

PARTICIPANT HAND-OUTS:

GENDER-RESPONSIVE
PROCUREMENT (GRP)
FOR COMPANIES



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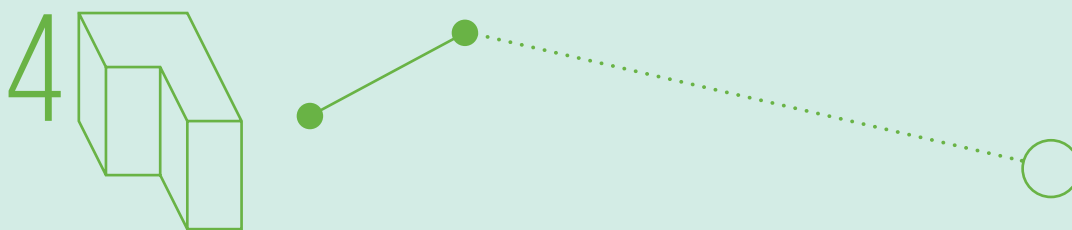
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IMPLEMENTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT IN YOUR BUSINESS

**Training Manual for Gender-Responsive
Procurement in the Private Sector**

PARTICIPANT HAND-OUTS



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Explanatory note: This document serves as 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 of companies implementing GRP. The hand-outs mirror the Trainers' Toolkit in structure. Each of the nine modules in the Trainers' Toolkit is complemented by a section in the hand-outs. The appendixes are to be used during the training, so these should be printed for each participant.

MODULE



SAFETY, INTRODUCTIONS & EXPECTATIONS

This module is for training purposes only.

Participants are asked to share their name, company name and specific function within their company. Also, participants may state their expectations for the training, and if relevant, to share a special skill regarding women's empowerment.

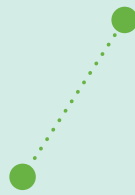
MODULE



INTRODUCTION TO GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT (GRP)

The information contained in this section corresponds to
Module 2 of the Trainers' Toolkit.





INTRODUCTION

Gender-responsive procurement is defined as the sustainable selection of goods, services and works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. This practice requires the application of a gender lens across the entire procurement cycle and on employment and working conditions. By buying in ways that promote gender equality – during the stages of planning, tendering, evaluation and contract management – companies can help remove structural barriers for women in the supply chain without lowering quality or increasing unnecessary costs. In the procurement process, clear and lawful steps – such as inclusive market outreach and objective evaluation – are used to create an inclusive market while ensuring the company continues to receive the best value for money.

WHY GRP?

It is important to acknowledge that markets are not gender-neutral. Gender inequality shows up in the different starting positions of women and men in business, shaped by social norms, institutional practices and long-standing patterns of exclusion. Women entrepreneurs often face structural constraints that affect how they can participate in procurement: less access to finance and collateral, weaker business networks and buyer connections, lower visibility in supplier databases and the ongoing reality that women carry a larger share of unpaid care responsibilities. These factors influence business scale and growth. The result is not lower capability, but unequal conditions.

These inequalities are often compounded by intersectional factors such as race, ethnicity, class, location, disability or age, which can further shape women's access to assets, markets and opportunities. For example, women entrepreneurs in rural areas, from marginalized ethnic groups, or operating in the informal economy typically face additional barriers to formal procurement markets and business networks. Intersectionality therefore helps explain why some women entrepreneurs are even less visible or connected than others, and why a one-size-fits-all view of "women suppliers" misses important differences in economic reality. Gender discrimination arises when procurement policies or practices, even if they appear neutral, end up excluding or disadvantaging suppliers because of gendered realities in the market.

GRP is about removing structural barriers and ensuring equal opportunities to compete, not about lowering standards or awarding contracts based on gender. Procurement already shapes markets through its requirements (e.g., turnover thresholds, contract sizes, qualification criteria). If these requirements unintentionally exclude certain groups because of known structural inequalities, adjusting them to enable fair participation is not discrimination; it is correcting bias in access to opportunity. The core procurement principles – value for money, quality, risk management, competition – remain unchanged.



Treating all suppliers identically (equality) assumes a level playing field that does not exist in most markets. Equity recognizes different starting conditions and seeks to ensure that capable suppliers can realistically compete. Many standard procurement practices already apply equity logic without controversy – for example, small and medium enterprise (SME)-friendly lotting, local supplier development, or payment terms adapted to supplier cash flow. GRP uses the same rationale: broadening the supplier base to improve competition and resilience. From a legal and policy perspective, addressing documented market barriers faced by women entrepreneurs is generally framed as expanding fair access, not as discriminatory preference. GRP does not change who wins contracts; it changes who gets a fair chance to compete.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Participants should be aware that while the following definitions are based on UN Women standards, they may differ depending on the specific country or region of operation. Establishing clear, localized definitions is crucial for ensuring consistency, accountability and effective data collection during the implementation of GRP. Some key definitions are listed below. Others can be found in the Glossary section.

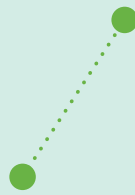
Gender equality: Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys.

Gender equity: Refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. This may involve the use of temporary special measures to achieve ultimate equality.

Gender-responsive business: A business that integrates gender equality and women's empowerment across its workplace, marketplace and community. This includes working towards gender balance in leadership, closing pay gaps, embedding fair recruitment practices, and supporting women throughout the value chain.

Women-led business: A legal entity in any field that has a minimum of 50 per cent women-identified representation in management with senior-level, strategic decision-making abilities.

Women-owned business: A legal entity, that at a minimum: 1) is at least 51 per cent owned by one or more women; 2) is unconditionally controlled by one or more women over both long-term decision-making and the day-to-day management and administration of business operations; and 3) is independent from non-women entrepreneurs.



WHY IS GRP RELEVANT FOR COMPANIES?

GRP is not merely a compliance exercise but it supports a strategic business model that drives innovation and systemic change. There is a strong business case for GRP, as indicated by the following six reasons¹:

1) Increased revenue & reduced procurement spending. GRP can positively impact a company's bottom line by expanding its customer base. Many women entrepreneurs that win contracts as suppliers eventually become customers themselves, creating a circular revenue stream. Additionally, GRP reduces spending by increasing competition within the supplier pool. Broadening the range of potential vendors prevents price stagnation and allows companies to tap into the lower overhead and increased efficiency often found in smaller, more agile firms.

2) Greater supplier availability & resilience. Diversifying the supplier base through GRP mitigates the risk of relying on a dangerously small group of vendors or geographically concentrated production centers. By fostering a more varied and localized group of suppliers, companies are better protected against supply chain disruptions caused by extreme weather, climate change, or global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

3) Stronger brand reputation. Adopting GRP strengthens a brand's standing with customers, investors and employees who increasingly value social responsibility. Since women control a massive and growing portion of global consumer spending, aligning procurement practices with their values fosters deep brand loyalty. Furthermore, a commitment to GRP and ESG values makes a company more attractive to younger talent, specifically Gen Z and Millennials, who prefer working for purpose-led organizations.

4) More innovation & adaptability. Sourcing from a wider range of talent through GRP brings differing perspectives that drive "radical innovation". Smaller, women-owned businesses are often more agile and willing to pivot than long-established, larger firms that may have become complacent.

5) Improved service-delivery. GRP can lead to increases in efficiency, customer service and productivity. Because they are often SMEs, women-owned suppliers may be more eager for business and offer more specialized, personalized service compared to large manufacturers. Furthermore, partnering with gender-responsive enterprises with aligned values fosters closer, high-trust and longer-term working relationships, which ultimately saves time and resources in oversight and capacity-building.

¹ UN Women. 2022b. [Procurement's strategic value: Why gender-responsive procurement makes business sense.](#)



6) Stronger markets through economic development & inclusive growth. Investing in women's entrepreneurship through GRP strengthens the entire economic ecosystem by supporting local labour markets and stimulating growth. Since SMEs create the majority of jobs globally, bringing revenue to women's enterprises helps build a stable, self-supporting market with diverse value chains. Conversely, excluding women's enterprises is a massive opportunity cost. Closing gender gaps in entrepreneurship could potentially boost global GDP by trillions of dollars.

Currently, an equity gap exists in global supply chains; while women own one in three businesses worldwide, they capture less than 1 per cent of large corporate and government supplier spending. Addressing this gap allows companies to act as a lever for gender equality.

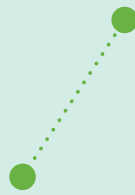
BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FORMAL ECONOMY

Women entrepreneurs face a wide range of barriers in accessing procurement opportunities. Some are structural and lie beyond the direct control of buyers, such as limited access to finance and unequal care responsibilities. Other barriers are created or reinforced by the procurement system itself, including complex and disproportionate qualification requirements, large, bundled contracts that exclude smaller firms, short bidding timelines, lack of transparency in evaluation, long payment terms and gender-blind contract conditions. While structural inequalities also require wider policy and financial reforms, procurement can also influence these structural barriers.

This training focuses on understanding the barriers and needs of women entrepreneurs and the practical changes buyers can make by applying a gender lens to procurement planning, tender design, evaluation, contracting and supplier management – for example, simplifying requirements, unbundling contracts, introducing prompt payment, using inclusive evaluation criteria and embedding gender-responsive clauses – so that procurement processes actively support fair access and women's economic participation.

To add a gender lens to procurement, it is essential to understand the obstacles women face. Women entrepreneurs tend to be smaller than those run by men and have lower average growth rates and revenues. One primary barrier is access to finance, as women often lack collateral or face unfounded beliefs from financial institutions that they are high-risk borrowers.

Other significant barriers include limited access to human capital, such as disparities in education and professional experience, and restricted access to social capital, which includes formal business networking and connections. Furthermore, institutional laws and regulations can unintentionally block women; for example, if banking laws require land ownership for loans, or inheritance laws that favour men prevent women from registering companies or buying equipment. Finally, social and cultural inequities, such as the disproportionate burden of family responsibilities and stereotypical beliefs about women's capabilities, continue to impact women's participation in the formal economy.



STRATEGIC ENTRY POINTS FOR GRP

The landscape of GRP depends on four primary factors that serve as entry points for change. First, institutions must establish formal legal and institutional frameworks, which include adopting inclusive policies and mandates in the private sector. Second, partnerships are vital; companies should collaborate with women entrepreneurs, financial institutions and business associations to create an enabling environment. Third, evidence (data) is required to support the case for GRP by mapping women's businesses and identifying supply-side barriers. Finally, capacity must be built on two levels: strengthening the procurement organizations' management and staff and providing training to women's enterprises on business practices and corporate supply chains.

INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Gender-responsive procurement is supported by a strong set of international, regional and national frameworks that translate gender equality from a principle into concrete economic practice.

At the international level, human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions on non-discrimination, equal pay for work of equal value and workplace violence, and global commitments like the Beijing Platform for Action establish women's equal economic participation as a legal obligation.

Regional frameworks, including European Union (EU) procurement directives and African and regional trade protocols, provide legal space for integrating gender and social criteria into procurement without breaching competition rules.

At the national level, governments operationalize these commitments through procurement laws, preferential policies, quotas, evaluation criteria and contract conditions that promote women entrepreneurs and gender-responsive business practices.

Voluntary global standards – such as the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs); UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards; and environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting regimes – further guide companies on how to implement GRP in practice, creating a coherent policy environment that enables and incentivizes inclusive procurement across public and private sectors.

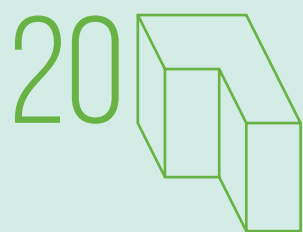
Annex 1 outlines the multilayered legal and policy landscape that supports GRP, ranging from global mandates to practical private-sector tools.

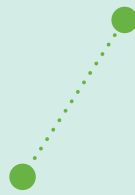
MODULE



LEADERSHIP AND POLICY

The information contained in this section corresponds to Module 3 of the Trainers' Toolkit.





INTRODUCTION

Leadership commitment and the alignment of corporate policies to drive gender-responsive procurement (GRP) is considered the first essential step of a company's GRP journey, which eventually spans multiple practical implementation areas including supplier assessment, engagement, procurement processes, contract management and monitoring. For a company to successfully embark on this journey, it must evaluate several core elements, primarily focusing on how leadership can champion the cause and how existing policies can be aligned with gender-equality objectives.

THE STRATEGIC GRP JOURNEY

Establishing a foundation for GRP requires a structured approach driven by high-level management. The journey begins with four specific leadership and policy actions. First, a company must develop a business case that explicitly links GRP to its core corporate goals. Second, it is necessary to assign an executive champion, such as a Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO), to act as a sponsor for the initiative. Third, the company should convert its intent into a short policy statement that can be communicated both internally to staff and externally to the public and potential suppliers. Finally, an implementation plan must be developed, which should include two to three measurable targets, such as data coverage, participation funnels or specific spending targets.

ASSESSING MATURITY AND ESTABLISHING A BASELINE

To understand the current status of GRP within an organization, companies are encouraged to perform a self-assessment to identify their maturity level and priority gaps. The **WEPs GRP Assessment Tool** (Appendix 2) provides a structured questionnaire that evaluates a company across five key domains:

1. Gender equality commitment
2. Procurement policy and strategy
3. Internal procurement and supply chain management department
4. Supplier database and data reporting
5. Supplier engagement and diversification



The WEPs GRP Assessment Tool helps companies understand how far they have progressed in integrating gender-responsive procurement into their policies, systems and practices. It consists of 31 questions across the five key domains. Each question carries a score, with a total possible score of 78. Higher scores indicate that GRP is more systematically embedded in the organization.

The total score places your company in one of four maturity levels. **Beginner (0–20)** indicates that few or no GRP initiatives are in place. **Improver (21–40)** suggests that some GRP elements exist or are being developed. **Achiever (41–50)** means that policies and systems are largely in place, though results may not yet be visible. **Leader (51–78)** reflects that GRP is fully integrated into procurement practice and supported by measurable outcomes. The scoring is intended as a diagnostic tool to identify strengths, gaps and priority actions for advancing gender-responsive procurement.

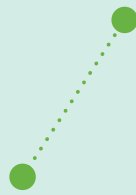
DEVELOPING A GRP POLICY

A GRP policy sets the rules and expectations. It states that the organization commits to gender equality in procurement and defines principles (non-discrimination, inclusion of women entrepreneurs, fair payment, safe workplaces). It provides the mandate for procurement teams to apply gender-responsive practices and ensures that GRP is embedded within broader organizational values, governance and sustainability objectives. A policy sets the commitment, principles and governance framework – including who is accountable for what and the GRP implementation plan then details the concrete tasks, timelines and operational steps.

THE GRP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND INDICATORS

The GRP strategy defines the organization's overall approach to integrating gender equality into procurement, including the key objectives and priority areas for change across the procurement cycle. The GRP implementation plan translates this strategy into practical action by setting out specific activities, responsibilities, timelines and performance indicators. While the strategy provides direction, the implementation plan provides the operational road map that ensures gender-responsive procurement is applied consistently in everyday procurement practice.

