

TRAINERS' TOOLKIT

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO BECOME PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPLIERS

TÜRKİYE  BANKASI

TURKONFED

 UN
WOMEN 

 FOR ALL
WOMEN
AND GIRLS

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality. It works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO BECOME PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPLIERS

Training Manual for Women Entrepreneurs

UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office



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Explanatory note: This document serves as a series of hand-outs for participants, which they can refer to during and after the training. It also serves to support trainers using the Trainers' Toolkit with data, background information and examples for navigating gender-responsive procurement.

The hand-outs mirror the Trainers' Toolkit in structure. Each of the eight modules in the Trainers' Toolkit is complemented by a section in the hand-outs. The appendices are to be used during the training, so these should be printed for each participant.

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ACRONYMS

ECARO	Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
GRP	Gender-responsive procurement
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ITC	International Trade Centre
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprises
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and medium enterprise
SOP	Standard operating procedure
TÜRKONFED	Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollars
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles

BACKGROUND

The global economic landscape reveals a stark disparity in procurement: while women own approximately one in three businesses worldwide,¹ they capture less than 1 per cent of the total procurement spending from large corporations and governments.² This gender gap is particularly significant given that public procurement alone can represent up to 40 per cent of a country's gross domestic product,³ yet women entrepreneurs and their businesses remain disproportionately concentrated in the lowest, least visible tiers of supply chains. These entrepreneurs often face deep-seated structural inequalities, including limited access to productive resources, finance and professional networks compared to their male counterparts.



To address these imbalances, UN Women promotes gender-responsive procurement (GRP) – the sustainable selection of goods, services and civil works that intentionally considers the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is a strategic approach that involves applying a

gender lens throughout the entire procurement cycle – from initial planning and tendering to evaluation and contract management. Crucially, GRP is not a form of charity or a compromise on quality; rather, it is about ensuring an equal opportunity to compete by removing the systemic barriers that have historically excluded women from markets.

The primary goal of this training programme is to empower women entrepreneurs with the technical knowledge and strategic tools required to navigate these complexities. By focusing on enhancing supplier readiness and visibility, the curriculum helps participants transition into becoming regular, reliable suppliers for public and private buyers. Through this participatory knowledge-sharing forum, entrepreneurs learn to recognize the business value they bring to supply chains.

THE INTEGRATION GAP: POLICY VS. PRACTICE

A significant disconnect often exists between high-level international and national policies and the practical, day-to-day implementation of procurement. While a multilayered ecosystem – ranging from the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) to national small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) participation laws – provides the authority for inclusive buying, these mandates frequently fail to translate into habitual behaviour within organizations. This integration gap means that while a buyer may have a public commitment to diversity, their internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and qualification criteria may still remain unintentionally gender-blind.

1. World Bank. Undated. Enterprise Surveys. The World Bank Gender Data Portal. Accessed 3 June 2026. <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/en/data/exploretopics/gender>

2. Jocelyn Chu. 2022. *Procurement's strategic value: Why gender-responsive procurement makes business sense*. UN Women.

3. ITC (International Trade Centre). 2014. *Empowering Women Through Public Procurement*.

In practice, administrative and structural barriers continue to exclude women entrepreneurs before they can even submit a bid. Requirements such as high turnover thresholds, massive contract sizes (procurement aggregation), and rigid past-performance criteria often reflect the capabilities of large, male-dominated incumbent firms. Furthermore, the reliance on closed supplier lists and informal insider networks keeps many women entrepreneurs invisible to decision-makers, regardless of the formal policy language supporting inclusive sourcing.

This toolkit is designed to bridge this gap by teaching entrepreneurs how to identify and leverage legal triggers and policy entry points. Participants learn to advocate for measures like contract lotting (dividing large contracts into smaller parts) and prompt payment regulations, which are essential for the survival of smaller firms. By understanding the fine print of procurement, women entrepreneurs can strategically position their businesses as solutions that help buyers meet their own legal, ethical and environmental, social and governance commitments.

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING THE TRAINING MANUAL

This manual is designed to train female individuals who own a company, no matter the size or the sector. It may also support women entrepreneurs who are freelancers or who are planning to start their own business. The structure of the manual is flexible in order to accommodate the different needs of the target groups.

The process of developing the training manual started by understanding the main barriers for women entrepreneurs to participate in the formal economy. Literature review and complementary desk research were undertaken to understand gender-responsive procurement legislation, public and private policies and international obligations. Special attention was paid to understanding procurement processes in the private sector. The desk research also focused on the analysis of existing training manuals and toolkits created by international organizations on topics such as gender mainstreaming and gender sensitization, including

resources by UN Women and on the implementation of the WEPs.

As a result of the desk research and assessment of target group needs, the following knowledge and capacity-development needs were identified:

- Basic theoretical and practical knowledge on GRP and WEPs principle 5
- Knowledge and practical use of tools to assess the GRP opportunities among buyers
- Technical assistance and guidance to develop, implement and monitor action plans for accessing buyers

Inputs and feedback from stakeholders and the target group have been sought and incorporated throughout the manual development process. These include internal UN Women feedback from different parts of the organization: (1) the

UN Women Economic Empowerment Section at Headquarters in New York; (2) the UN Women Private Sector Team/WEPS Secretariat in New York; and (3) the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) in Istanbul – which are all actively working to promote the implementation of GRP among businesses. UN Women ECARO also facilitated inputs from the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (TÜRKONFED) International, which channels Türkiye's 30 federations, more than 300 associations and over 50,000 businesspeople based on volunteerism and independence, and which accounts for 55 per cent of the

country's agricultural and non-public employment and for 88 per cent of foreign trade, excluding energy sector. These consultations and feedback opportunities have been important to draw on global and regional experiences and expertise with GRP.

To validate the trainers' toolkit, a pilot training was organized online, where SheSupplies trainers provided four half-day training sessions for 21 women entrepreneurs across the Europe and Central Asia region. The feedback generated through the training has been crucial for finalizing the toolkit.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

This manual provides a guideline for planning, implementing and evaluating trainings to promote women entrepreneurs' access to public and private procurement. It specifically aims to support women in navigating barriers in the procurement processes, in finance, in gaps in information and networks, and sociocultural barriers. It also guides participants in understanding laws, regulations and policies on gender-responsive procurement and learning how to make them beneficial for their business.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through this training, participants will:

1. **Understand the fundamentals and value of GRP:** Define gender-responsive procurement and recognize how it removes structural barriers to enable fair competition and business growth.
2. **Identify multidimensional barriers:** Recognize the specific structural, financial, informational and sociocultural obstacles – such as limited collateral, exclusion from informal networks and gender stereotypes – that hinder women entrepreneurs.
3. **Navigate the procurement cycle:** Understand the standard procurement process (from need definition to contract management) to identify exactly where barriers occur and where opportunities exist.
4. **Enhance financial and operational readiness:** Develop strategies to improve financial health, manage cash flow, and ensure compliance with the rigorous documentation and certification requirements often required by buyers.
5. **Build visibility and networks:** Learn to use supplier portals, industry associations, and direct buyer engagement to overcome information gaps and become visible to those seeking diverse suppliers.

