are compliant with the law. Their monitoring is so meticulous to the point that the team reviews all work-related text messages sent by employees!

Training sessions on compliance are held

for all staff members. A strict company policy has been put in place, with no tolerance given to employees found guilty of leaking customer data.

Customers are given multiple options to forward complaints: they can either meet company agents directly at one of the many local branches, or they can call the call centre. The time frame promised by Wing to settle the complaints is very short, within 2 days. They also follow up with clients by calling them back.

Finally, Wing have built up an impressive, multi-layered digital protection system, including internet firewalls and antivirus software.

6.2 Grab

Originally from Myanmar, Grab is now a major "super-app" operating across multiple South-East Asian countries. It offers various services, including deliveries and cab-hailing. The company envisions to help the region's development by

offering safe and reliable services, thanks in no small part to its comprehensive, sophisticated customer protection package.

On their website, Grab clearly displays their internal Code of Conduct, Data

This can be done if the companies set up internal dispute settlement mechanisms, wherein they resolve consumer complaints internally. Usually referred to as customer service, this is beneficial in several ways: it saves time and resources for all parties, can increase customer loyalty and the company's reputation, and contributes to good societal governance by increasing trust in institutions.

A good customer service is:

Accessible	Customers need to know how to access the service. Do they need to call a hotline? Is there a dedicated section on the company website? Do they speak with company agents at a local branch?
Responsive	The complaints need to be handled as quickly as possible by company staff. A time frame should also be clearly indicated (for example, 3 days) for the whole process, so that customers know what to expect.
Objective	All customers should be treated equally and without bias.
Confidential	Data from complaining customers should be secured, with their identities kept confidential.
Accountable	Once frontline staff receive the complaints by customers, these should be forwarded to upper management. A senior figure will be responsible to ensure the complaints are handled correctly and timely.



5.6 Train Company Employees

Employees (especially those working in frontline roles) are the primary point of contact between customers and the company. It is vital they understand their role in protecting consumers, whether this be by illustrating the choice of products/services fairly, handling sensitive data correctly, and explaining relevant company policy and procedures.

Often, if an employee fails to do any of these, it is not out of malice, but because he or she was not aware of the correct procedures. It is vital to invest in human capital, by providing ongoing training to employees about how to perform their role to the best of their potential.

Training can take several forms, ranging from info pack guides distributed to new hires, regular workshops, and published company guidelines/guidebooks.



Demanding or Accepting Payment with no Intention to Supply the Goods or Services Purchased

Demanding or accepting payment from consumers with no intention of delivering the good or service. Or, with the intention of delivering a different, often lower quality good or service.



False or Misleading Representation about Business Activities

Making false or misleading representations related to the profits, investments, operations, or activities of a business. For example, exaggerating profits of a business to encourage investment or further sales.



Coercion of Consumers by Force or Mental Threat

Using physical or mental force or coercion on a consumer to encourage them to use a good or service.



Pyramid Scheme Selling

A pyramid scheme is a way of making money that cannot continue very long. It involves promising people payment, goods, or services, primarily for enrolling other people into the scheme or training them to take part. Money primarily comes from recruiting new people to the scheme, and so often does not supply any real sale of products or services to consumers.



Sale of Goods or Services Bearing False Trade Descriptions

Any false label or description given to a good or service. For example, sewing a false logo onto a non-branded shirt.



Other Unfair Practises as Determined by Competent Regulators

Other unfair practises shall be determined by Prakas of the competent regulators. Unfair practises will adapt over time to fit new and changing forms of unfair conduct.

5. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR?

5.1 Consumer Protection as a Strategic Business Decision

So far, we've discussed what government and consumer groups can do to promote consumer protection. But it is arguably businesses that play the key role, since they are the ones that provide products and services in the first place.

Companies that embrace consumer protection are not only fulfilling legal and moral obligations to society, but are also making a strategic, sound business choice.

Here are five ways the private sector can help with consumer protection.



**Provide
safe
products**



**Refrain
from unfair
conduct**



**Protect
Consumer
Data**



**Set Up Internal Dispute
Settlement Mechanisms**



**Train
Company
Employees**



5.2. Provide Safe Products

First of all, businesses should ensure that the products and services they provide to customers are **safe**.

TIP BOX: What is a safe product/service?

A product or service is defined as safe when it provides either no risk or an acceptable risk to the customer. When assessing risk, it is essential to considering the features and intended use of the product or service in question. For example, a hammer or a plastic bag may be used safely by adults, but it might not be safe for children.

It is the responsibility of companies to ensure the safety of their products/services, and they should be held liable if this is not the case. Being liable means you accept responsibility and agree to pay the consequences if you are found guilty.



5.3 Refrain from Unfair Conduct

To prevent unfair competition, businesses should refrain from unfair conduct. These malpractices are defined in the 2019 Consumer Protection Law and have been summarised in the table above.

The following are examples of unfair conduct: a car producer falsely advertises their cars to be environmentally friendly by lying about their emissions in advertisements; a milk-producing company makes false claims about the nutritional benefits on their product labels; an online webpage engages in a pyramid scheme by promising users huge financial rewards if they agree to pay a fee to use their service and refer this service to other users.



5.4 Protect Consumer Data

In Cambodia's increasingly digital economy, the rising number of online transactions means customers are exposing their data to leaks and breaches, thus compromising their safety/reputation.

The right to consumer privacy is cited in Article 22 of the 2019 E-commerce Law and in Article 10 of the Cambodian Civil Code. Businesses holding customer data [for example, banks and online sales platforms] need to ensure that such data is protected against leaks and should not be released without the consent of the customer.



5.5 Set Up Internal Dispute Settlement Mechanisms

Consumers are sometimes unhappy about the product or service they purchase and seek to redress this by voicing their complaints.

For them, taking the company responsible to court can be an option, but the process is often slow, expensive, and not necessary for minor complaints. Most of the time it is better to solve the problem before it escalates.