Based on the WEPs GRP Assessment Tool, companies understand their gaps and can develop the GRP implementation plan and feasible strategic actions across six implementation pillars: leadership and policy, supplier assessment, supplier engagement, procurement processes, contract management, and monitoring and evaluation. Participants utilize the **GRP Implementation Plan Template** (Appendix 3) and the **GRP Indicators Guide** (Appendix 4) to ensure strategic objectives are set and linked to potential high-level indicators.

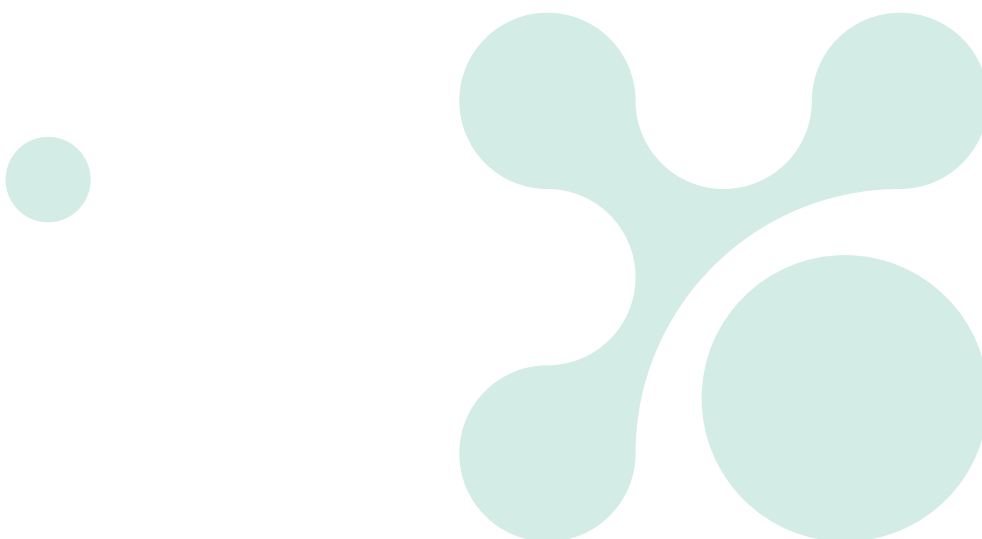


It is recommended that companies keep their initial objectives feasible. When first working with indicators, organizations should start with high-level goals – such as “establishing a GRP policy by the end of 20xx” – before moving into the granular details of procurement process indicators. Strategic actions in the implementation plan should be chosen based on what is most feasible to organize within the first year.

For companies that need an early signal of commitment from leadership before a full policy is finalized, a pragmatic tip is to issue a one-page intent statement. This statement, which should include principles and the name of the executive sponsor, provides immediate direction and can be replaced by a full, detailed policy after the gap analysis and target-setting process is completed.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING PROGRESS

A successful GRP strategy requires both ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluation. Monitoring focuses on tracking whether GRP actions are being implemented as planned and whether procurement processes are changing in practice, such as the use of gender criteria in tenders, improved payment terms or the increased participation of women entrepreneurs. Evaluation goes a step further by assessing whether these changes are effectively reducing barriers and leading to meaningful outcomes, such as greater access to contracts for women entrepreneurs, improved working conditions and stronger economic empowerment. Together, monitoring and evaluation ensure that GRP policies move beyond intention to deliver real, measurable impact.

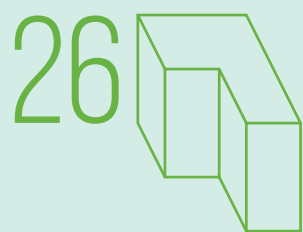


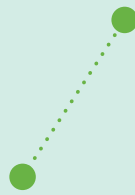
MODULE



SUPPLIER ASSESSMENT

The information contained in this section corresponds to Module 4 of the Trainers' Toolkit.





INTRODUCTION

The collection of gender-disaggregated supplier data is a continuous process integrated across the entire procurement life cycle rather than a one-time event. Building on the strategic objectives and indicators identified in previous stages, this module focuses on understanding why this data is essential for a company's success. By utilizing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, companies can gain a comprehensive understanding of supplier diversity and the actual impacts of their procurement decisions on the ground.

WHAT IS SUPPLIER ASSESSMENT IN GRP?

A supplier assessment is the structured way a buyer gathers, verifies and reviews supplier information through a gender lens to decide which enterprises can compete, win and perform. This process is applied at various stages, including pre-qualification, onboarding or as part of ongoing due diligence. The goal is to identify women entrepreneurs, and gender-responsive suppliers without compromising legal neutrality or value-for-money. By focusing on areas such as ownership, leadership, workforce composition and internal policies, a company can update its diversity database and ensure its sourcing is truly inclusive. The **Supplier Assessment Template** (Appendix 5) helps companies to assess suppliers in a structured way.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA

For any company committed to GRP, collecting sex-disaggregated data is fundamental to achieving three primary purposes. First, they serve for diagnosis by establishing a clear baseline of the current supplier landscape. The data provide clear insight into where women entrepreneurs or gender-responsive businesses are represented – or missing. Second, data are essential for accountability and measurement. Without specific metrics – such as the percentage of women in leadership or the workforce composition – a company cannot develop a credible GRP Implementation Plan or track necessary key performance indicators (KPIs). Third, data allow for targeted improvement and risk mitigation. By identifying gender gaps in areas like workplace safety, pay equity or exposure to gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment, companies can prioritize their capacity-building efforts and direct resources to areas of the greatest social and business impact.

Sex-disaggregated data also enable companies to be more transparent in their reporting and align with ESG/sustainability standards also leading to increased stakeholder trust through transparent reporting.



METHODS FOR COLLECTING DATA

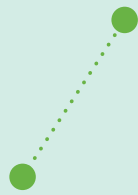
To capture a full picture of the supply chain, companies use a mix of digital tools and direct engagement methods. Supplier assessment questionnaires (SAQs) are standardized forms used during onboarding or pre-qualification where suppliers report quantitative indicators. Many companies also utilize specialized diversity artificial intelligence (AI) software to automate the tracking and categorization of spending with diverse vendors in real-time.

For qualitative insights, companies may employ confidential worker surveys or mobile-based tools that allow women to safely report on working conditions and harassment. Direct interviews and site visits conducted in female-led environments provide deeper understanding of lived experiences. To ensure data integrity, third-party verification is often used to cross-reference supplier claims with established certification bodies like WEConnect or WBENC (Women's Business Enterprise National Council Certification). Furthermore, high-risk or strategic suppliers may be subject to formal financial, technical or social audits to verify labour practices and sustainability.

DATA-GATHERING GUIDELINES: THE RISK-NECESSITY LENS

When collecting supplier data, organizations must be mindful of sensitivities regarding personal and confidential information. Using a “traffic light” risk-necessity lens helps categorize which data are appropriate to collect:

- **Green (generally collectable):** These are organizational facts needed to run GRP that do not identify sensitive personal details. Examples include the supplier's legal name, women enterprise status, certification expiry dates, the presence of anti-harassment policies and payment terms. These enable core KPIs and are typically lawful under “legitimate interests”.
- **Amber (collect with safeguards):** These data can edge towards personal information if too granular, so they should be minimized or de-identified. Examples include banded values for the percentage of women ownership or women on the board, anonymized pay-equity review status and delivery team percentages. Access should be limited, and information should be verified via sample checks rather than intrusive proofs.
- **Red (avoid):** Companies should not collect high-risk personal data that are not needed for GRP. This includes sensitive information such as health status, religion, sexual orientation or national ID numbers, unless legally required. Raw payroll or named salary data should also be avoided as they add risk without improving GRP outcomes.



BEST PRACTICES AND ENFORCEMENT

To ensure success, companies must establish standardized definitions for what constitutes a “woman entrepreneur”, “women enterprise” or “gender-responsive” business to allow for comparability across the supply chain.

Enforcement is managed by making the completion of GRP assessment questionnaires a mandatory requirement during the request for information/proposal/quotation (RFI/RFP/RFQ) stages. A supplier who fails to submit the necessary gender-responsive data may be deemed non-compliant, preventing them from proceeding further in the procurement process.

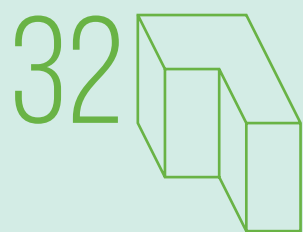


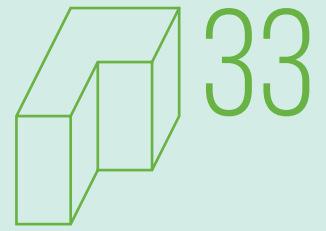
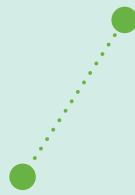
MODULE



SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT

The information contained in this section corresponds to Module 5 of the Trainers' Toolkit.





INTRODUCTION

Supplier engagement refers to the active and ongoing collaboration between buyers and their (potential) suppliers to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment within the supply chain. Rather than treating procurement as a series of isolated transactions, supplier engagement focuses on building strategic partnerships in which expectations are clearly communicated, progress is supported and capacity is strengthened over time. Through engagement, companies can ensure that suppliers not only understand gender-responsive objectives, but also commit to them and develop the skills, systems and resources needed to achieve shared outcomes.

Supplier engagement deliberately covers both current suppliers and potential suppliers, because many women entrepreneurs are excluded before they ever enter the supplier base.

FIVE CORE PILLARS OF SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT

The **Supplier Engagement Guide** (Appendix 6) provides a practical framework for how buyers can work proactively with both existing and potential suppliers to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment through procurement. It moves beyond one-off transactions to focus on building inclusive supplier relationships by identifying new women entrepreneurs, setting clear expectations, incentivizing gender-responsive practices, tracking performance and strengthening supplier capacity over time. Together, these actions help create a more diverse, fair and resilient supply chain while delivering better social and business outcomes, and spur financial assistance and mentorship to strengthen supplier capabilities and inclusion.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT

Clear expectations and ongoing collaboration improve quality, compliance and risk management, while capacity-building investments help suppliers grow into reliable long-term partners. In this way, gender-responsive supplier engagement supports not only equality outcomes but also cost efficiency, continuity of supply and stronger commercial relationships.

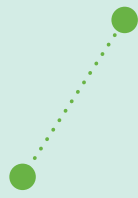


SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT FOR ALL SUPPLIERS

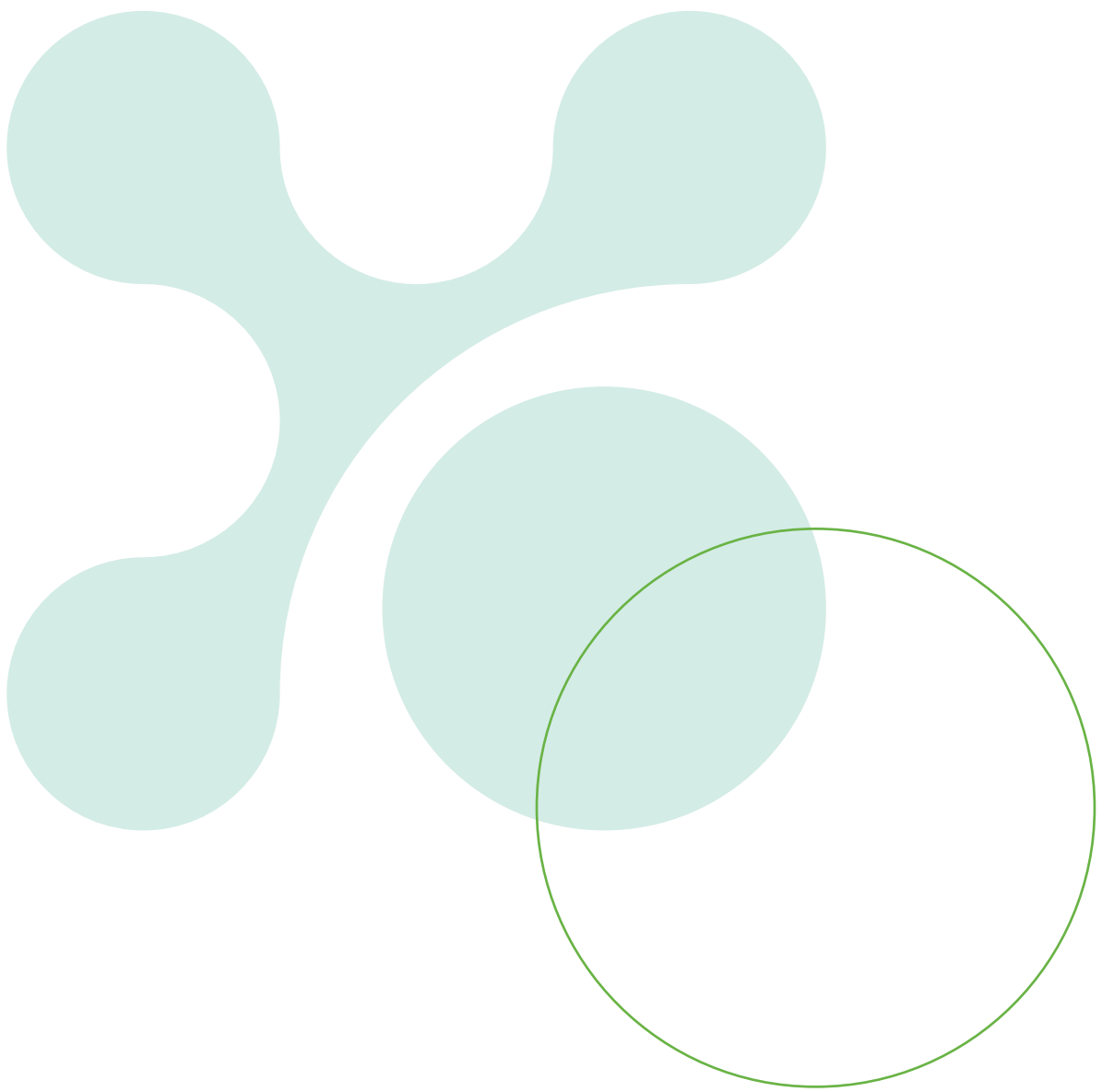
Supplier engagement in a gender-responsive procurement approach covers the full supplier life cycle – from identifying and onboarding new potential suppliers, particularly women entrepreneurs that may be excluded from traditional channels, to working with existing suppliers to improve performance, inclusion and compliance with gender equality standards. Focusing on both groups ensures that procurement not only strengthens current supplier practices but also continuously expands access and opportunity for new and diverse businesses.

The **Supplier Engagement Guide**, Appendix 6, provides the core pillars for engagement.