6. **Leverage legal and policy frameworks:**

Understand how international treaties, national laws and corporate supplier diversity

policies (like set-asides or preferential evaluation) create competitive advantages for women-owned businesses.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL

The manual consists of two parts:

The Trainers' Toolkit: Contains practical guidelines on how to plan, implement and evaluate trainings on empowering women entrepreneurs to benefit from GRP. Here, the user will find exercises, cases, notes for lectures, samples for evaluation and logistical information. The trainers can also use the Participant Hand-outs document (described below) to structure lectures, as it contains data, references to legal texts and definitions as well as company examples.

Participant Hand-outs: Consists of hand-outs for each training module. The purpose of the hand-outs document is to support the continued learning process, during and after the training, and to enable women entrepreneurs to start the process of benefitting from GRP. The information and supporting appendices in the hand-outs can also be referenced by the trainers when delivering the training. The appendices should be printed for each participant before the training as the participants will use these as worksheets.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAINERS' TOOLKIT

The aim of the Toolkit is to provide a step-by-step guide on how to plan, implement and evaluate trainings promoting women entrepreneurs to benefit from GRP. The Toolkit is structured in the following interconnected parts:

- **Step 1: Planning:** Preparing the trainer and the venue.
- **Step 2: Implementation:** Eight modules covering the GRP journey from leadership to monitoring, including introduction to, and evaluation of, the training.

STEP 1

PLANNING

Trainings are a way of sharing knowledge and building skills, either in a formal or an informal setting, that will lead to a change in behaviour. Adult education and learning processes should generally be participatory and inclusive, and it is the responsibility of the trainers to create a positive learning environment that engages participants.

Planning training workshops requires time and resources; therefore, it is advisable for a trainer to have a co-trainer who will contribute to the entire planning, implementation and evaluation process. Moreover, training styles are often an “extension” of a trainer’s personality, knowledge and preferences. Conducting the trainings in pairs may allow for diversity in terms of training modes, which might be beneficial for the learning process.

1.1. CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

To convey the necessary information to participants through an inclusive training workshop, trainers need to be aware of the needs of their participants. Conducting a capacity needs assessment will enable trainers to set clear learning goals and adapt the content to match the needs of the target group.

A capacity needs assessment is conducted before the training to help the planning process. It can be conducted through interviews with enterprises and their employees or managers, by group discussion or by tests on topics relevant to the training. Observations can also be made to assess the needs of the target group. Finally, questionnaires can be used to collect necessary information. Each method is valid in terms of information-gathering; however, interviews and group work may be time- and resource-intensive. Therefore, if you are dealing with a large pool of training participants, using a pre-designed questionnaire might be a better option. How to prepare and conduct such a capacity needs assessment is described below.

Conducting a capacity needs assessment

The capacity needs assessment form should include a short note that explains to the participants that the goal of the assessment is to identify the needs and areas of interest of the training participants in relation to the training workshop. To manage expectations, it can include a list of topics that the training can realistically offer, from which respondents can mark their areas of interest. The capacity needs assessment questionnaire should be short, with a maximum of 10 questions. It can contain open-ended questions, which are informative but time-consuming to summarize and analyse. It can also include multiple-choice options, which makes the questionnaire easier to complete and to analyse, but might not give sufficient information to the trainers. Trainers can also use ratings and sentence-completion activities to evaluate the knowledge of terms, the relevance of the information or the skills of the trainees. Finally, questionnaires can also use a combination of all these types of questions.

The pre-training capacity needs assessment should ideally be distributed to all of the training participants ahead of time with clear deadlines, to allow for their responses to be taken into account in the design of the training. They can be distributed as an attachment to an email or by using online survey data-protected privacy programmes. Based on the responses, the trainers can identify the areas of interest, preferences and possibly also the knowledge among the respondents and can adjust the training programme accordingly.

1.2. OBJECTIVES, TRAINING MATERIALS AND LEARNING METHODS

Based on the information generated through the capacity needs assessments, learning objectives can be refined. The objectives should be clearly explained to the participants and monitored throughout the training sessions. For example, trainers may start each training session by explaining to participants what they should be able to do or know by the end of the session. Using phrases such as

“be able to”, “have knowledge of”, “have skills to” or “have an understanding of” can enable participants to understand how their newly gained knowledge can be put into practice after the training.

The information and exercises included in this manual will be difficult to cover in one training. Therefore, trainers need to prioritize which topics to cover and be ready to rearrange the activities at the last minute, depending on how the participants respond to the activities and how much time the discussions require. Being clear on the learning objectives will help trainers prioritize and rearrange the training agenda, if need be. It is advisable to have extra activities planned as well as to be prepared to drop certain parts of the programme. Keep track of time and keep a dialogue with participants on what changes need to be made to the programme.

The training sequence is the flow of the activities and information-sharing at the actual workshop. When planning the training sequence, it is important to keep in mind that a learning cycle includes concrete experiences, reflections and observations, theory and concept introduction, and, finally, application and testing of new skills or knowledge. For example, the introduction of a new concept should be followed by an exercise that illustrates the concept or demonstrates how it is translated into policies or practices. Reflection after exercises where participants have tried newly acquired skills is also part of the learning cycle.

Learning methods can be clustered into two main groups: lectures and participatory learning methods. Case examples, (small) group discussions, brainstorming and video discussions are all examples of participatory training techniques. Participants have different learning styles. Using a mixture of lecture, individual and group work, written and oral material as well as audiovisuals will make sure different needs are met and hopefully keep energy levels up.

When working in small groups, trainers can try to form working groups so that a high level of diversity is present in each group. Trainers can try to create groups with gender and age diversity, for example, as well as those representing different sectors and sizes of companies, and participants with different levels of decision-making power in their companies.

Trainings can be seen as **knowledge-sharing forums**. The success of trainings is often conditioned not only by the theme and the knowledge of the trainers but also by factors such as: How many participants are present? What are their professional fields, the level of their responsibilities and their influence in their companies? How is their active participation ensured throughout the training, and what measures are taken to follow up after the training?

It is recommended that training workshops have a **maximum number of 20 participants**. With larger numbers of participants, it becomes difficult to give attention to all and to ensure everyone's participation in the activities. With less than eight participants, it is difficult to conduct exercises and participatory learning activities and might make the trainings more trainer-oriented. However, depending on the learning objectives set and the number of trainers involved, a training session may include more than 20 or less than eight participants.

When it comes to identifying and **recruiting training participants**, various criteria can be used, including the size of the company, the sector and the title/position of the individuals who will attend the trainings. It is advisable to aim to recruit participants who own companies or who have managerial roles in their companies and those who are in the process of starting a business.

To recruit participants, trainers can reach out to business associations or women-owned companies directly. The presence of a UN Women office or UN Global Compact Local Network in the country can also provide a helpful platform for recruitment as well as further engagement beyond the training.