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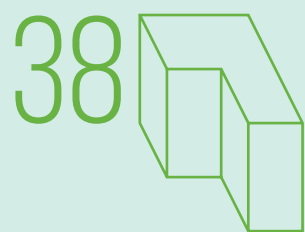


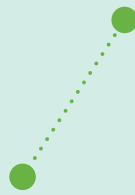
MODULE



PROCUREMENT PROCESSES

The information contained in this section corresponds to Module 6 of the Trainers' Toolkit.





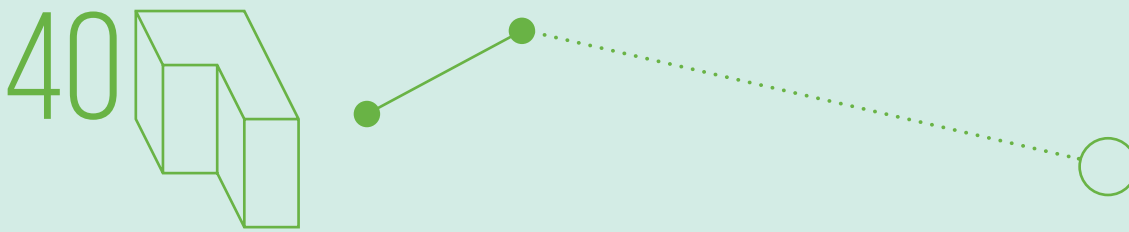
INTRODUCTION

Module 6 focuses on why and how companies should apply a gender lens to their procurement policies and practices. Integrating a gender lens into each stage of the procurement cycle allows organizations to utilize their significant purchasing power to actively advance gender equality and women's empowerment. By identifying and removing structural barriers, companies can move beyond "gender-blind" processes to create a fair and inclusive market that benefits from the innovation and resilience offered by women entrepreneurs and gender-responsive businesses.

BARRIERS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE PROCUREMENT CYCLE

Women entrepreneurs encounter specific structural, social and technical obstacles at every stage of the procurement cycle. These barriers are often rooted in gender biases, a lack of resources and limited access to networks.

- 1. Planning and market analysis:** In this stage the buyer defines what it needs, sets budgets and timelines, and analyses the supplier market. This includes market research, risk assessment and deciding how the contract will be structured (for example whether to bundle or unbundle contracts). Women entrepreneurs often suffer from market invisibility, as they are frequently underrepresented in official supplier databases used for market research. Procurement teams often operate with a "gender-blind" perspective, defaulting to familiar, established suppliers and failing to set proactive diversity targets at the initial stage. Furthermore, information about upcoming opportunities is often shared through informal, male-dominated networks (e.g., "old boys' clubs") that exclude women. Lastly, large, bundled contracts prevent SMEs, including women entrepreneurs, from participating, hence need to be unbundled at this early stage of the procurement process.
- 2. Pre-qualification:** In this stage, potential suppliers are screened to ensure they meet basic legal, financial and technical requirements. This may involve registration in supplier databases, expression of interest processes, or shortlisting. Financial and technical requirements, such as high turnover thresholds or extensive bank guarantees, disproportionately exclude women who may face higher interest rates or lower loan approval rates. Additionally, complex e-procurement portals (registration) and lengthy documentation requirements act as deterrents for smaller enterprises with limited administrative staff.
- 3. Tendering and evaluation:** During the tendering stage, the buyer issues a request for quotation (RFQ), request for proposal (RFP) or tender documents, outlining technical specifications, evaluation criteria and contract terms. Structural barriers include short windows for bid preparation – which affect women balancing business with unpaid care responsibilities – and high bid costs for professional technical proposals. During the evaluation stage, bids are assessed against technical, financial and sometimes social or sustainability criteria, and the contract is



awarded to the selected supplier. The criteria again can form a barrier when they are disproportionate and evaluation committees may also hold unconscious biases, perceiving women-led and/or smaller firms as “riskier” or less capable of handling high-value contracts. Women may also face serious integrity risks, such as demands for bribes or sextortion (sexual favours) in exchange for contract consideration.

4. **Contracting and management:** Women are often facing barriers, even after they win the bid, during the contracting phase – for example, during negotiations or they are perceived as “difficult,” leading them to accept lower profit margins. Small women entrepreneurs frequently lack the “financial cushion” to pay for legal advice or absorb unfair risk allocation or rigid delivery schedules that do not account for interruptions or differing contexts, such as women’s disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. Once a contract is active, delayed payment terms (e.g., 90 days) are corrosive to women entrepreneurs, which typically have lower liquidity to manage operations.

Note: Both the “contracting” as well as “monitoring & evaluation” stages of the procurement process will be covered in Module 7: Contract management and Module 8: Monitoring and evaluation.

APPLYING A GENDER LENS TO PROCUREMENT STAGES

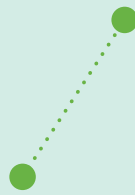
To ensure a fair and inclusive process, companies need to adapt their procurement practices at every stage of the procurement life cycle.

1. Planning and market analysis

Buyers should actively correct market invisibility and avoid gender-neutral procurement design. This includes conducting inclusive market research that goes beyond existing supplier databases by mapping women entrepreneurs through partnerships with women’s business associations, chambers of commerce and development organizations. Buyers should set clear supplier diversity objectives from the outset and ensure upcoming procurement opportunities are widely communicated through open and transparent channels rather than informal networks. Contract structures should be reviewed to assess whether large, bundled contracts can be unbundled into smaller lots that better match the capacity of SMEs and women entrepreneurs, enabling broader participation without compromising quality or value.

2. Pre-qualification

At the pre-qualification stage, buyers can reduce exclusion by reviewing financial and technical requirements to ensure they are proportionate to the size and risk of the contract. Instead of rigid turnover thresholds or high bank guarantees, alternative evidence of capacity – such as phased experience, references or performance on smaller contracts – can be accepted. Registration and documentation processes should be simplified, with clear guidance and user-friendly e-procurement



systems that support first-time and small suppliers. Where possible, buyers can provide onboarding assistance or help desks to support women entrepreneurs in navigating qualification requirements.

3. Tendering and evaluation

To make tendering and evaluation more inclusive, buyers should allow adequate time for bid preparation and clearly communicate procurement timelines in advance. Tender documents should avoid unnecessarily complex language and excessive documentation requirements that increase bid costs. Evaluation criteria should focus on technical quality and value for money rather than company size alone, ensuring that scale is not used as a proxy for capability. Procurement teams and evaluation committees should receive training on unconscious bias and use transparent scoring systems to ensure fair decision-making. Strong integrity mechanisms and safe reporting channels should be in place to prevent corruption, bribery and harassment throughout the tendering process.

4. Contracting and management

During contracting, buyers should apply fair negotiation practices and use clear, plain-language contracts with balanced risk allocation that reflects the actual scope of work. Performance guarantees, liability clauses and delivery schedules should be proportionate and realistic for smaller suppliers. To support cash flow, buyers should introduce prompt payment policies, offer advance or mobilization payments where appropriate and avoid practices that delay invoicing or freeze payments during disputes. Throughout contract management, regular engagement and feedback should be used to address challenges early and ensure suppliers – particularly women entrepreneurs – can deliver successfully and sustainably.

THE GENDER-RESPONSIVE SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT

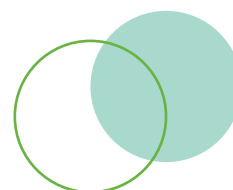
A supplier code of conduct is a key tool for implementing gender-responsive procurement because it clearly sets out the buyer's expectations on fair, inclusive and respectful business practices across the supply chain. By embedding principles such as non-discrimination, equal pay for work of equal value, safe workplaces and zero tolerance for harassment, the code ensures that gender equality is not optional but a condition of doing business. It provides a common standard for all suppliers, supports accountability through monitoring and corrective actions, and helps translate organizational gender commitments into everyday supplier practices. In this way, the supplier code of conduct forms the foundation for consistent, enforceable and sustainable gender-responsive procurement.

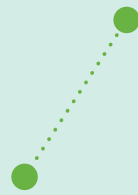


KEY COMPONENTS OF AN “IDEAL” GENDER-RESPONSIVE SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT INCLUDE:

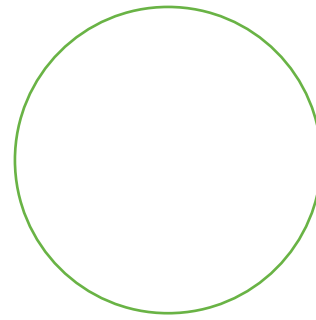
The key gender-responsive components to include are:

- **Non-discrimination/inclusion** (explicitly includes pregnancy, family status, gender identity, etc.)
- **Preventing sexual harassment and gender-based violence** (requires routines for dealing with (sexual) harassment and GBV and states that it must be reported).
- **Health & safety** (maternal health, pregnancy and post-partum-related adjustments, gender-sensitive infrastructure).
- **Decent work** (equal pay for work of equal value, flexible hours, wages/leave/benefits, child-care).
- **Grievance channels and remediation** (available to personnel and interested parties, with remediation processes).
- **Collection/reporting of sex-disaggregated and gender data** refers to collecting or reporting on agreed indicators (e.g. sex-disaggregated workforce data; incidents and remediation; training completion; women in supervisory roles on the contract).
- **Capacity-building** (regular training for managers and workers on non-discrimination, harassment prevention and grievance procedures).
- **Commitment to supplier diversity & growth** (expectations such as non-discrimination in subcontracting, transparent subcontracting opportunities and cooperation with programmes that expand women's participation in the value chain).





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MODULE

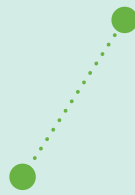


CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The information contained in this section corresponds to Module 7 of the Trainers' Toolkit.

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INTRODUCTION

The contracting stage is where procurement decisions become legally binding and where many barriers for women entrepreneurs either emerge or can be removed. Even when women entrepreneurs successfully win a tender, unfair contract terms – such as long payment periods, high financial guarantees, unbalanced risk allocation or unclear legal language – can undermine their ability to deliver and grow. Exclusion in the contracting stage is not only created by unfair contract clauses or slow, non-transparent and bureaucratic processes. It also arises from power imbalances.

Applying a gender lens in contracting ensures that agreements are fair, proportionate and supportive of inclusive participation by introducing measures such as prompt payment, reasonable security requirements, clear performance expectations and gender-responsive clauses. This transforms contracts from purely legal documents into tools that protect suppliers, promote equality and enable sustainable business success.

A GENDER LENS IN THE CONTRACTING STAGE

A gender-responsive contracting approach ensures that the supplier who wins the contract can realistically deliver without being undermined by cash-flow traps, excessive risk transfer or opaque administration. It pairs fair, predictable processes (fast onboarding, timely approvals, disciplined change control) with fair commercial terms (pay on time, reasonable guarantees, balanced risk), so that women entrepreneurs are not excluded after award and the buyer gets better delivery, stronger supplier performance, and reduced operational and reputational risk.

To evaluate whether a contract clause needs gender-sensitive reform, companies should ask if the clause is strictly necessary, if it disproportionately burdens smaller firms, and if there is a more inclusive way to manage the risk. Key areas for reform include (but are not limited to):

Gender-responsive contract processes

- 1. Time-bound contracting and fast onboarding**
Ensure contracts are signed within defined timelines and suppliers can invoice quickly.
- 2. Fair negotiation framework**
Limit post-award renegotiation and use standard contract templates.
- 3. Prompt and predictable payment processes**
Pay within shorter timelines and avoid freezing full invoices during disputes.
- 4. Accessible onboarding and communication**
Clear guidance on compliance, invoicing and performance expectations.
- 5. Safe escalation and integrity controls**
Channels for reporting harassment, coercion or corruption.



Gender-responsive contract clauses

1. Prompt payment clause

Short payment terms (<30 days, prompt payment and more favourable payment terms are essential to reduce their barriers to participation.)

2. Advance or mobilization payment clause

Support start-up costs where appropriate (e.g., link advances to milestones or simple guarantees).

3. Balanced liability and risk allocation

Caps on liability and insurable obligations. Contract terms are based on actual project risk rather than rigid, one-size-fits-all templates.

4. Fair variation and termination clauses

Compensation for committed costs when changes or early termination occur.

5. Limited set-off and withholding rights

Payments cannot be withheld or reduced beyond clearly defined, proportionate issues directly related to the supplier's performance, ensuring predictable cashflow and reducing financial strain.

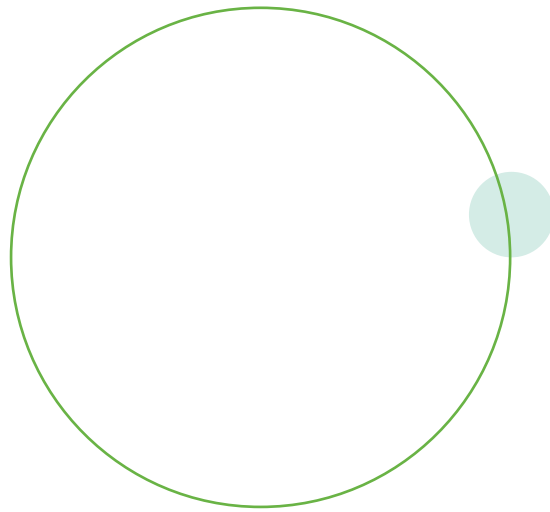
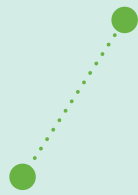
6. Gender-responsive performance clauses

Non-discrimination, safe workplaces, reporting and corrective actions.

How to get there: Align with supplier code of conduct and ESG goals.

Most gender-responsive contracting does not require new systems – it requires revising standard templates, payment rules, approval workflows and staff practices.

Appendix 7, **Gender-responsive contracts checklist** supports this module.



MODULE

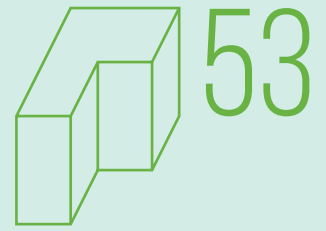
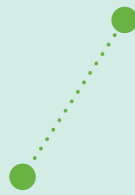


MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The information contained in this section corresponds to Module 8 of the Trainers' Toolkit.

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INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are essential for ensuring that gender-responsive procurement moves beyond policy commitments and leads to real change in practice. Monitoring focuses on tracking whether GRP actions are being implemented across the procurement cycle, such as the use of inclusive tender requirements, gender-responsive contract clauses, supplier engagement activities and timely payments.

Evaluation then assesses whether these actions are effectively reducing barriers and improving outcomes for women entrepreneurs and women workers, including increased access to contracts, fairer working conditions and stronger supplier performance. Together, M&E provide the evidence needed to strengthen accountability, guide continuous improvement and demonstrate the impact of GRP initiatives.

MONITORING COMPANY STATUS ON GRP

To maintain a clear picture of progress, companies are encouraged to perform continuous self-assessments using tools like the WEPS GRP Assessment Tool. This allows the organization to re-evaluate its maturity across five core domains: gender equality commitment, procurement policy and strategy, procurement management department, supplier database and data reporting, and supplier engagement and diversification. Using this tool on a recurring basis helps the company identify if initial priority gaps have been closed and provides an updated baseline for the next cycle of the GRP implementation plan.

PROCESS AND OUTCOME INDICATORS FOR TRACKING

To understand whether GRP is being implemented effectively and delivering real results, organizations need to track a small set of clear, meaningful metrics across the procurement life cycle.

These indicators should measure both changes in procurement practices and the outcomes for women enterprises and women workers. Common process indicators include the percentage of tenders that apply gender-responsive criteria, the number of suppliers that have signed and comply with a gender-responsive supplier code of conduct, the share of contracts that include gender-related clauses, and average payment times to women entrepreneurs or small suppliers.



Outcome indicators focus on outcomes, such as the proportion of total procurement spending awarded to women entrepreneurs, the number and value of contracts won by women entrepreneurs across different sectors, improvements in workforce diversity within supplier companies and the resolution of gender-related grievances. Together, these metrics provide a practical evidence base to identify gaps, guide improvements, and demonstrate how GRP contributes to both equality goals and stronger procurement performance.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

In monitoring GRP, both process and outcome indicators can be quantitative (numbers / measurable data) and qualitative (experience and quality-based information). Using a mix of both provides a more complete picture of how GRP is being implemented and whether it is achieving meaningful outcomes.

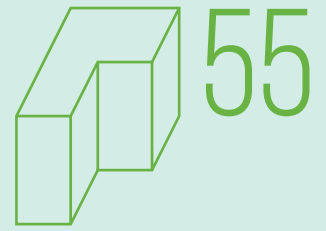
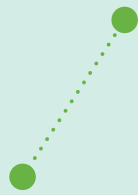
Quantitative process indicators may include the percentage of tenders that apply gender-responsive criteria, the number of suppliers trained on the supplier code of conduct, or the share of contracts that include gender-related clauses. Qualitative process indicators can capture how well these measures are implemented, such as procurement staff confidence in applying GRP tools or supplier feedback on the clarity of expectations.

Quantitative outcome indicators may track results such as the proportion of procurement spending awarded to women entrepreneurs, reductions in payment delays or increases in women's participation in supplier workforces. Qualitative outcome indicators can assess changes in experience and impact, including women entrepreneurs' perceptions of fairness and access, improvements in workplace culture or case examples of strengthened supplier capacity.

REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is a key pillar of GRP, as it builds stakeholder trust and meets the expectations of investors and consumers. Companies should report on their GRP progress and targets through various public channels, including the corporate website, social media outlets, annual sustainability or ESG reports, and formal public statements.

Reporting allows for internal accountability by measuring the performance of procurement officers against their targets for engaging diverse suppliers. It also creates feedback loops through women entrepreneurs' experience surveys, where women-led suppliers can report on their lived experience



regarding a buyer's payment timelines, communication and site safety. For more advanced organizations, digital auditing and real-time tracking using AI and blockchain can be used to verify supplier claims and automatically monitor the validity of diverse certifications.

UPDATING THE GRP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The data gathered during the monitoring and evaluation phase should feed directly back into the company's GRP implementation plan. By reviewing the indicators and the results of the evaluation, participants can refine their strategic actions and set new, more ambitious targets for the following year. This ensures that GRP is treated as a continuous, strategic management process rather than a one-time project.



MODULE



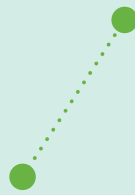
CLOSURE OF THE TRAINING

This module is for training purposes only. Participants are invited to reflect on key learnings from all training modules and identify priority actions.



GLOSSARY

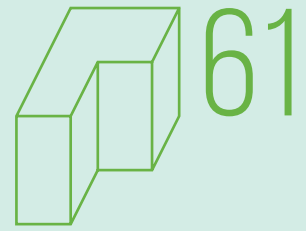
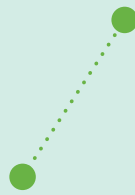
Term	Definition
Award criteria	The standards or factors used to evaluate and compare bids in a procurement process to determine the best overall value.
Best value for money	A procurement principle measuring how well goods or services meet social, environmental and strategic objectives within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.
Bid (performance) bonds	Financial guarantees required by contracts that often act as a barrier to women entrepreneurs due to high collateral requirements.
Bidder	Any entity or individual (public, private or State-owned) bidding in a competitive tender process for a contract.
Contracting authority	An entity, such as a government or public law body, that awards a public procurement contract.
Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE)	Refers to EDGE Global Standards (gender-binary) and EDGEplus (gender and intersectionality) for measuring organizational equity.
ESG	Environmental, social and (corporate) governance.
Gender budgeting	A finance approach that adjusts budget policies to promote gender equality and reallocates resources to reduce gender gaps.
Gender equality	The state where rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on being born male or female, taking into account the priorities of both groups.
Gender equity	The process of ensuring fairness by providing support and resources that account for the different needs of various genders.
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 advancement.
Gender-responsive enterprise or business	An enterprise that integrates gender equality principles in its policies, often complying with WEPs and ILO standards.



Gender-responsive procurement (GRP)	The selection of goods and services that considers the impact on gender equality and leverages purchasing to promote women's empowerment.
Gender washing	A term used by scholars and activists to highlight perceived hypocrisy in the behavior of corporations, states, and international organizations toward women and girls. It is generally used to mean efforts by an organization to portray itself as feminist, progressive, or women and girl friendly, even while it continues to cause harm to women and girls elsewhere in its operations.
Global Reporting Initiative	International standards helping entities communicate their impact on issues like climate change and gender equality.
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise.
NGO	Non-governmental organization, also known as a non-profit.
Private buyer	A company (privately or publicly owned) regulated by private law that acquires goods, services or works.
Procurement	The act of acquiring goods, services or works by private companies or public contracting authorities.
Prompt payment	The practice of paying invoices within 15–30 days to protect the cash flow of smaller women entrepreneurs.
Public buyer	A public entity regulated by public law engaged in acquiring goods, services, or works.
RFx	An umbrella term for different types of formal requests (e.g., Request for X) sent to potential suppliers.
Sex-disaggregated data	Data collected and presented separately by gender to identify specific trends and inequalities.
Sextortion	A critical integrity and safety barrier where women may face demands for sexual favours in exchange for contract awards or signatures.
Sustainable Development Goals	Seventeen global goals adopted in 2015 to end poverty and protect the planet. SDG 5 specifically targets gender equality.



Supplier	Any private company or individual contracted to provide works, supplies or services to a buyer.
Supplier diversity	A programme promoting procurement from businesses at least 51 per cent owned and operated by underrepresented individuals or groups.
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.
UN	United Nations
Value chains	The full range of activities for a product or service, from conception and delivery to final disposal.
Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)	A set of seven principles guiding businesses on promoting gender equality in the workplace and community.
WEPs GRP Assessment Tool	A 31-question self-assessment developed by UN Women to help companies gauge GRP progress.
Woman entrepreneur	A woman entrepreneur is a woman who is starting or running a business or income-generating activity – formal or informal – to earn a living and grow opportunities.
Women enterprise	A business at least 51% owned, managed, and controlled by one or more women.
Women's empowerment	Comprises five components: self-worth, right to choose, access to resources, control over one's life, and ability to influence social change.
Women-led business	A legal entity in any field that has a minimum of 50 per cent women-identified representation in management with senior-level, strategic decision-making abilities.
Women-owned business	A legal entity at least 51 per cent owned and unconditionally controlled by one or more women, independent from non-women-owned businesses.



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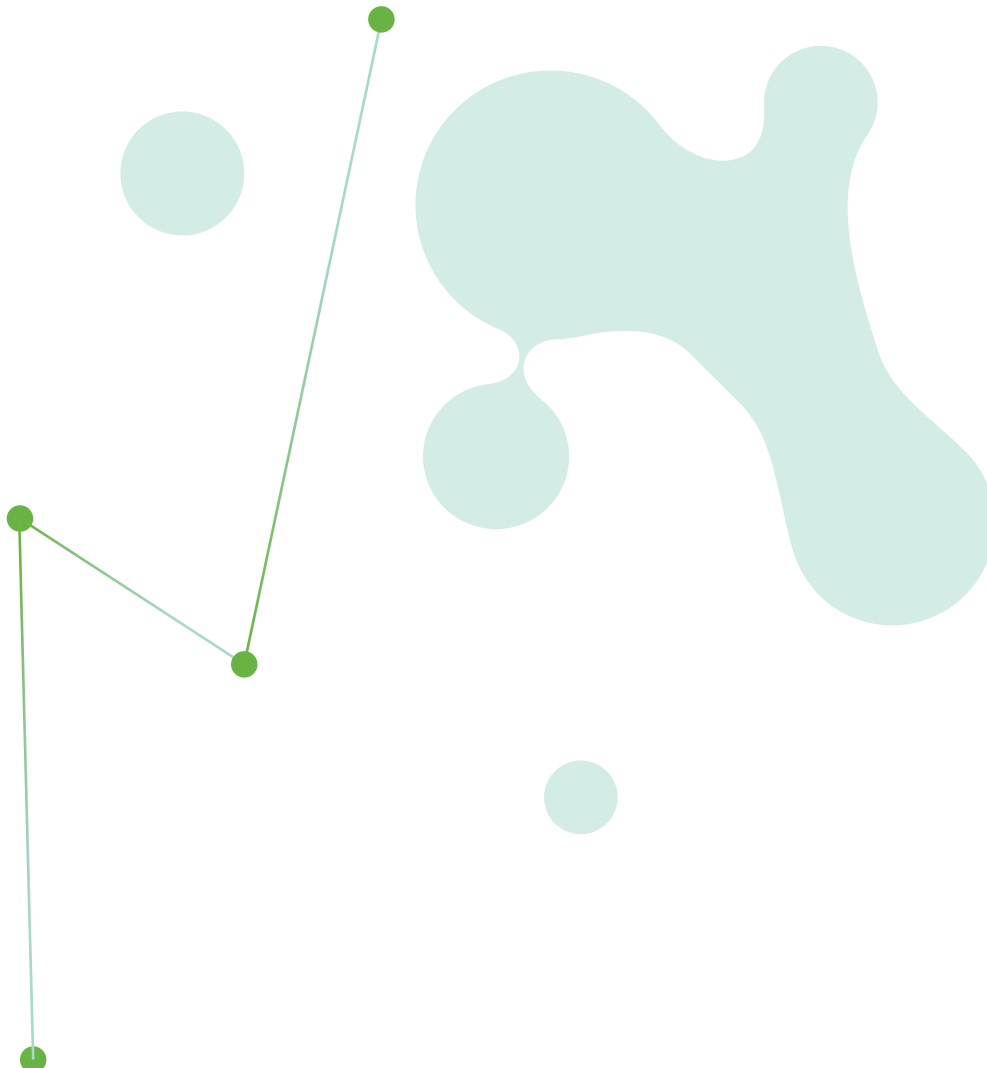


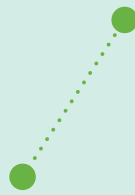
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ANNEX 1. OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, AGREEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

This is an overview of international law, national law and national public and private regulatory and policy measures promoting GRP.

International law

International law provides the overarching moral and legal mandate for gender equality by establishing that women's economic rights are fundamental human rights. Key instruments like CEDAW and ILO Conventions obligate signatory States to eliminate discrimination in economic life and ensure safe, equitable working conditions. These treaties act as the ultimate "source of authority" that justifies and requires the creation of gender-responsive policies at all lower levels of government and industry.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)

Specifically, its "Women and the Economy" Critical Area of Concern urges governments to increase women's access to economic opportunities.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) CEDAW imposes a legal obligation on State Parties to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the right to non-discrimination for women, and to ensure the development and advancement of women in order to improve their position to one of both de jure and de facto equality. This legal obligation includes a responsibility to address prevailing gender relations and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes that affect women in law, as well as in legal and societal structures and institutions (ratified by 189 countries).

International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions.

Though ratified by States, many ILO conventions create direct compliance duties for businesses through national labour laws. Key conventions relevant for GRP are:

- **ILO Convention 111** – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), which requires the elimination of sex-based discrimination, including in access to opportunities and economic participation
- **ILO Convention 100** – Equal Remuneration, which requires equal pay for work of equal value and indirectly supports procurement policies requiring suppliers to meet equality standards.
- **ILO Convention 190** – Violence and Harassment at Work, which is increasingly embedded into supplier codes of conduct and procurement requirements.



Regional frameworks

Regional frameworks bridge the gap between global ideals and national enforcement by creating shared rules for trade and competition. Instruments such as the European Union (EU) Procurement Directives or the Maputo Protocol in Africa provide the legal “permission” for Member States to include social and gender-related criteria in contracts without being accused of unfair market distortion. These frameworks are essential for ensuring that gender responsiveness becomes a standardized requirement across entire economic regions.

- **EU Procurement Directives:** Provide the legal “safe harbour” to include social and gender criteria without violating competition laws.
- **Maputo Protocol (Africa):** Article 13 requires States to promote women’s entrepreneurship and access to credit/contracts.
- **Regional trade blocs (such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR, CARICOM):** Often include MSME development protocols that prioritize marginalized groups in cross-border trade.

National legal & policy frameworks

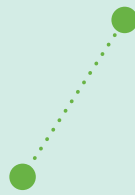
Governments can enable and incentivize GRP in both the public and private sectors. They can promote GRP at two levels: firstly, by using their role as a regulator and carefully structuring the rules that govern the public and private procurement processes and, secondly, by using purchasing and sourcing policies and practices as powerful tools to economically empower women.

National laws and public policies transform international obligations into specific, enforceable mandates within a country’s borders. This layer includes Public Procurement Acts that may set aside specific percentages of government spending for women entrepreneurs or grant preferential scoring to gender-responsive bidders. These laws create the immediate legal pressure and financial incentives that force the private sector to adapt their sourcing strategies to meet national development goals.

Examples:

- In Türkiye, the Women Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan (2018–2023) includes objectives for developing labour legislation that would enhance the participation of women in public procurement by introducing new provisions that explicitly allow positive discrimination in favour of women.
- In South Africa, the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 2000 was specifically enacted to prevent unfair discrimination and promote equality within the procurement process. It has put in place a points-based procurement system, which favours those who have a higher Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) rating when awarding tenders.

A number of countries have procurement laws that explicitly prohibit preferential criteria or practices that pose a threat to fair competition in the procurement process.