The training targets **8 to 20 participants** to ensure active participation.

- **Online setup:** Meeting tool that allows for break-out rooms.
- **Learning methods:** A mix of lectures, individual work, group exercises and plenary discussions.
- **Key tools:** participant hand-outs and slides.

1.3. PREPARATIONS CHECKLIST

- The training software is available
- Invitations are sent to the participants
- The list of participants is confirmed
- The capacity needs assessment is conducted
- Trainers have agreed who is doing what during the training sessions
- A timekeeper is assigned for each session among the trainers (unless trainers decide to involve the participants in this activity)
- Materials are prepared: registration form, list of participants and contact details for distribution, hand-outs, evaluation forms, agenda and exercises/cases.
- Training certificates are prepared for each participant, if applicable.



The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of green and blue. These shapes create a layered, mountain-like effect, with some areas appearing darker due to the overlap. The overall color palette is cool and modern.

STEP 2

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 2 consists of eight training modules covering women entrepreneurs' barriers and opportunities for accessing procurement. The first is an introductory module, the last is a closing module, while modules 2 to 7 cover all content elements. Each training module consists of three parts: a lecture, exercises and a final part where trainers and participants synthesize the key takeaways. Covering all the elements and conducting all exercises would require four half-day online sessions.

Below are a few key points to keep in mind while delivering the training content.

A TRAINER'S CHECKLIST FOR A PRODUCTIVE AND ENJOYABLE TRAINING

- Ensure that the atmosphere is friendly and empowering so that participants feel comfortable to ask questions and provide feedback.
- Set up ground rules together with the participants, emphasizing that the rules shall be respected throughout the training. Make sure that respect and non-discrimination are included here. Ultimately, it is the trainers' responsibility that harassment, derogatory language or "jokes" that can be perceived as derogatory do not take place or are not accepted.
- Trainers and participants are expected to create an environment "free of any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority, and being mindful of the need to prevent such conduct".⁴
- When discussions arise, try to engage various participants to get different views on the topic and to nuance their inputs against one another's. If participants express opinions that are contrary to the values contained in

this manual, and which could be offensive to other participants or yourself, do not hesitate to state that such remarks will not be accepted, and refer to the joint ground rules.



- As a trainer, try to remember the names of the participants and ask all to sign up under their names so that names are visible to all.
- Praise participants for their active participation but try not to evaluate or rate their inputs. Say "Interesting, thank you", rather than "Very good, thank you".
- Make yourself available if participants have further questions or need more explanation on topics discussed or assignments distributed.
- Consider incorporating energizing exercises as part of the session so that participants get active and retain their concentration.
- Before starting the training session, read and reread the training toolkit so that you are familiar with each part of it, and make sure you know exactly what each activity entails.

4. For definitions, see: United Nations Secretariat. 2019. [Secretary-General's bulletin: Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority](#). ST/SG/2019/8.

MODULE 1

**SAFETY,
INTRODUCTIONS &
EXPECTATIONS**

DURATION:

60 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

I. Opening and welcome (15 minutes)

The trainers begin by welcoming the participants and introducing themselves to establish a professional yet friendly and empowering atmosphere. It is essential to formally acknowledge UN Women and the sponsors whose support made the programme possible. The trainers then introduce the necessary house rules (including the use of cell phones only during breaks), and information about the online meeting tool.

II. Participant introductions (30 minutes)

Following the opening, the trainers facilitate participant introductions, to build rapport and demonstrate that the knowledge present in the room is immense. Each participant (or their partner) should share:

- Their **name, company name, country**
- **Product(s)/service(s) and sector of work.**
- Their **expectations for the training**, which the trainers should record on a paper to evaluate at the conclusion of the programme.

III. Objectives and agenda overview (15 minutes)

Finally, the trainers share the four half-days training objective: to move women entrepreneurs towards being a supplier to companies with a gender-responsive procurement policy and programme. The trainers provide a clear overview of the agenda, offering short summaries for each session:

Day 1: Gender-responsive procurement

Day 2: Navigating procurement processes and financial barriers

Day 3: Navigating the gap in information and networks and sociocultural barriers

Day 4: Navigating laws, regulations and policies for GRP

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FOR MODULE 1:

- Establishing a positive learning environment is the responsibility of the trainers.
- The training is a knowledge-sharing forum where participants contribute as much as the trainers.
- The objective is for women entrepreneurs to become suppliers to the private and public sector.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 1
- A notepad to jot down objectives of participants

Associated annexes and appendices:

Appendix 1: Exercise Kalinga Mining Case

Annex 1. Overview international, regional and national frameworks



MODULE 2

**INTRODUCTION TO
GENDER-RESPONSIVE
PROCUREMENT (GRP)**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- What is gender-responsive procurement and why is it relevant for your business?
- Barriers for women entrepreneurs in procurement.
- What buyers can do to include women entrepreneurs.
- How company procurement processes work.
- How to engage buyers strategically.

DURATION:

120 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

Lecture (60 minutes): What is GRP?

Use the slides to introduce gender-responsive procurement, defined as the sustainable selection of goods, services and civil works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is essential for trainers to emphasize that GRP is about equal opportunity to compete, not about lowering standards or providing charity. By implementing GRP, buyers remove structural barriers that often prevent capable women entrepreneurs from participating in the market.

Key components of the module include:

- **The equity gap:** Understanding that women entrepreneurs are disproportionately represented in lower-paid, lower-skilled tiers of the supply chain despite their significant business ownership rates.
- **Equality vs. equity:** Learning that while equality treats all suppliers the same, equity involves designing processes so suppliers with different structural constraints can participate fairly.

- **Intersectionality:** Recognizing how factors like race, class, location and age compound the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.
- **Strategic buyer tools:** Exploring how buyers use supplier databases, targeted outreach and weighted evaluation criteria to include women.
- **Visibility and registration:** Highlighting that visibility of the entrepreneur starts before a tender is even released; if you are not registered in supplier portals, you may never see the opportunities.

Exercise (55 minutes group work): The Kalinga case example

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: To identify GRP elements in a real-world scenario and determine how a woman entrepreneur can strategically engage with a procurement system.

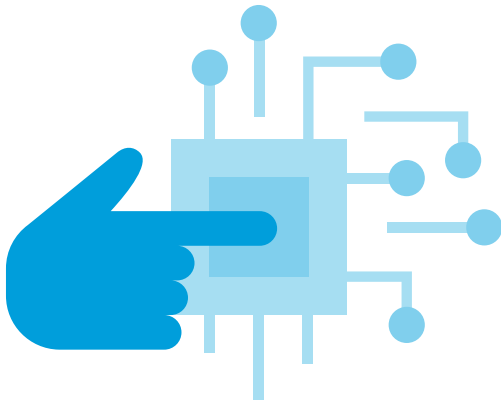
Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Individual reading (10 minutes):** Instruct each participant to read the Kalinga case study individually. Ask them to look specifically for mentions of how the organization commits to diversity and what specific services they require.
2. **Small group discussion (20 minutes):** Break the participants into small groups. Task each group with discussing and preparing answers to the following three questions:
 - › **What GRP elements do you see in this case?** (Look for public commitments, targets and reporting).
 - › **Where do opportunities for women entrepreneurs exist?** (Consider sectors like catering, transport, cleaning or maintenance).