Examples:

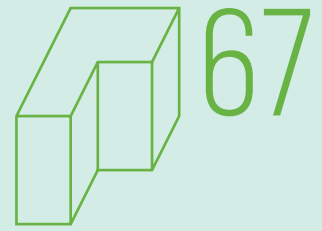
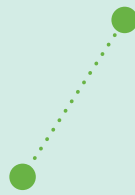
- Procurement laws in Uzbekistan specifically prohibit any selection criteria that would go against the principle of “competitiveness and objectivity” in the Law on Public Procurement.
- In Georgia, despite there being very prescriptive legislation in place to ensure a “fair and non-discriminatory” process when selecting bidders for a procurement contract, it is unlikely that this would apply to gender-responsive practices. This is clear from the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, which stipulates that temporary special measures intended to accelerate de facto equality, especially in gender, pregnancy and maternity issues, and also with respect to persons with limited capabilities, shall not be considered discrimination.
- Türkiye permits positive discrimination under the Turkish Labour Law for women and people with disabilities.

A few States have taken further steps to provide a clear basis for GRP within national procurement regulations.

Public/private regulatory & policy measures	Type of measure	Objective of measure
Including gender-related criteria or considerations into bidding frameworks and proceedings (evaluation)	Exclusion grounds, selection criteria, award criteria and tie-breaker provisions	Increasing the amount of procurement contracts awarded to women entrepreneurs, and incentivizing and rewarding businesses adopting strong gender-responsive business practices.
Establishing gender equality-related obligations for successful bidders (contract)	Contract performance conditions	Encouraging companies to adopt gender-responsive business practices. Notification of the performance conditions should be given in the contract announcement or in the specifications.
Setting procurement-related quotas for suppliers that meet key criteria in relation to gender equality	Quotas	Increasing the amount of procurement contracts awarded to women entrepreneurs, and incentivizing and rewarding businesses adopting strong gender-responsive business practices.



Development of certification, evaluation or points-based programmes for companies based on gender equality related credentials	Certifications and evaluation programmes	Incentivizing companies to adopt gender-responsive business practices and facilitating the identification of such companies.
Financing, grant-making or other training programmes made available by public and private buyers to women entrepreneurs for their business advancement	Financing and grant-making	Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and making them more competitive.
Tax and other incentive-based programmes in support of companies with strong gender equality credentials and/or women entrepreneurs	Tax incentives	Increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and making them more competitive. Incentivizing companies to adopt gender-responsive business practices.
Development of measures, whether incentive-based or principle-based, promoting gender advancement in the context of public planning, budgeting and procurement	Standard-setting	Mainstreaming gender equality and women's advancement within public planning, budgeting and procurement frameworks.
Governance, transparency, disclosure, reporting and/or monitoring regimes related to gender-equality metrics (in particular, for publicly listed companies), e.g. in the context of ESG and corporate sustainability regulation	Reporting and disclosure regimes	Incentivizing companies to adopt gender-responsive business practices and facilitating the identification of such companies.
E-procurement	E-procurement platform	Improving accessibility to procurement for vulnerable groups, e.g. SMEs, women entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs, etc.



International standards and principles

Voluntary international standards and principles provide the “how-to” methodology for businesses to operationalize their gender commitments. Tools like the WEPs and ISO 20400 offer structured benchmarks, definitions and performance indicators that move gender from a vague concept to a measurable business process. They serve as a universal language that allows buyers and suppliers to align their expectations and track progress against global best practices.

United Nations Global Compact (UNGC): The UNGC is a United Nations initiative. The framework is based on 10 principles for responsible business that are clustered into four areas of focus: human rights, labour rights, the environment and anti-corruption. Signatories are obliged to report annually on their progress in implementing the 10 principles, in what is called the “Communication on Progress” (COP).

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: The UN Guiding Principles are the most influential global norm for corporate responsibility. It requires businesses to conduct human rights due diligence, explicitly including gender impacts and encourages companies to evaluate gender-based discrimination in supply chains.

Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs): The WEPs were launched in 2010 by UN Women and the UN Global Compact. They are the result of a multi-stakeholder consultancy process with the aim of strengthening the gender dimension of corporate sustainability. The seven principles aim to help businesses develop and share best practices for empowering women and promoting gender equality.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5: The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, put an emphasis on the complex and holistic approaches driven by the public, as well as private actors, that are needed to ensure sustainable development for all.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises: The OECD Guidelines apply directly to companies in countries that have formally agreed to the Guidelines. The Guidelines require non-discrimination, diversity, equal opportunity and due diligence.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 26000 – Social Responsibility

This standard encourages gender equality and non-discrimination throughout the value chain and has become increasingly embedded into supplier qualification requirements.



ANNEX 2. COMPANY CASES OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT

Brief narrative descriptions of activities, commitments, outcomes and business value.

Gender-responsive procurement (GRP) is the deliberate use of purchasing policies and practices to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across a company's supply chain. Common procurement levers include spending targets with women entrepreneurs, supplier discovery and qualification mechanisms, supplier development and capacity-building, contractual requirements and supplier codes, and transparent measurement and reporting. The cases below draw on publicly available company and partner reporting. Where public sources provide commitments but limited quantified outcomes, this is stated explicitly.

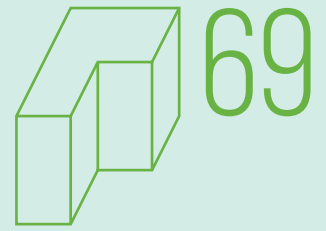
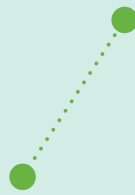
Company cases

Accenture – Supplier inclusion through responsible buying and supplier development

Accenture frames procurement as a responsible buying function that can create more inclusive supply chains. Its supplier impact and sustainability approach emphasizes building a more sustainable and inclusive supply base, and it has operationalized this through a Diverse Supplier Development Programme that matches Accenture executive mentors with diverse supplier companies in a structured 18-month mentoring relationship to help suppliers grow. Accenture has also been associated with women entrepreneurs spending commitments through WEConnect International communications, including a stated commitment of spending USD 100 million by 2020 with women entrepreneurs globally. Public information on outcomes is strongest on the existence and design of the supplier development activities and the articulation of commitments; however, consolidated public reporting of results specifically against the USD 100 million commitment is not consistently presented in the cited sources. The business case is typically positioned as long-term value-creation through a broader, more capable supplier ecosystem, improved supplier performance, and enhanced ability to meet client expectations for responsible and inclusive sourcing.

Anglo American — Gender-inclusive supplier development in mining value chains (2023–2024)

Anglo American has strengthened gender-inclusive sourcing through its enterprise and supplier development programmes, which prioritise participation of women-owned businesses in mining supply chains across Africa and Latin America. The company integrates inclusive procurement into local content and host-community supplier strategies, providing targeted capacity-building, market access support and procurement linkage for women entrepreneurs in mining-related services and goods. Reported outcomes include increased participation of women-owned enterprises in local supplier ecosystems and their integration into operational procurement categories. Anglo American frames inclusive sourcing as part of sustainable mining and resilient local supply chains, linking supplier diversity to community development, operational continuity and long-term value creation.



Arredo & Fundación MediaPila – Women’s empowerment as a differentiated sourcing model

Argentinian home and décor company Arredo partners with Fundación MediaPila to integrate women textile producers into its value chain. Women trained through MediaPila produce textile items that are sold through Arredo’s retail channels, linking skills development directly to commercial demand. Arredo supported the producers with costing, pricing and production guidance so their work could meet quality and delivery requirements and function as part of its supply chain.

The collaboration has become a source of product and brand differentiation. Arredo highlights that products made by MediaPila women resonate strongly with consumers, particularly in campaigns aligned with occasions such as Mother’s Day, allowing the company to offer products that meet customer preferences for meaningful, socially responsible goods. By embedding women-led production into its sourcing, Arredo combines inclusive procurement with marketing value, strengthening brand positioning while expanding market access for women producers.

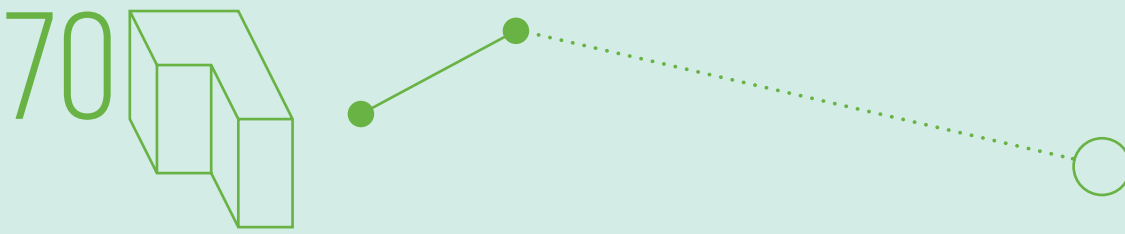
Camusat – Developing women-owned subcontractors in telecom supply chains

Camusat (telecom infrastructure) integrates gender equality and inclusion within its ESG approach and reports initiatives to increase women’s participation in technical and supply chain roles. By integrating gender equality into its business operations strategy, Camusat has transformed its supply chain from a traditional vendor model into a high-performance ecosystem. In Kenya, this was achieved through a strategic collaboration with Safaricom and UN Women aimed at increasing the participation of women-owned firms in the historically male-dominated telecom infrastructure sector.

By intentionally partnering with these entrepreneurs, Camusat leveraged their “clean slate” status to bypass legacy industry habits and provide bespoke training on modern best practices. This approach did more than just strengthen local supplier capacity; it fostered superior communication and agility, ultimately proving that investing in women-led subcontractors creates a more loyal, responsive, and higher-quality procurement network than relying on the status quo.

Cartier, Kering and Watch & Jewelry Initiative 2030 members – Piloting GRP assessment and sector action planning

In 2023, UN Women partnered with the Watch & Jewelry Initiative 2030 (founded by Cartier and Kering) to pilot the WEPs Gender-Responsive Procurement Assessment Tool with nine companies in the watch and jewelry sector, including Cartier, Gucci, Swarovski and others. The pilot’s central activity was a structured assessment of procurement strategy, supplier data practices, and governance to identify gaps and prioritize actions for gender-responsive procurement. The participating companies were generally signatories to the Women’s Empowerment Principles and already active on workplace gender equality, while the pilot surfaced that GRP was new for many and that systematic tracking of procurement spending with women entrepreneurs or gender-responsive suppliers was often missing. The reported outcomes are the identification of common gaps and the formulation of



recommendations, as well as an intention to explore a second phase involving suppliers and co-designing GRP tools and resources. The business case is framed around strengthening responsible sourcing and transparency, improving supply chain risk management and building sector credibility through consistent, measurable gender-responsive procurement practices.

[Gulf African Bank – Simplifying procurement to increase women-owned suppliers](#)

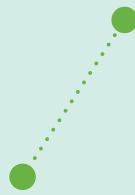
Gulf African Bank (Kenya) positioned inclusive sourcing as part of responsible business practice and embedded GRP into its supply chain after becoming a signatory to the Women's Empowerment Principles. Following a baseline analysis showing low sourcing from women-owned businesses, the bank set a target to increase procurement from 4.5% to 20%. In addition, the bank introduced dedicated procurement opportunities for women-owned suppliers and simplified supplier access processes (simplified tender documents, removed application fees, introduced continuous supplier prequalification), and partnered with UN Women to train women entrepreneurs in tendering. These measures aimed to increase participation of women-owned businesses in the bank's supply chain while strengthening relationships with women-led enterprises as customers and partners. As a result, women-owned suppliers increased significantly, reaching 26% of procurement spend. GRP also expanded the bank's customer base, as women suppliers opened accounts and accessed finance through tailored credit products. The women's business segment now contributes about 25 per cent of the bank's portfolio.

[IKEA – Women-focused supply-chain inclusion in agricultural sourcing \(2022–2024\)](#)

IKEA has expanded gender-inclusive sourcing within agricultural and raw-material supply chains, particularly through programmes supporting women producers and entrepreneurs in rural value chains linked to home furnishing materials. The company works with local partners to strengthen women suppliers' capacity, productivity and market access and integrates gender equality expectations into supplier standards and sustainability programmes. Outcomes reported include increased participation of women producers and suppliers in IKEA-linked value chains and improved livelihoods in sourcing communities. IKEA frames gender-inclusive sourcing as part of responsible value-chain development and sustainable sourcing commitments.

[Intel – Time-bound women entrepreneur supplier spending targets and early achievement](#)

Intel operates a global diverse supplier programme and set a procurement goal to spend USD 100 million with women entrepreneurs around the world by 2020. Intel later reported that it reached the USD 100 million goal more than a year ahead of schedule and announced a higher commitment to spend USD 200 million with women entrepreneurs by 2020. Public reporting confirms early achievement of the USD 100 million goal but does not specify whether the USD 200 million target was reached. The implied procurement activities include using women entrepreneur ecosystems to identify suppliers, ensuring procurement processes provide qualified women entrepreneurs suppliers an



opportunity to compete, and applying internal tracking to validate progress against spending commitments. The reported outcome is the early achievement of the initial target and the escalation of ambition. Intel's public narrative connects supplier diversity and inclusion to business performance, framing diversity as a driver of continued relevance and growth. In practical procurement terms, the business benefit is broader access to competitive suppliers, strengthened innovation and responsiveness, and reduced concentration risk in the supply base.

Johnson & Johnson – Supplier diversity targets and high-volume spending with diverse suppliers

Johnson & Johnson (J&J) treats supplier diversity as a strategic procurement practice and publicly reports significant annual spending with diverse suppliers, including women entrepreneurs. J&J has stated that it spends around USD 1 billion annually to support women- and minority-owned businesses and has also set a goal to spend USD 4.5 billion with small and diverse suppliers by 2025. Publicly described activities include engaging certified diverse suppliers, using development and mentorship mechanisms, and embedding supplier diversity objectives into procurement strategy and governance. The reported outcome is sustained high-volume spending and an explicit time-bound target for expanded spending. In gender equality terms, the material contribution is market access, revenue stability and scaling opportunity for women entrepreneurs that can meet corporate requirements. J&J's business case is framed around strengthening a competitive, innovative supplier base and supporting business performance through supplier diversity, with external recognition and membership in prominent supplier diversity networks reinforcing reputational value.

Microsoft – Expanding supplier diversity and inclusive sourcing governance (2023–2024)

Microsoft has continued to embed supplier diversity within its responsible sourcing and ESG governance, reporting sustained multi-billion-dollar annual spending with diverse suppliers globally, including women-owned businesses. The company integrates supplier inclusion into procurement strategy, contracting and supplier engagement processes, supported by internal accountability mechanisms and public reporting. Microsoft positions inclusive sourcing as a driver of innovation and competitiveness in its supply ecosystem and highlights the role of diverse suppliers in strengthening supply resilience and market responsiveness. The programme reflects mature integration of inclusive procurement within corporate ESG and supply-chain management frameworks.

L'Oréal — Gender-inclusive sourcing in sustainable supply chains (2022–2024)

L'Oréal has continued to integrate gender equality into sustainable sourcing programmes, including initiatives that support women entrepreneurs and producers in supply chains for natural ingredients and packaging. The company collaborates with suppliers and NGOs to strengthen women's economic participation and integrates gender considerations into responsible sourcing standards and supplier partnerships. Outcomes reported include expanded opportunities for women suppliers and producers within L'Oréal's global value chains. The business case articulated links inclusive sourcing to sustainable supply security, innovation and brand credibility in responsible sourcing.



Pfizer – Supplier diversity programme with measurable supplier pipeline expansion

Pfizer describes supplier diversity as integral to building a strong supplier base and explicitly commits to building and sustaining relationships with minority and women entrepreneurs. In a public article describing the programme, Pfizer reported that in 2020 it partnered with over 450 suppliers and added 44 qualified and capable small businesses, with the stated aim of increasing diversity within the supply chain. The procurement activities implied include targeted supplier outreach, qualification and onboarding processes, and ongoing relationship management to integrate new suppliers into critical purchasing categories. The outcome reported is a measurable expansion of the supplier pipeline which, from a gender lens, can translate into more entry points and growth opportunities for women entrepreneurs' small businesses when they are part of the qualifying pool. Pfizer's business case is framed around strengthening the supply base through broader participation, which can enhance agility, competition, and innovation and reduce dependency on a narrow set of suppliers.

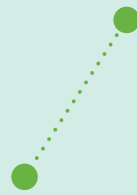
Procter & Gamble – WEConnect-linked commitments and country-level spending increases

Procter & Gamble (P&G) has used partnership-based commitments to increase sourcing from women entrepreneurs, including collaboration with WEConnect International to identify qualified women entrepreneur suppliers and support their readiness to compete. P&G committed to spend a cumulative total of \$300 million US dollars by deliberately working with women-owned and women-led businesses across the Asia Pacific, Middle East, and Africa region, from the year 2021 to 2025.

The implied procurement activities include supplier identification through women entrepreneurs' certification and matchmaking, supplier development support, and internal procurement tracking to evidence progress against commitments. The outcome reported is the completion of a significant spending commitment and a scaled country-level spending target with a time horizon. The women's empowerment benefit is direct market access and revenue growth for women entrepreneur suppliers, which typically supports business scaling and job creation in local markets. The business case for P&G is access to competitive local suppliers, improved supply resilience, and strengthening legitimacy and brand equity through demonstrable inclusive sourcing.

Sodexo – Large-scale diverse spending with a client-enabled inclusive procurement model

Sodexo reports a mature supplier inclusion model in which both corporate spending and client-mediated spending are used to expand economic opportunities for diverse suppliers, including women entrepreneurs, where relevant under its diversity categories. In FY2024, Sodexo reports spending over USD 1 billion with diverse and small businesses in the United States through Tier 1 and Tier 2 purchases, and it reports that clients spent an additional USD 1 billion with diverse and small businesses using Sodexo contracts but paying vendors directly. This dual outcome indicates a procurement model that combines Sodexo's own sourcing influence with a scalable mechanism for clients to extend inclusive procurement through Sodexo's contracted supply arrangements. The gender equality and women's empowerment contribution is via increased access to large, stable demand



and visibility in commercial value chains. The business case for Sodexo is explicit: supplier inclusion is linked to client value, enabling clients to meet social impact objectives, strengthen local economic participation, and diversify supply options while leveraging Sodexo's procurement capabilities.

Unilever – Embedding diverse supplier spending targets into corporate equity commitments

Unilever has publicly committed to spend EUR 2 billion (USD 235 billion) annually with diverse suppliers by 2025, explicitly including suppliers that are small and medium-sized businesses owned and managed by women among other underrepresented groups. The commitment positions procurement as a delivery mechanism for Unilever's broader equity, diversity and inclusion agenda and implies activities such as mapping supplier diversity, improving supplier discovery channels, adapting category strategies and tendering approaches to ensure qualified women entrepreneurs can compete, and strengthening data capture and reporting on supplier diversity status. Unilever's communication is primarily framed as a forward-looking commitment and does not, in the same statement, provide a quantified outcome achieved to date against the annual target. The articulated business case is that inclusive sourcing extends the company's equity and inclusion ambition into the value chain, potentially strengthening supply resilience and innovation while supporting a reputation for responsible business and alignment with stakeholder expectations.

Walmart – Sourcing from women entrepreneurs as part of responsible sourcing

Walmart links women's economic empowerment to procurement through responsible sourcing and supplier inclusion, including active sourcing from women entrepreneurs. The operational activities implied in its public reporting include identifying women entrepreneur suppliers, enabling them to meet retail readiness requirements, integrating them into onboarding and contracting processes, and tracking spending over time. Walmart reports that, over the past 10 years, it has sourced more than USD 42 billion from women entrepreneurs, providing a concrete outcome that can be interpreted as expanded market access for women entrepreneurs at scale. Walmart's framing of this work emphasizes economic opportunity and inclusion in supply chains, and it has also highlighted curated retail opportunities for women entrepreneurs' brands. From a business perspective, large retailers typically position women entrepreneurs' supplier sourcing as a way to broaden the supplier ecosystem, strengthen competition and innovation, and align brand value with customer expectations for inclusive growth and responsible business conduct.

Yildiz Holding - Supporting women's entrepreneurship and women-led sourcing

Yıldız Holding (food and retail, headquartered in Türkiye with global operations and more than 80,000 employees) positioned gender equality as a core sustainability and competitiveness priority, on the premise that equal participation of women strengthens inclusion, talent attraction and problem-solving across the business. To institutionalize this agenda, the company established the Yıldız

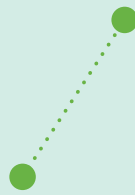


Holding Women's Platform (2021) and developed an Equal Opportunity and Women's Empowerment Manifesto based on inputs from employees worldwide, translating the manifesto into an action plan that integrates gender equality into communications and culture ("discourse"), human resources (HR) and workplace systems ("business environment"), as well as in external engagement ("ecosystem") and the supply chain ("value chain").

In practice, Yıldız Holding identified internal barriers, set measurable goals and tracked progress transparently, including targets to increase women's representation in leadership and governance. It reinforced these commitments through gender-neutral HR policies and bias-mitigation measures in hiring, promotion and pay; notably, it became the first holding company in the food and retail sectors to receive EQUAL-SALARY certification in 2024, validating equal pay for work of equal value for women and men through an external assessment. The company also invested in women's leadership pipelines via structured development programmes (for new managers through senior executives), including subsidiary-specific initiatives and senior leadership diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) training to strengthen accountability.

Beyond the workforce, it extended gender-responsive practices into the value chain by supporting women's entrepreneurship and women-led sourcing through participation in the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator and the Gender-Responsive Procurement and Investment Programme, and by implementing initiatives such as "Women Stars of Agriculture" (financial support, training, technical guidance and purchase guarantees for women farmers) and "Count Me In" (linking women's cooperatives to customers via ŞOK Marketler stores).

Outcomes reported over 2019–2024 include increases in women employees (37 to 49 per cent), women in blue-collar roles (36 to 51 per cent), women on boards (14 to 22 per cent), and women managers (29 to 35 per cent), alongside higher hiring and promotion figures for women and substantial participation in mentoring and leadership programmes. The business case articulated by the company is that these results provide evidence that diversity and equal opportunity are drivers of long-term success, helping the organization build a stronger talent pipeline, improve inclusion and retention, and enhance decision quality through a wider range of perspectives, while value-chain initiatives expand supplier diversity and economic opportunity for women producers and entrepreneurs connected to the company's markets.



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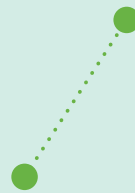
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APPENDIX 1. COMPANY EXAMPLE



Academy

SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION:

From Policy to Impact: How Yıldız Holding is Driving Gender Equality Across its Global Operations

In this case study, we'll explore Yıldız Holding's comprehensive strategy to strengthen gender equality across its global operations. Through leadership commitment, structured initiatives and ecosystem-wide engagement, the company has successfully increased women's participation and inclusion at all levels.

COMPANY AT A GLANCE

Industry: Food and Retail
Founded: 1944
Headquarters: Türkiye, with operations worldwide
Number of Employees: More than 80,000



THE CHALLENGE

Yildiz Holding believes that a sustainable future is only possible through the equal participation of women in the economy. The company recognizes that providing equal opportunity to a diverse employee base is critical to long-term success, as it fosters a more inclusive organization, attracts top talent and improves problem-solving by integrating a wide range of perspectives.

This highlighted the importance of adopting a structured and institutionalized approach to gender equality. To advance these efforts, the company established the Yildiz Holding Women's Platform in 2021.

THE ACTION: EXPANDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DRIVING IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH AN ACTION PLAN

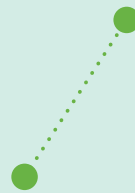
Yildiz Holding launched the **Women's Platform** as a strategic initiative to mainstream gender equality across all its businesses. Designed to promote women's economic inclusion and strengthen women's representation in leadership roles, the platform serves as the cornerstone for all gender-related policies and initiatives within the organization, including:

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE "EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT MANIFESTO"

To provide structure to its gender equality efforts, Yildiz Holding developed the **Equal Opportunity and Women's Empowerment Manifesto**, incorporating insights from employees worldwide. This framework is built on **four key pillars**:

- **Discourse:** promoting inclusivity through communication
- **Business Environment:** ensuring fairness in hiring, promotions and benefits
- **Ecosystem:** expanding efforts to the broader community
- **Value Chain:** supporting women in entrepreneurship and throughout supply chains through initiatives.

These pillars help integrate gender equality principles into all business operations.



2. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The company **identifies internal barriers** to gender equality, **sets measurable improvement goals** and transparently **tracks progress**. It actively promotes female leadership, setting targets for women's representation in senior roles and boards.

Yıldız Holding also maintains **gender-neutral HR policies**, taking specific actions to mitigate biases and ensure fair hiring practices, promotions and salaries. For example, in 2024, it became the **first holding company in the food and retail sectors to receive the EQUAL-SALARY certification**, confirming equal pay for men and women based on a rigorous assessment by the **International EQUAL-SALARY Foundation**.

3. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

Yıldız Holding offers a range of leadership development programs designed to support women's career progression at all levels of the organization:

- Leadership Foundations – for new managers
- Leadership Mastery: Transformational Leadership Programme – for mid-level managers
- Leadership Excellence – for senior executives

Its subsidiary pladis has developed its own initiative: Leadership Development Programme, created in partnership with the London Business School and tailored for experienced professionals. Participants develop skills in communication, motivation, self-awareness and leadership, while building strong professional networks.

On another hand, **C-Level DEI Training Program** trains senior leaders on how to integrate equality and non-discrimination into corporate strategy, ensuring leadership accountability for gender equality.

4. EXPANDING GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN & PROMOTING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Yıldız Holding actively supports women's empowerment across its value chain through several impactful initiatives. Since 2022, its leading frozen food brand in Türkiye, **SuperFresh**, has been implementing the **"Women Stars of Agriculture"** project to support women farmers. The program offers financial support, training, and guaranteed product purchases, while also providing technical guidance from agricultural engineers throughout the farming process. In just one year, the project surpassed its three-year targets, reaching around **1,500 women farmers** with training modules on topics such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and even artificial intelligence. Notably, the share of women among their farmers has grown from **5% to nearly 30%**, inspiring further expansion of the initiative.



In addition, Yıldız Holding promotes women's entrepreneurship through its participation in the **Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator (WEA)** (a multi-stakeholder partnership convening six United Nations agencies) and the **Gender-Responsive Procurement and Investment (GRPI) Program**, prioritizing sourcing from women-led businesses and generating economic opportunities across the supply chain.

This commitment is also reflected in the **"Count Me In"** project, which connects women's cooperatives across Türkiye with customers by featuring their locally made products in **ŞOK Marketler** stores—creating both economic value and greater visibility for women producers.

5. LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Yıldız Holding's leadership actively drives gender equality initiatives by setting measurable non-discrimination and equality goals and participating in **training programs**. Employees play a crucial role through **mentorship programs, advocacy networks and feedback mechanisms** such as the **"Shine Together"** initiative. This **collaborative approach** ensures that gender equality policies remain effective and responsive to employee needs.

6. PUBLIC ADVOCACY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Yıldız Holding extends its impact through **public advocacy**, collaborating with **UN Women** and **government institutions** to implement gender equality initiatives in its communities. The company also raises awareness through **corporate communications and social media**, reinforcing its role as a leader in advancing gender equality and inspiring other organizations to adopt similar commitments.

STAKEHOLDER ROLES

- **Leadership:** Set measurable targets, champion non-discrimination and equality initiatives and undergo specialized training.
- **Employees:** Participate in mentorship programs, provide feedback and advocate for workplace inclusivity.
- **Suppliers and Partners:** Support gender-responsive procurement and investment strategies.
- **Public Institutions and NGOs:** Collaborate on social impact projects, particularly in agriculture and entrepreneurship.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- **Cultural change:** The company addressed unconscious bias through leadership training and communication strategies.
- **Implementing global initiatives:** Given their large-scale operations across different geographies, adapting policies consistently posed challenges but the company remained committed and firm to embedding participation, equality, and pluralism across all business processes.
- **Structural barriers in male-dominated industries:** Developed policies ensuring fair recruitment, promotions, salary structures and work-life balance.

IMPACTS & RESULTS

Yildiz Holding initiatives to date have provided concrete evidence that diversity and equal opportunity in the workplace are key drivers of long-term success.

Growth in Female Representation (2019-2024):



Female employees increased from 37% to 49%.



Women on boards grew from 14% into 22%.



The female manager ratio increased from 28% to 35%.



Female employees in blue collar roles increased from 38% to 51%.

Higher Hiring and Promotion Rates for Women:



New female hires rose from 46% (2019) to 60% (2024).



Women promoted within the company increased from 27% (2022) to 57% (2023).

Participation in Training and Leadership Programs:



48% of female employees participated in mentoring programs.



34% in leadership development programs.



36% in young talent programs.



KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Embed Non-Discrimination and Equality into Core Strategy:** Sustainable Impact requires integrating gender equality into business objectives.
- 2. Leadership Engagement Drives Change:** Cultural transformation must start at the executive level.
- 3. Measure and Communicate Progress:** Data-driven insights enhance transparency and accountability.
- 4. Expand Impact Beyond the Organization:** Gender equality efforts should extend to supply chains and broader communities, and they should receive the support required to make progress.



We believe that a sustainable future can only be achieved through the active participation of women in society and the economy. At Yıldız Holding, in line with our vision of “investing in people,” we are taking pioneering steps to promote equal opportunity and we are encouraged by the positive outcomes our efforts have generated.