- › **How could a woman entrepreneur engage with this procurement system?** (Think about registration, networking and subcontracting).

3. **Plenary reporting (15 minutes):** Bring the groups back together. Have a representative from each group share their findings.
4. **Wrap-up (15 minutes):** Conclude by repeating the GRP elements in a concise way, ensuring that all elements are covered, using the slides.

Note: The case example used for the exercise can be replaced by a close-to-home case.



- GRP creates market access if a business is well positioned.
- GRP focuses on removing structural barriers to enable fair competition without lowering standards.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 2
- **Appendix 1.** Exercise Kalinga Mining Case (in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Annex 1:** Overview of international standards, agreements and principles
- **Annex 2:** Company cases of GRP.

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FROM MODULE 2:

- GRP supports equal opportunities in procurement.
- Buyers may be required or encouraged by policies to include women entrepreneurs.
- Women entrepreneurs can actively enhance their own opportunities by being visible and procurement-ready.
- Being a woman entrepreneur can be a distinct advantage in specific procurement systems.

MODULE 3

**NAVIGATING
PROCUREMENT
PROCESS BARRIERS**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand common barriers in procurement.
- Understand where barriers arise in the procurement cycle.
- Identify where opportunities are available.

DURATION:

125 minutes

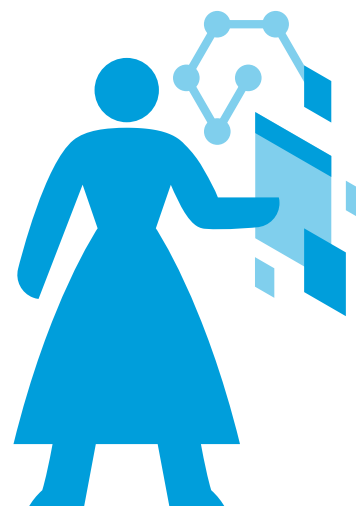
PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

Lecture

Use the slides to guide the session. Procurement barriers for women entrepreneurs are not limited to the bidding phase; they occur at every stage of the procurement cycle, from the initial definition of needs to the final contract performance. Trainers should guide participants in categorizing these obstacles into six main areas: access to information and networks, qualification and compliance, scale and capacity mismatches, financial constraints, unfavourable contract terms and underlying bias. While these barriers can seem daunting, the goal of this module is to shift the perspective from seeing them as dead ends to identifying them as navigational challenges that can be addressed through proactive strategy and preparation.

Key components of the module include:

- **The six barrier categories:** A deep dive into information gaps, compliance burdens, scale issues, financial hurdles, contract terms and sociocultural bias.
- **The procurement cycle:** Mapping exactly how barriers manifest during need definition, supplier identification, prequalification, evaluation and contracting.
- **Procurement aggregation:** Understanding how the bundling of contracts into large geographic or volume requirements disadvantages smaller firms.



- **The “Incumbent” advantage:** Recognizing how technical specifications may be unintentionally written to favour a buyer’s existing, long-term suppliers.
- **Post-award barriers:** Highlighting that challenges continue after winning, particularly regarding late payments and unbalanced liability clauses.

EXERCISES: BARRIER MAPPING AND PROCUREMENT READINESS

Module 3

Exercise 1: Barrier mapping

Duration: 45 minutes

Objective: To help participants identify which specific procurement barriers are most relevant to their individual business context and to identify potential opportunities/actions to navigate these barriers.

Step-by-step instructions:

Group session in break-out rooms (45 minutes):

1. The participants individually identify their key barriers per procurement stage with Appendix 2. Procurement cycle barrier-mapping self-assessment **(10 minutes)**.
2. The participants share their key barriers per procurement stage with the group **(10 minutes)**.

3. The groups discuss the opportunities/action points that would work for these barriers. (Appendix 3 can be used as a reference to identify opportunities/action points **(10 minutes)**).
4. **Plenary:** A group representative shares their group outcomes with the larger group. As a trainer, note common themes (e.g., “everyone struggles with turnover thresholds”) to reinforce that these are structural systemic issues, not individual business failures **(15 minutes)**.

Module 3

Exercise 2: Procurement readiness

Duration: 30 minutes

Objective: To move from identifying barriers to developing concrete actions that improve a business’s ability to compete.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Gap identification (10 minutes):** Ask participants to identify their top three gaps in procurement readiness using the self-assessment tool (Appendix 4).
2. **Group strategy session (15 minutes):** Break participants into small groups. Task them to discuss potential actions to solve the gaps identified in the first step.
3. **Plenary (5 minutes):** A representative from each group briefly shares one key readiness action with the room.
Close the exercise by emphasizing that visibility plus readiness equals opportunity.

- Entrepreneurs can take proactive action to address these challenges.
- There are six main barrier categories: information and networks, qualification and compliance, scale and capacity, finance and cash flow, contract terms, and bias.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 3
- **Appendix 2:** Procurement cycle self-assessment (in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 3:** Barriers & opportunities across the procurement cycle (reference document in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 4:** Procurement readiness checklist (in Participant Hand-outs).

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FROM MODULE 3:

- Procurement barriers occur at each stage of the process, from need definition to performance.
- Many significant barriers arise even before the tendering phase begins.

MODULE 4

**NAVIGATING
FINANCIAL BARRIERS**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognize structural financial barriers.
- Understand how these affect procurement participation.
- Reflect on your own experiences.
- Identify actions to improve finance readiness and cash flow.

DURATION:

150 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

Lecture

The “Gender Finance Gap” represents a significant paradox in global markets: while women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face a credit gap estimated between USD \$1.4 to \$1.7 trillion, the rate of non-performing loans among female borrowers is actually 53 per cent lower than among their male counterparts.⁵ This indicates that women are often more reliable borrowers, yet they continue to face systemic exclusion from financial systems. Trainers should clarify that these barriers are **structural**, rooted in issues like unequal property and inheritance laws that limit women’s access to the fixed assets (land or buildings) typically required as collateral by traditional banks.

Financial capacity is not just about general business growth; it is a prerequisite for **procurement participation**. Without sufficient working capital or access to credit, a woman entrepreneur may be excluded before she can even compete because she cannot meet high turnover thresholds, provide bid securities or performance bonds, or cover the upfront mobilization costs required to start a project. Even after winning a contract, **cash flow management** becomes the most critical factor for survival. Delayed payments from buyers, com-

bined with limited cash reserves and high upfront costs, can prevent a business from delivering on its promises, thereby damaging its reputation and future eligibility for tenders.