- Mehmet Tütüncü
Yıldız Holding Chair of
the Board and CEO

YILDIZ HOLDING IS A PARTICIPANT OF THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT SINCE 2019, INCLUDING:

- Participant of the [Target Gender Equality Accelerator](#)
- Signatories of the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#)
- Participant of the [SDG Ambition Accelerator](#)

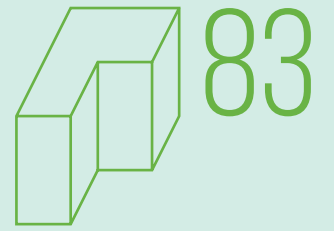
RECOMMENDED UN GLOBAL COMPACT RESOURCES

Target Gender
Equality Accelerator

E-learning:
Target Setting for Gender Equality

Sign Up to Forward Faster

Disclaimer: This case study is intended strictly for learning purposes and does not constitute an endorsement of the individual companies by the UN Global Compact.



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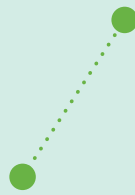


APPENDIX 2. WEPS GRP ASSESSMENT TOOL

UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) GRP Assessment Tool			
Section	#	Question	Answer options / selection
Company gender equality commitments	1	Do you have a policy or strategy on gender equality?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ In discussion (1) ☐ Yes (implementing) (2) ☐ Yes (measured/reported) (3)
	2	Do you have a public commitment to gender equality (e.g. WEPs)?	☐ No (0) ☐ In discussion (1) ☐ Yes (implementing) (2) ☐ Yes (measured/reported) (3)
	3	Is your company reporting to platforms like EDGE, Equileap or Bloomberg?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Considering (1) ☐ Internal only (2) ☐ Yes (measured/reported) (3)
Procurement policy and strategy	4	Is GRP a stand-alone policy or embedded in your strategy?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ In discussion (1) ☐ Yes (policy exists) (2) ☐ Yes (measured/reported) (3)



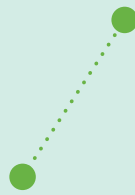
	5	Do you set an annual target spending for women entrepreneurs?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (not shared) (1) ☐ Yes (tracked internally) (2) ☐ Yes (reported externally) (3)
	6	If yes to Q5, what is the target percentage?	%
	7	Do you set an annual target spending for SMEs (< 300 employees)?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (not shared) (1) ☐ Yes (tracked internally) (2) ☐ Yes (reported externally) (3)
	8	If yes to Q7, what is the target percentage?	%
	9	Do you set an annual target spending with diverse suppliers (disability, ethnic groups, etc.)?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (not shared) (1) ☐ Yes (tracked internally) (2) ☐ Yes (reported externally) (3)
	10	If yes to Q9, what is the target percentage?	%
	11	Do you track annual spending for suppliers with gender commitments (e.g. WEPs)?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (not shared) (1) ☐ Yes (tracked internally) (2) ☐ Yes (reported externally) (3)



	12	If yes to Q11, what is the target percentage?	%
Internal procurement/ supply chain management	13	What is the percentage of women in your procurement/supply chain departments?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ < 20% (1) ☐ 20-40% (2) ☐ > 40% (3)
	14	Is your chief procurement/supply chain officer female?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (1)
	15	What is the percentage of women in management in procurement?	%
	16	Do staff receive training on gender concepts and/or GRP?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (regularly) (1) ☐ Yes (required/orientation) (3)
Supplier database and data reporting	17	Do you have a supplier database?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (1)
	18	How many levels/tiers of supplier data do you track?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ Tier 1 (1) ☐ Tiers 1-2 (2) ☐ Tier 3+ (3)
	19	Does your database capture sex-disaggregated data on ownership?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Tier 1 (1) ☐ Tier 2 (2) ☐ Tier 3+ (3)



	20	Do you track procurement spending with women entrepreneurs?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Tier 1 (1) ☐ Tier 2 (2) ☐ Tier 3+ (3)
	21	Do you publicly share the number of women entrepreneurs or spending with women entrepreneurs?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (3)
	22	Do you track spending on other diverse suppliers?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Tier 1 (1) ☐ Tier 2 (2) ☐ Tier 3+ (3)
	23	Do you publicly report numbers/spending on other diverse suppliers?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (3)
	24	Do you track if suppliers are gender-responsive (WEPs, gender audits, etc.)?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Tier 1 (1) ☐ Tier 2 (2) ☐ Tier 3+ (3)



	25	Do you track procurement spending with gender-responsive suppliers?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Tier 1 (1) ☐ Tier 2 (2) ☐ Tier 3+ (3)
	26	Do you publicly report spending/numbers for suppliers with gender commitments?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (3)
Supplier engagement & diversification	27	Are you working with organizations to certify women entrepreneurs for your value chain?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (working) (2) ☐ Yes (connected to chain) (3)
	28	Do you take proactive measures to integrate women entrepreneurs (e.g. favourable terms, training)?	(Select all that apply in your records)
	29	Do you encourage suppliers to sign WEPS or conduct gender audits?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (3)
	30	Do you expand relationships via trade fairs for women entrepreneurs and gender-responsive enterprises (GREs)?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (3)
	31	Do you use larger databases (e.g. WeConnect) to diversify suppliers?	☐ Don't know (0) ☐ No (0) ☐ Yes (3)



APPENDIX 3. GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT (GRP) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

SECTION 1. Leadership & policy

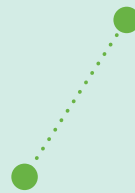
This section explains why your organization is implementing gender-responsive procurement and how it supports your broader business, sustainability and inclusion objectives. It also describes the governance structure. The policy should make clear that GRP is a strategic business tool as well as a gender equality initiative.

Sample text:

The purpose of this GRP implementation plan is to integrate gender equality and women's economic empowerment into all stages of the company's procurement activities in order to build a more inclusive, resilient and high-performing supply chain. Through GRP, the company seeks to increase access to procurement opportunities for women entrepreneurs, promote decent working conditions across its supplier base and encourage suppliers to adopt gender-responsive business practices.

Strategically, GRP supports the company's broader commitments to sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and responsible business conduct. By embedding gender considerations into procurement planning, supplier engagement, contracting and performance management, the company aims to strengthen supplier diversity, reduce operational and reputational risks, improve supplier performance and drive innovation. GRP is therefore positioned not only as a social responsibility initiative, but as a core business strategy that contributes to long-term value creation and sustainable growth.

Effective GRP requires a clear governance structure that defines leadership oversight, roles and accountability across the organization. GRP governance ensures that policies are translated into action by assigning responsibility to senior leadership, procurement teams, ESG or sustainability functions and contract managers, while providing mechanisms for coordination, decision-making and performance review. A strong governance structure embeds GRP into existing procurement and corporate systems rather than treating it as a stand-alone initiative, enabling consistent implementation, resource allocation and continuous improvement.



Sample table for GRP governance

Role / function	Main responsibilities in GRP	How they contribute
Executive leadership / Board sponsor	Approves GRP policy and objectives, allocates resources, reviews performance	Sets strategic direction and ensures accountability
Procurement leadership	Integrates GRP into procurement strategy and procedures, drives implementation and takes leadership on integrating monitoring, evaluating and learning of GRP commitments into existing procurement systems. Coordinates reporting.	Turns GRP commitments into daily practice
Procurement team (officers & contract managers)	Apply inclusive processes, manage suppliers, monitor contract performance. Tracks indicators, prepares progress reports, supports learning.	Ensures GRP is implemented on the ground
ESG / DEI or sustainability team	Provides gender and sustainability expertise, supports the development of indicators, supports training,	Ensures GRP aligns with equality and sustainability goals
Legal department	Updates contract templates and policies, ensures enforceability and alignment with relevant, local, national and international legal frameworks (e.g., Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights).	Embeds GRP into formal agreements
Finance department	Implements fair and gender-responsive payment terms and financial incentives.	Removes cash-flow barriers, promotes shorter pay cycles, etc. to support women's businesses and SMEs
Compliance / Risk team	Oversees audits, grievance mechanisms and integrity controls.	Protects against abuse and non-compliance



SECTION 2. Baseline and priority gaps

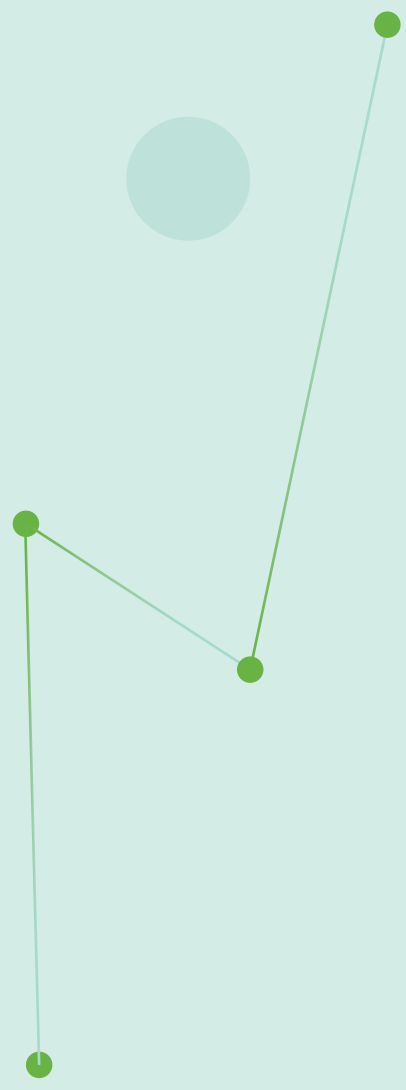
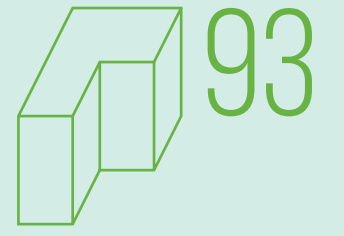
This section describes the outcome of the WEPs GRP Assessment Tool and identifies the most important gaps that need to be addressed through the GRP implementation plan. It should summarize key findings from your WEPs GRP Assessment. Based on this baseline, the organization should highlight a small number of priority areas where changes will have the greatest impact. This helps focus GRP actions on the most significant barriers rather than trying to address everything at once.

Note: Women's Empowerment Principle 5 offers a structured internal self-assessment tool that helps companies assess their GRP policies and practices, identify gaps, and prioritize areas for improvement. It consists of about 31 questions covering procurement policy, supplier engagement, data and reporting, and other key themes, and produces a scorecard with tailored guidance. It is specifically designed for companies and is a good fit for establishing a baseline and priority gaps in your implementation plan. The WEPs tool is available through the WEPs platform (note: access requires sign-up as a WEPs signatory).

Sample text:

An internal assessment of the company's procurement policies, processes, supplier data and contract practices indicates that while procurement systems are generally effective in managing cost and quality, gender equality is not yet systematically integrated. Women entrepreneurs currently represent a small share of registered suppliers and an even smaller proportion of awarded contracts. Market analysis relies primarily on existing supplier lists, limiting visibility of diverse suppliers. Pre-qualification requirements, including high turnover thresholds and extensive financial guarantees, unintentionally exclude many small and women enterprises. Tender documents do not yet include gender-responsive criteria, and evaluation focuses largely on scale and past contract size. Contracting practices apply standard payment terms of 60–90 days and broad risk allocation, which create cash flow and delivery challenges for smaller suppliers. In addition, the company does not currently collect sex-disaggregated supplier or workforce data, making it difficult to track inclusion or outcomes.

Based on this baseline, the company has identified the following priority gaps for action: improving visibility and access for women entrepreneurs through inclusive market engagement; reviewing and adjusting qualification and evaluation criteria to ensure proportionality; introducing gender-responsive contract clauses and prompt payment practices; strengthening supplier engagement and capacity-building initiatives; and establishing a simple monitoring system with sex-disaggregated indicators. Addressing these priority areas is expected to have the greatest impact on creating a more fair, inclusive and resilient procurement system.





SECTION 3. Strategic actions

Strategic actions describe the concrete steps the organization will take to achieve its GRP strategic objectives and address the root causes of exclusion within the procurement system. These actions translate policy commitments and objectives into practical changes in procurement processes, supplier engagement, contracting practices and internal capacity. Strategic actions should be specific, realistic, and directly linked to identified priority gaps, and should focus on reforms that have the greatest potential to improve access, fairness and gender equality outcomes. Progress on strategic actions is typically tracked through process indicators, while their effectiveness is assessed through outcome indicators.

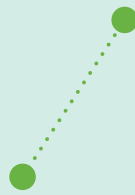
Sample table for strategic actions

Pillar	Strategic action	Expected result	Owner	Timeline
Leadership & policy (Module 3)	Adopt a formal GRP policy and integrate it into procurement strategy and ESG commitments.	GRP is institutionalized with a clear organizational mandate.	CEO/procurement lead	0–3 months
	Assign senior leadership accountability and include GRP targets in performance reviews.	GRP is actively prioritized, resourced and enforced across the organization.	Executive leadership	3–6 months
	Train procurement leadership on GRP principles and business values.	Leaders actively support and enforce GRP reforms.	Head of procurement / Chief Procurement Officer	3–6 months
Pillar	Strategic action	Expected result	Owner	Timeline
Supplier assessment (Module 4)	Integrate gender self-identification into supplier onboarding.	Full visibility of supplier diversity from the start of the relationship.	Procurement officer	0–3 months
	Collect sex-disaggregated supplier ownership and workforce data.	Visibility of supplier diversity and performance.	Procurement operations / Supplier data management team	3–6 months

	Consult women workers during assessment.	Accurate risk identification.	Procurement/ supplier compliance/ ESG/ sustainability team	3–6 months
Pillar	Strategic action	Expected result	Owner	Timeline
Supplier engagement (Module 5)	Partner with business associations, Chambers of Commerce, Ministries.	Expanded and more diverse supplier base.	Procurement/Sourcing team or supplier diversity lead	3–12 months
	Introduce and enforce gender-responsive supplier code of conduct across all suppliers.	Clear, standardized expectations on non-discrimination, safe workplaces and gender equality practices throughout the supply chain.	Procurement leadership and supplier compliance/ responsible sourcing team	3–6 months
	Launch supplier development and mentorship programmes.	Improved technical, financial and operational capacity of women entrepreneurs to compete and deliver successfully.	Supplier development or procurement excellence team	6–18 months
	Introduce incentives for gender-responsive procurement and inclusive supplier behaviour.	Increased supplier investment in gender-responsive policies and practices.	Procurement leadership and category managers	6–12 months
Pillar	Strategic action	Expected result	Owner	Timeline
Procurement processes (Module 6)	Integrate inclusive market research into procurement planning.	Greater visibility of diverse suppliers and broader participation in procurement opportunities.	Procurement planning/sourcing team	3–6 months