Key components of the module include:

- **The structural financial barriers:** Detailed exploration of collateral limits, weak credit history, unfavourable loan terms, cash flow constraints, limited networks and the impact of social norms.
- **Impact on procurement eligibility:** Understanding how financial health dictates the ability to meet pre-qualification requirements like insurance, guarantees and historical turnover.
- **Payment delays:** Recognizing how late payments from buyers disproportionately affect smaller firms with limited reserves.
- **Financial documentation & digitization:** The importance of maintaining formal records, using business bank accounts and building a borrowing track record to become credit-ready.
- **Alternative financing routes:** Exploring guarantee schemes, supplier or buyer finance, and grants as alternatives to traditional bank loans.

EXERCISES: FINANCIAL BARRIERS, ACTIONS AND FINANCIAL HEALTH

Module 4

Exercise 1: Identify financial barriers and key actions

Duration: 45 minutes

Objective: To help participants identify their specific financial constraints and develop a proactive plan to manage or mitigate them.

5. IFC. 2022. [Closing the Gender Finance Gap Through the Use of Blended Finance](#).

Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Individual:** Refer to Appendix 5. Participants individually identify the three main financial constraints and assess & rank how this affects their business **(15 minutes)**.
2. **Group session in break-out rooms:** The participants share outcomes in break-out rooms **(15 minutes)**.
3. **Plenary:** The group representatives share in plenary **the top three financial barriers (15 minutes)**.

Module 4

Exercise 2: Financial health self-assessment

Duration: 45 minutes

Objective: To evaluate the current readiness of the business to approach lenders or participate in high-value tenders.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Scoring (5 minutes):** Using Appendix 6, participants individually score their business on various financial indicators (0 = not in place, 1 = partly, 2 = fully).
2. **Gap analysis (10 minutes):** Based on their scores, participants identify their biggest gaps in financial health.
3. **Group session in break-out rooms, (15 minutes):** In small groups or plenary, participants discuss immediate steps to close these gaps.
4. **Plenary (15 minutes):** The groups each share their findings.

Conclude by reminding participants that improving financial health is a continuous process that directly increases their procurement power.

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FROM MODULE 4:

- Financial barriers directly affect the ability of women entrepreneurs to participate in procurement.
- Many financial constraints are structural in nature, such as limited collateral and asset ownership.
- Improving financial health and readiness increases overall procurement opportunities.
- Effective cash flow management is critical for the successful delivery of contracts.
- Practical steps, such as maintaining better records or negotiating milestone payments, can improve access to finance.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 4
- **Appendix 5:** Financial barriers identification & action template (in Participant Hand-out)
- **Appendix 6:** Financial health self-assessment (in Participant Hand-out).



MODULE 5

**NAVIGATING THE GAP
IN INFORMATION AND
NETWORKS**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand information and network barriers.
- Recognize how they affect procurement access.
- Identify actions to improve visibility and connections.

DURATION:

85 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

Lecture

Access to procurement opportunities depends heavily on an entrepreneur's awareness of tenders and its visibility to key decision-makers. In many industries, procurement often relies on knowing suppliers, meaning entrepreneurs or businesses that remain outside established networks rarely access high-value opportunities. Trainers should emphasize that information and network gaps are not just personal failings but structural barriers – such as closed supplier lists and limited buyer relationships – that lead to women entrepreneurs not being invited to bid or missing out on subcontracting opportunities entirely.

Network barriers are often compounded in male-dominated sectors where informal information channels and industry associations may unintentionally exclude women entrepreneurs. To overcome these hurdles, participants must move from a reactive stance to an intentional strategy of building market presence. This involves a dual approach: technical registration on government and corporate supplier portals to ensure visibility, and strategic networking with prime contractors and industry groups to build the trust and familiarity that buyers often prioritize during the selection process.

Key components of the module include:

- **Common information barriers:** Understanding obstacles like lack of tender alerts, weak market intelligence and a poor understanding of complex procurement processes.
- **Network exclusions:** Recognizing the impact of smaller professional networks, exclusion from informal insider circles and weak links to large prime contractors.
- **The visibility gap:** Identifying how low market presence results in a lack of buyer trust and fewer invitations to participate in restricted tenders.
- **Proactive information tools:** Utilizing tender alerts, monitoring buyer procurement plans and following industry news to move ahead of the competition.
- **Strategic networking actions:** Joining sector associations, attending meet-the-buyer events and engaging with chambers of commerce to build social capital.

EXERCISE: IMPROVE MARKET VISIBILITY & ACCESS

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: To assess the current state of a business's market presence and develop a concrete action plan to bridge information and network gaps.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Individual assessment (10 minutes):** Instruct participants to use **Appendix 7** to perform a self-assessment of their current situation.
2. **Defining actions (10 minutes):** Using the gaps identified in the first step, participants should fill out **Appendix 8** to define three to five specific actions they will take to improve market access.

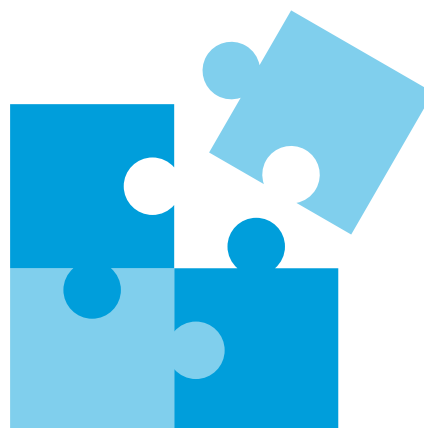
3. **Group discussion (20 minutes):** Break the participants into small groups to share their identified gaps and proposed actions. This allows for peer-to-peer learning, where participants might share specific portals or industry groups that have worked well for them.
4. **Plenary sharing and resources (20 minutes):** Bring the group together for a final sharing session. Conclude by reviewing **Appendix 9 and 10**, which provide additional guidance and templates for tracking procurement opportunities and building a professional networking log.
5. **Wrap-up:** Remind participants of the module's core mantra: **Visibility increases opportunities**. Building a network is an intentional business activity that directly correlates to contract wins.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 5
- **Appendix 7:** Visibility & market access self-assessment (in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 8:** Access to information & networks guide (reference document in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 9:** International platforms and resources (reference document in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 10:** Networking mapping template (reference document in Participant Hand-outs).

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FROM MODULE 5

- Access to procurement opportunities depends heavily on access to networks and information.
- Women entrepreneurs face structural visibility gaps that keep them outside of buyer awareness.
- Because buyers often rely on known suppliers, being outside these networks is a significant hurdle.
- Networks can be built intentionally to improve a business's visibility to decision-makers.
- Increased visibility directly correlates to increased opportunities for winning contracts.



MODULE 6

**NAVIGATING
SOCIOCULTURAL
BARRIERS**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand what sociocultural barriers are.
- Understand how they influence legal, financial and institutional systems and market behaviour.
- Recognize how they affect business performance.
- Identify strategies to manage and mitigate these barriers.

DURATION:

120 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

Lecture

Sociocultural barriers are deeply rooted in social norms, gender roles, and long-standing expectations regarding the roles of women and men in society. It is critical for trainers to emphasize that these barriers are **structural and interconnected** rather than individual failures. They are embedded in the very fabric of social structures, institutions and policies. Because markets are not gender-neutral, these norms influence everything from a woman entrepreneur's access to finance and networks to her negotiation power and the way her business risk is perceived by potential buyers. Even when an individual entrepreneur is highly capable and prepared, these systemic barriers can persist, shaping what opportunities are considered possible or "appropriate" for her business.

These norms do not exist in a vacuum; they flow "upstream" to influence legal, financial and institutional systems, creating reinforcing cycles that limit business growth. For example, the social norm that men are primary asset-holders often results in inheritance laws that favour men, which in turn means women lack the fixed-asset collateral (like land) required by financial systems for business loans. In the procurement world, this manifests as **institutional bias**, where "serious" suppliers



are stereotyped as large, male-dominated firms, leading to procurement designs – such as massive bundled contracts – that unintentionally lock out women-owned SMEs. Furthermore, market behaviour is affected by **authority and credibility bias**, where women may face harder negotiations or be perceived as less technically competent in certain sectors, forcing them to underprice their services or settle for lower-risk contracts.

Key components of the module include:

- **Defining sociocultural norms:** Understanding how societal expectations shape the rules of the game for women entrepreneurs.
- **Key barriers:** Exploring specific obstacles such as gender stereotypes, unpaid care responsibilities ("time poverty"), restricted mobility and sector segregation.
- **Systemic influence:** Analysing how norms formalize into legal outcomes (property laws), financial outcomes (collateral bias) and institutional outcomes (informal "insider" networks).
- **Market behaviour and perceptions:** Recognizing how gender stereotypes lead to trust gaps, reduced bargaining power and the "secondary earner" bias.
- **Impact on business growth:** Understanding how these factors force women into lower-margin sectors or limit their time for strategic networking and expansion.

EXERCISE: FROM BARRIER TO ACTION

Duration: 45 minutes

Objective: To identify which sociocultural barriers affect participants' businesses most and develop practical, strategic actions to navigate or mitigate them.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Individual reflection (10 minutes):** Instruct participants to read **Appendix 11** individually. Ask them to identify and choose 2–3 specific sociocultural barriers that have the most significant impact on their own business.
2. **Small group strategy session (30 minutes):** Break the participants into small groups. Task each group with the following:
 - › Select **2–3 common barriers** identified by the group members.
 - › Complete **Appendix 12** by discussing how these barriers manifest in their local context.
3. **Plenary reporting (5 minutes):** Have a representative from each group share their most impactful barrier and one strategy they discussed.
4. **Wrap-up:** Conclude by reinforcing that while these barriers are structural, entrepreneurs can strengthen their ability to navigate them through visibility and strategic action. Remind them of the three ways to break these cycles: embracing open-mindedness, engaging the community and trusting in the power of education.

KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FROM MODULE 6

- Sociocultural barriers are structural and interconnected across different systems, including legal and financial ones.
- These challenges are results of societal norms and should not be viewed as individual failures.
- Understanding how these norms impact systems allows entrepreneurs to develop strategic responses.
- Overcoming these barriers often requires both individual business strategies and broader ecosystem changes.
- Gender norms influence market behaviour, negotiation power and how credibility is perceived by buyers.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 6
- **Appendix 11:** Strategies and practical actions guide (reference document in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 12:** Addressing sociocultural barriers (in Participant Hand-outs).

MODULE 7

**NAVIGATING LAWS,
REGULATIONS AND
POLICIES FOR GRP**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- How international frameworks influence national and corporate procurement policies.
- How national procurement laws and government regulations affect supplier access.
- How procurement policies and supplier diversity initiatives create opportunities.
- How to identify policy entry points and position your business strategically.

DURATION:

85 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

Lecture

Gender-responsive procurement is supported by a **multilayered regulatory ecosystem** that provides the authority for inclusive practices. This framework moves from broad international human rights principles – such as the Beijing Declaration, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and International Labour Organization conventions – down to the specific “fine print” found in national laws and corporate contract clauses. Trainers should explain that while international treaties set the global ethical obligation, the internal **“mini-laws” of an organization**, such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Supplier Codes of Conduct, are what dictate the actual day-to-day behaviour of buyers and determine if administrative barriers are removed.

National laws and corporate policies are the primary mechanisms through which GRP becomes operational. For instance, many countries now utilize **contract lotting**, which involves dividing large contracts into smaller packages so that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) can realistically compete. Additionally, internation-

al standards like the **UN Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs)** and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encourage companies to track their procurement spending with women and adopt supplier diversity targets.

Understanding these legal “triggers” and policy entry points allows a woman entrepreneur to position her business strategically as a preferred partner for buyers who are legally or ethically required to meet inclusion targets.

Key components of the module include:

- **The levels of GRP law:** Understanding how authority flows from international treaties to regional acts, standards (like ISO 20400), organizational SOPs, and finally, specific contractual clauses.
- **International drivers:** Recognizing how the WEPs (specifically Principle 5) and SDGs (5, 8 and 12) push corporations to seek out women-owned businesses.
- **SME participation tools:** Utilizing national policy measures such as contract lotting, simplified eligibility criteria and targets for SME sourcing.
- **Transparency through e-procurement:** Using national portals (like Kenya’s Integrated Financial Management Information System or Rwanda’s Public Procurement Portal) to find opportunities without relying on informal “insider” networks.
- **Financial protections:** Leveraging prompt payment regulations, which require government buyers to pay suppliers within a set timeframe (e.g., 30 days), to protect cash flow.
- **Supplier development:** Engaging in “meet-the-buyer” events and readiness assessments often mandated by government or donor-funded projects.

EXERCISE: UNLOCKING PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Duration: 30 minutes

Objective: To identify how specific policies and regulatory frameworks create concrete procurement opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

Step-by-step instructions:

1. **Small group discussion (20 minutes):** Break the participants into small groups. Provide them with **Appendix 14** from their handbook. Ask the groups to discuss the following:
Current discovery methods: How do you currently find procurement opportunities? (e.g., portals, word of mouth, newspapers).
 - › **Policy identification:** Based on the lecture, which policy tools (like contract lotting or SME targets) have you seen in practice, or which ones could you leverage?
 - › **Strategic positioning:** How can you use your knowledge of a buyer's diversity targets (like the WEPs or national SME laws) to approach them more effectively?
2. **Plenary reporting (10 minutes):** Bring the groups back together. Have a representative from each group share their findings. As the trainer, highlight the importance of **moving from informal discovery to systemic tracking** of opportunities through official portals and policy entry points.
3. **Wrap-up:** Conclude by reinforcing that knowledge of procurement policies is a **competitive advantage**. When an entrepreneur understands the rules the buyer must follow, they can better articulate why their women-owned business is the right choice to help that buyer meet their legal and policy obligations.



KEY TAKEAWAY MESSAGES FROM MODULE 7

- Legal frameworks have a direct impact on both public and private procurement policies and practices.
- Women entrepreneurs can strategically use their position within procurement systems to identify and secure opportunities.
- Possessing a thorough knowledge of procurement policies and practices serves as a distinct competitive advantage for a business.
- International frameworks, such as the WEPs and the SDGs, act as high-level drivers that encourage governments and corporations to adopt gender equality targets in their supply chains.
- National laws are the primary mechanism for making GRP operational through tools like contract lotting, simplified eligibility criteria, and specific SME participation targets.
- The transition to e-procurement systems and online portals reduces the reliance on informal "insider" networks and provides more transparent access to tender information.
- Prompt payment regulations, which often require government buyers to pay suppliers within 30 days, are essential for protecting the cash flow of women-owned SMEs.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 7
- **Appendix 13:** Procurement opportunities guide (reference document in Participant Hand-outs)
- **Appendix 14:** GRP buyer assessment checklist (in Participant Hand-outs)

Associated appendices:

Appendix 13: Procurement opportunities guide (ref.doc.)

Appendix 14: GRP buyer assessment checklist.

MODULE 8

**WORKING,
QUESTIONING AND
CLOSING**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Allow time for parts of the training that required more time than anticipated.
- Give participants an opportunity to revisit the appendices and ask questions.
- Discuss follow-up needs.
- Test the knowledge accrued during the training.

DURATION:

120 minutes

PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

I. Review and questions (75 minutes)

Trainers should ensure participants have understood the materials shared in former modules and allow time for participants to revisit the appendices and complete the template appendices as much as possible. In case any topics were “parked” during former modules, this timeslot can be used to discuss them and answer any questions related to former modules.

II. Written evaluation (10 minutes)

The trainers should allocate time for participants to complete the **Training Evaluation Form (Appendix 15)**. This step is vital for assessing whether the learning objectives were achieved and provides the data necessary to modify and improve future workshops based on participant feedback regarding content, methodology and the trainers’ performance. The trainers should emphasize that honest feedback is appreciated to ensure the training remains a high-quality tool for promoting GRP.

III. Plenary session: Intentions and related needs (15 minutes)

Following the written assessment, the trainers facilitate a plenary session where each participant is given **one minute to share their intentions and related needs**. This session allows the women entrepreneurs to identify specific areas where they

want to make next steps and what technical assistance or guidance they require to implement their newly developed plans. The trainers must ensure these intentions and needs are formally recorded – either through detailed notes or audio recording – to inform follow-up support and ensure the “GRP journey” continues beyond the classroom.

IV. Acknowledgments and farewell (5 minutes)

The trainers conclude the programme by formally thanking the participants for their active engagement. The trainers must acknowledge UN Women and the programme sponsors, whose support was essential for the manual’s development and the delivery of the training. Finally, the trainers invite all attendees to an informal get-together at a designated venue and time to celebrate the completion of the course and foster further professional networking.

MATERIALS:

- Slides Module 8
- Quiz hand-out
- **Appendix 15:** Training Evaluation Form.



GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Access to markets	The ability of women enterprises to equally participate in and benefit from market opportunities, including procurement and value chains.
Assets	Anything that can be owned or controlled to produce value and that is held by an economic entity and that could produce positive economic value.
Behavioural barriers	Psychological obstacles arising from individual beliefs, social norms and cultural perceptions. They can manifest as internal challenges or responses to external pressures from others in the entrepreneurial environment.
Buyer	An organization or entity that procures services, goods and civil works from suppliers.
Capacity-building	Activities that strengthen the skills, knowledge, and systems of women entrepreneurs to compete and perform in markets and procurement.
Contract lotting	When large contracts are divided into smaller packages, so that smaller suppliers can compete. This practice improves the participation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.
Contract terms	The conditions governing rights and obligations of buyers and suppliers, including payment, risk allocation and performance requirements.
Contracting authority	An entity, such as a government or public law body, that awards a public procurement contract.
Economic empowerment	A transformative, collective process through which economic systems become just, equitable, and prosperous, and all women enjoy their economic and social rights.
Equality in procurement	A traditional approach where all suppliers are treated exactly the same, regardless of their different starting points or structural constraints.

Equity in procurement	A strategic approach whereby processes are designed intentionally so that suppliers facing different structural constraints can participate fairly and have an equal opportunity to compete.
Gender equality	This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.
Gender equity	The process of ensuring fairness by providing support and resources that account for the different needs of various genders.
Gender norms	Gender norms are ideas about how men and women should be and act. People internalize and learn these "rules" early in life. This sets-up a life cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping. Put another way, gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms, within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time.
Gender-responsive business practices	Corporate practices, such as equal pay for work of equal value and flexible working, that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
Gender-responsive enterprise or business	A gender-responsive enterprise would meet rigorous criteria for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment principles in policies and practices in the workplace, marketplace and community to have systemic impacts.
Gender-responsive procurement	The sustainable selection of goods, services and civil works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. GRP requires a gender lens in all phases of the procurement cycle, including planning, tendering, evaluation and contract management.
Incumbent supplier	An established supplier that currently holds a contract or dominates a particular market or industry. They are often the default choice for a buyer, which can create a barrier for new entrants.

Inclusive sourcing	Procurement approaches that intentionally include underrepresented suppliers, including women-owned and led businesses, in supply chains.
Intersectionality	An analytical framework which recognizes that people's multiple identities – such as race, ethnicity, class, location and age – interact to create unique patterns of discrimination and privilege.
Market access	The opportunity for enterprises to enter and compete in markets, including public and private procurement systems.
Networking	Building professional relationships that enable access to information, opportunities, markets and resources.
Prequalification	The stage where buyers assess whether suppliers meet minimum requirements, such as through vendor registration or databases, before tenders are released.
Prime supplier	The company is directly contracted by the buyer and responsible for delivering the contract.
Private buyer	A company regulated by private law that acquires goods, services or works.
Procurement	The act of acquiring goods, services or civil works by private companies or public contracting authorities.
Procurement aggregation	When large organizations combine all their purchasing needs into one huge contract to save money, often making it harder for MSMEs and women enterprises to compete.
Procurement cycle	The stages through which procurement is planned, suppliers are selected, contracts are awarded and performance is managed.
Prompt payment regulations	Rules that require government buyers to pay suppliers within a specific timeframe, such as 30 days, to improve cash flow for smaller businesses.
Public buyer	A public entity regulated by public law engaged in acquiring goods, services or works.
Reserved (set-aside) procurement	Contracts or categories that are restricted exclusively to women entrepreneurs or diverse suppliers to create easier entry points.

Sustainable Development Goals	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development , adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030.
Supplier	Any company or individual contracted to provide goods, services or civil works to a buyer.
Supplier diversity	Procurement policies and practices that intentionally increase the participation of underrepresented groups, including women-owned businesses, in supply chains.
Supplier readiness	The extent to which a business meets buyer requirements to participate in procurement opportunities.
Supply chains	The direct sequence of activities, from the buyer's perspective, required to produce goods.
Tier 1 suppliers	Suppliers directly contracted by a buying business.
Tier 2 suppliers	Indirect suppliers who are contracted by the buyer's Tier 1 suppliers.
Tier-2 sourcing (subcontracting)	A practice where large prime contractors are required to source a portion of their goods or services from women entrepreneurs as subcontractors.
Time poverty	An expression to denote women's larger share of unpaid care and domestic work, resulting in limited time for other activities such as networking, travel or strategic business expansion.
Value chain	The full range of activities for a product or service, from conception and delivery to final disposal.
Visibility	The extent to which a business is known and recognized by buyers and the market.
Women's Empowerment Principles	The WEPs are a set of seven actionable principles established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact that offer businesses guidance on how to advance gender equality and empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Woman entrepreneur	A woman founder who initiates, organizes and operates a business enterprise.
Women's enterprises	While definitions vary, women enterprises are often classified as businesses that are at least 51 per cent owned, managed and controlled by one or more women.
Woman-led enterprise	While definitions vary, a woman-led enterprise is often classified as a legal entity that has a minimum of 50 per cent women-identified representation in management with senior-level strategic decision-making abilities.
Women-owned business	While definitions vary, a woman-owned business is often classified as a legal entity that is at least 51 per cent owned and unconditionally controlled by one or more women, and which is independent from non-women-owned businesses.
Women's economic empowerment	Women's economic empowerment is a transformative, collective process through which economic systems become just, equitable and prosperous, and all women enjoy their economic and social rights, exercise agency and power in ways that challenge inequalities and level the playing field, and gain equal rights and access to, ownership of and control over resources, assets, income, time and their own lives.
Women's empowerment	The empowerment of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. This implies that to be empowered they must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions).

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

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QUIZES FOR PARTICIPANTS

MODULE 2: INTRODUCTION TO GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT

1. According to the UN Women definition used in the sources, what is GRP?

- a) A capacity-building programme for women-led and women-owned businesses.
- b) A policy that automatically awards a certain percentage of government contracts to women.
- c) **The sustainable selection of goods and services that considers the impact on gender equality.**
- d) A procurement policy that favours women-led and women-owned businesses.

2. What percentage of global public procurement awards currently go to women entrepreneurs?

- a) Approximately 25%.
- b) Around 10%.
- c) **Approximately 1%.**
- d) Less than 0.1%.

3. How does “equity” differ from “equality” in a procurement context?

- a) Equality allows for preferences; equity treats everyone exactly the same.
- b) **Equity involves designing processes so suppliers with structural constraints can participate fairly; equality treats all the same regardless of their starting point.**

- c) Equity is more for private companies; equality is more for government buying.
- d) There is no functional difference between the two terms.

MODULE 3: NAVIGATING PROCUREMENT PROCESS BARRIERS

4. At what point in the procurement cycle do barriers for women entrepreneurs typically emerge?

- a) During the final payment phase.
- b) When submitting the official bid.
- c) **At every stage, from the initial definition of needs to final contract performance.**
- d) During the prequalification phase.

5. What is “procurement aggregation” and how does it impact smaller businesses?

- a) It is the process of splitting large contracts into small lots, which often disadvantages smaller firms.
- b) **It is the bundling of multiple needs into one massive contract, which often disadvantages smaller firms.**
- c) It is a database used to aggregate diverse suppliers.
- d) It is a long-term contract with one supplier, aggregating various recurring services or products.

6. Which of the following is identified as a barrier during the “supplier identification” phase?

- a) High turnover thresholds.
- b) **Reliance on closed supplier lists or known vendors.**
- c) Late payments from the buyer.
- d) Unbalanced liability clauses in the contract.

MODULE 4: NAVIGATING FINANCIAL BARRIERS

7. What does research indicate about the rate of non-performing loans for female borrowers compared to males?

- a) It is significantly higher.
- b) It is exactly the same.
- c) **It is 53% lower.**
- d) It is 13% higher.

8. Why is “limited collateral” a common structural barrier for women entrepreneurs?

- a) Women are statistically less likely to own a business bank account.
- b) **Unequal property and inheritance laws often limit women’s access to fixed assets like land.**
- c) Banks regard women’s property as less valuable collateral than men’s property.
- d) Women-owned businesses are typically less profitable and therefore property is not accepted as collateral.

9. Even after a contract is won, what is the most critical factor for business survival?

- a) Having paperwork in order to demonstrate financial health.
- b) **Effective cash flow management to survive payment delays.**

- c) Administering staff to follow-up with contract requirements.
- d) Changing contract terms and conditions.

MODULE 5: NAVIGATING THE GAP IN INFORMATION AND NETWORKS

10. Why do businesses that remain outside established networks struggle to access opportunities?

- a) They lack the basic education required for bidding.
- b) **Buyers frequently rely on existing supplier networks, supplier portals or referrals when identifying potential suppliers. Networking is required before a bid can be submitted.**
- d) High tender fees create barriers to access tender documents.

11. How is the “visibility gap” defined?

- a) A lack of clear signage on the front of a business office.
- b) **Low market presence leading to lack of buyer trust and few invitations to bid.**
- c) The absence of a company’s social media profile.
- d) The inability to see tender notices in local newspapers.

12. What is the recommended technical action to improve visibility to major buyers?

- a) Running a social media advertising campaign.
- b) **Registering on government and corporate supplier portals.**
- c) Hiring a third-party sales broker.
- d) Sending physical brochures to local businesses.

MODULE 6: NAVIGATING SOCIOCULTURAL BARRIERS

13. What does it mean for a barrier to be structural in a sociocultural context?

- a) It refers to the physical design of a workplace.
- b) **It is embedded in societal norms, institutions and systems in ways that consistently disadvantage certain groups, regardless of capability.**
- c) It is a temporary challenge that goes away with more education.
- d) It applies to businesses in the construction sector.

14. How is time poverty described as a barrier for women entrepreneurs?

- a) A lack of time-management.
- b) **Unequal unpaid care and domestic responsibilities.**
- c) The short duration of most government contracts.
- d) The time it takes for a bank to process a loan application.

15. How does gender-based “competence bias” manifest in the market?

- a) Women are given lower prices because they are less trusted.
- b) **Women are perceived as less capable or credible.**
- c) Buyers prefer women-owned firms for technical engineering tasks.
- d) It has no measurable impact on the selection of suppliers.

MODULE 7: NAVIGATING LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES FOR GRP

16. At the organizational level, what is the key trigger that turns high-level policy into daily habits for buyers?

- a) International treaties.
- b) Regional directives.
- c) **Standard operating procedures and manuals.**
- d) Specific contractual clauses.

17. What is the primary impact of contract lotting in national procurement policies?

- a) It combines all small needs into one massive, efficient contract.
- b) **It divides large contracts into smaller lots so SMEs can compete.**
- c) It randomizes which supplier wins a contract to ensure fairness.
- d) It increases the insurance requirements for suppliers.

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