	Publish procurement pipelines and out-reach broadly.	Equal access to opportunity information.	Procurement operations	3–6 months
	Simplify registration and documentation requirements.	Lower administrative barriers.	Procurement operations + IT	6–12 months
	Accept alternative proof of capability (pilot projects, references, consortia).	Fairer access for newer/smaller suppliers.	Procurement leadership	6–12 months
	Adjust pre-qualification thresholds to be proportional to contract risk.	Reduced exclusion of SMEs and women entrepreneurs.	Procurement leadership	3–9 months
	Integrate gender-responsive criteria in tender evaluation.	Fairer evaluation and stronger inclusion outcomes.		6–12 months
	Review contract size and structure for unbundling.	Increased participation of women entrepreneur suppliers.	Category managers	6–12 months
	Use clear tender language and adequate timelines.	Lower bid costs and higher participation.	Procurement officers	
Pillar	Strategic action	Expected result	Owner	Timeline
Contract management (Module 7)	Introduce prompt payment terms and fast-track payments for SMEs and women entrepreneurs.	Improved cash flow, reduced supplier failure and stronger contract delivery.	Finance department with procurement leadership	3–6 months
	Include mobilization or advance payments where start-up costs are significant.	Suppliers can begin work without financial strain.	Procurement + finance	12 months
	Revise contract templates to ensure proportionate guarantees and balanced liability.	Reduced exclusion caused by excessive financial risk.	Legal department with procurement	6–12 months



	Introduce gender-responsive contract clauses (non-discrimination, GBV and harassment prevention, safe workplaces, reporting requirements).	Safer, more inclusive working conditions across the supply chain.	Legal + procurement + ESG/DEI	6–12 months
	Simplify onboarding and contract start-up processes.	Faster project mobilization and fewer administrative delays.	Procurement Operations	3–6 months
Pillar	Strategic action	Expected result	Owner	Timeline
Monitoring & evaluation (Module 8)	Establish GRP KPIs and reporting framework.	Regular visibility of GRP progress and impact.		3–6 months
	Monitor contract performance using gender KPIs.	Continuous improvement in supplier gender practices.	Contract managers + M&E/ESG team	Annually
	Track and resolve grievances related to discrimination, harassment or unfair practices.	Safer supply chain and trust in procurement system.	Compliance/risk team	Annually
	Require periodic supplier reporting on gender clauses and workplace standards.	Stronger compliance with gender commitments.	Procurement compliance team	Annually
	Report GRP performance to senior leadership regularly.	Leadership oversight and resource allocation.	ESG/M&E team	Quarterly
	Conduct gender audits and site visits (including women worker consultations).	Accurate identification of risks and gaps.	Supplier compliance / responsible sourcing team	Periodically

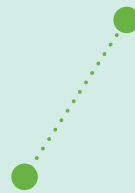


SECTION 4. Indicators & targets

Strategic actions describe the concrete changes an organization will make to embed gender-responsive procurement across policies, processes, supplier engagement, contracting and performance management. Indicators are used to track whether these actions are being implemented effectively and whether they are leading to improved inclusion and gender equality outcomes. Targets then set the level of progress the organization aims to achieve within a specific timeframe, providing accountability and a clear direction for improvement. Together, strategic actions, indicators and targets turn GRP commitments into practical, measurable results.

Sample table for indicators & targets

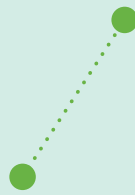
Pillar	Strategic action	Indicator	Target
Leadership & policy	Adopt and integrate a GRP policy into procurement and ESG frameworks.	GRP policy approved and referenced in governance documents	Policy adopted within 3 months
	Assign senior leadership ownership for GRP.	Executive sponsor named and GRP KPIs included in leadership performance reviews	100% of relevant leaders accountable within 6 months
	Train procurement leadership on GRP principles and business value.	% of procurement leaders completing training	100% trained within 6 months
Pillar	Strategic action	Indicator	Target
Supplier assessment	Integrate gender self-identification into supplier onboarding.	% of new suppliers with gender data captured	100% from defined quarter onward
	Collect sex-disaggregated ownership, leadership and workforce data.	% of suppliers with complete gender profiles	80–90% within 6 months 100% within 12 months
	Consult women workers during audits and assessments.	% of assessments including women consultations	100% high-risk suppliers annually
	Verify supplier gender data and policies.	% of suppliers certified or sample-audited	At least 70% verified annually



Pillar	Strategic action	Indicator	Target
Supplier engagement	Map women entrepreneurs and partner with women's business associations.	Number of partnerships and women entrepreneurs engaged	3–5 partnerships and 30% increase in women entrepreneur registrations
	Introduce and enforce a supplier code of conduct.	% of suppliers signed and assessed for compliance	100% signed; 70% assessed in first year
	Launch supplier development and mentorship programmes.	Number of women entrepreneurs supported; performance improvement rate	20–30 suppliers annually with measurable improvement
	Introduce incentives for inclusive supplier behaviour.	% of tenders applying incentives	At least 50% within 12 months
	Conduct regular supplier performance dialogues.	% of strategic suppliers reviewed annually	100% annually
Pillar	Strategic action	Indicator	Target
Procurement processes	Integrate inclusive market research in planning.	% of sourcing exercises including diverse supplier mapping	100% major procurements
	Set GRP and diversity targets at planning stage.	% of procurement plans with GRP targets	100% within 6 months
	Review contracts for unbundling opportunities.	% of large contracts assessed	All major contracts reviewed
	Adjust pre-qualification thresholds proportionally.	% of tenders using risk-based requirements	100% within 9 months
	Simplify registration and documentation.	Reduction in onboarding time	30–50% reduction within 12 months
	Accept alternative proof of capability (e.g., reduced months of audited financial reports).	% of tenders allowing alternative evidence	50%+ within 12 months



	Integrate gender-responsive evaluation criteria.	% of tenders with gender scoring elements	50–70% within 12 months
	Improve tender clarity and timelines.	Average bid preparation period	Minimum standards in 100% tenders
Pillar	Strategic action	Indicator	Target
Contract management	Introduce prompt payment terms.	Average days to payment for women entrepreneurs/SMEs	≤15–30 days
	Provide mobilization or advance payments.	% eligible contracts with advance clauses	100% where relevant
	Revise risk and guarantee clauses.	% contracts using revised templates	100% within 12 months
	Include gender-responsive contract clauses.	% of contracts with equality & anti-GBV and harassment clauses	100% of new contracts
	Simplify onboarding processes.	Time from award to activation	30–40% reduction
Pillar	Strategic action	Indicator	Target
Monitoring & evaluation	Establish GRP KPI and reporting system.	GRP dashboard operational	Within 6 months
	Track supplier performance on gender KPIs.	% of suppliers reviewed annually	100% strategic suppliers
	Conduct gender audits.	% of high-risk suppliers audited	100% annually
	Track and resolve grievances.	% of cases resolved within timelines	100%
	Report GRP progress to leadership.	Number of GRP reports per year	Quarterly
	Use findings for system improvement.	Number of policy/process updates	Annual improvement cycle



SECTION 5. Monitoring & evaluation

Review and continuous improvement are essential to ensure that gender-responsive procurement remains effective, relevant and results-driven over time. By regularly reviewing performance data, supplier feedback, audit findings and progress against targets, organizations can identify what is working, where barriers persist and where adjustments are needed. This “close the loop” approach ensures that lessons learned are translated into updated policies, improved procurement processes, strengthened supplier engagement and more ambitious goals, enabling GRP to evolve from initial reforms into a sustainable, high-impact system.

APPENDIX 4. GRP INDICATORS GUIDE

Use the GRP indicators guide to set gender-responsive procurement targets. The indicators in this guide align with Principle 5 of the WEPS GRP Assessment Tool and are structured according to the 6 implementation pillars of the GRP implementation plan template (Appendix 3).

The list can be used as a menu of options to choose from, depending on the company’s industry, its maturity in terms of gender equality and GRP, and feasibility for future change.

Indicators: Leadership & policy

Policies, governance, signaling and top-level commitment.

- Signatory of the WEPS
- Company has used the WEPS GRP Assessment Tool
- CEO / owner is a participant in HeForShe
- Membership in the Unstereotype Alliance
- Ads promote women as positive role models in alignment with Unstereotype Alliance
- The company has an approach to responsible marketing that considers the portrayal of gender stereotypes
- The company, in its external communication and advertising, takes into account the use of images that show men and women in non-traditional gender roles
- There is a supplier diversity/gender-responsive procurement policy or practice (including targets or quotas)

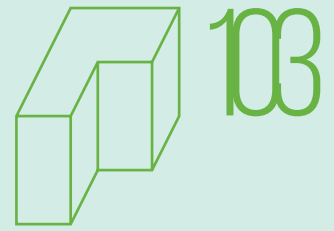
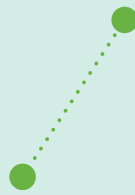


- The company has a supplier diversity programme
- The company encourages suppliers and vendors to advance performance on gender equality
- The supplier code of conduct requires non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies
- The company has an active social supply chain management approach
- The company has leadership commitment and support for gender equality and women's empowerment
- The company is a member of the Equal Pay International Coalition, or similar.
- The company has communicated its commitment to GRP to all staff
- The company has communicated its commitment to GRP publicly
- Inclusive communication in favour of equality and non-discrimination between women and men
- Executive GRP champion is assigned.

Indicators: Supplier assessment

Data coverage and supplier-level gender performance.

- Track and engage with women in the supply chain (e.g. number of women smallholders, commodities with high prevalence of women, consultation of women in auditing processes)
- Capture gender self-ID for 100 per cent of new suppliers from quarter xx onward
- % of known-women suppliers that are certified or sample-verified
- % of suppliers with gender-equality/non-discrimination policies
- % with sexual harassment/gender-based violence policies
- % with equal pay/fair wage policies
- % of women in supplier workforce
- % of women in management/supervisory roles
- % of women in technical/non-traditional roles
- Supplier has zero GBV and harassment cases or functioning grievance mechanisms
- % of suppliers providing safe conditions for women (e.g., PPE fit, facilities).



Indicators: Supplier engagement

Market outreach, pipeline development and capacity-building.

- Does the company take proactive procurement steps to expand relationships with women enterprises in the value chain and when contracting vendors?
- % of tenders preceded by a gender-sensitive market assessment
- # of potential women entrepreneurs identified during market research
- # of unique women enterprises contacted per quarter (net of duplicates).
- # of women enterprises invited to tender
- # of women entrepreneur suppliers identified per category / total identified suppliers (inclusive market scan)
- # of women enterprises successfully meeting pre-qualification criteria
- women entrepreneurs trained or mentored
- capacity-building workshops conducted
- # of teaming agreements or mentor matches formed
- % of event attendees (open days/briefings) who start pre-qualification within 60 days
- % of invited women enterprises who submit a compliant capability statement
- Average # of clarifying questions per women enterprises per RFx
- # of women enterprises onboarded this year
- % of unsuccessful women enterprises bidders who take a debrief within 30 days
- Portal engagement health: 30-day active rate of women enterprises on supplier portal.

Indicators: Procurement processes

Operational procedures, internal capacity and social impact monitoring.

- Procurement officers are trained on the UN Women Corporate Guide to GRP
- Sex-disaggregated data on suppliers collected (process)
- # of suppliers assessed for social impacts

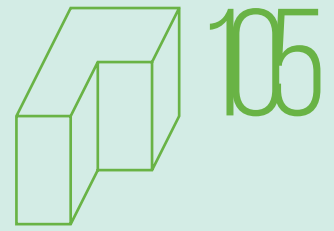
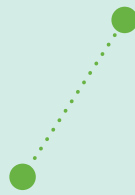


- % of suppliers that were screened using social criteria
- # of suppliers identified as having significant actual and potential negative social impacts
- Significant actual and potential negative social impacts identified in the supply chain
- % of suppliers identified as having significant actual and potential negative social impacts with which improvements were agreed upon
- % of suppliers identified as having significant actual and potential negative social impacts with which relationships were terminated, and why
- % of events with right-sized/unbundled lots intended to increase SME/women entrepreneurs' participation
- % of draft specs reviewed for plain language and proportional requirements
- #/% reduction in unnecessary barriers of PQ criteria (e.g., turnover thresholds, certifications)
- % of tenders using gender-responsive evaluation criteria
- % of supplier evaluations that assess gender-practice criteria
- Tender success rate for women entrepreneurs (%)
- Onboarding cycle time: median days from identification to approved vendor setup for women enterprises vs. others
- Top 3 causes of supplier onboarding rejection.

Indicators: Contract management

Enforcement, payment terms and Tier-2 reporting.

- % of contracts with gender KPIs or clauses
- suppliers required to submit gender data (including Tier 2)
- % of new/renewed contracts containing gender-responsive minimum controls (non-discrimination, anti-harassment)
- % of women enterprise contracts with ≤30-day terms or early-pay options
- % of contracts containing mentoring/teaming or capability-building commitments
- % of primes reporting Tier-2 women entrepreneurs' participation
- % of contract value flowing to women entrepreneurs at Tier-2



- % of audited suppliers with functioning grievance systems and verified anti-harassment implementation
- # of corrective action plans promoting gender equality implemented by suppliers

Indicators: Monitoring & evaluation

Outcome tracking, reporting cadence and impact signals.

- % of procurement spending (contracts' value) with women enterprises
- # of procurement contracts awarded with women enterprises
- % increase in spending on women enterprises through procurement (on amount spent and # of contracts awarded)
- % of addressable spending with women enterprises in Year 1, Year 2, Year 3
- % of spending per category (e.g. catering, PPE, marketing and facilities)
- Value of contracts awarded to women enterprises
- % of Tier-1 suppliers reporting on women enterprises participation in their own chains
- % of suppliers monitored annually for compliance
- Improvement in supplier gender policies
- Increase in women employed by suppliers
- Increase in women's leadership in supplier companies
- Improved supplier perceptions of fairness (survey)
- Quarterly GRP performance reports completed
- GRP outcomes included in annual sustainability/DEI report



APPENDIX 5. SUPPLIER ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Note: This supplier assessment is a sample that should be adapted depending on the context.

SECTION A: COMPANY PROFILE

A1. Company size (based on employee count)

Please select one:

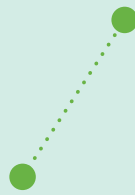
- ☐ Less than 10 employees (micro)
- ☐ 10–49 employees (small)
- ☐ 50–299 employees (medium)
- ☐ 300 or more employees (large)

A2. Ownership, management & control

1. Is the company women-owned? ☐Yes ☐No (please share certification if available)
2. Percentage of women in top executive roles (CEO, CFO, etc.): _____%
3. Percentage of women in management: _____%
4. Percentage of women on the Board of Directors: _____%

A3. Location

1. Registered legal address (country, city) _____
2. Company registration number _____
3. Primary operating site(s) (country, region, city) _____
4. Site type (HQ, plant, warehouse, service hub)_____
5. Workforce location split for the contract (banded % by country/region/site)_____
6. Are the subcontractor, if yes what is/are the locations (country/region)_____



SECTION B: WORKFORCE

B1. Workforce composition & leadership

SECTION C: GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICIES & PRACTICES (*select those questions that align with your company's strategy, policies, risk profile and category realities)

1. What are the total number of employees (FTE or headcount)_____
2. Number of women in total workforce ☐0% ☐ 1–24% ☐ 25–49% ☐50+
3. Women in management/supervisory roles ☐0% ☐ 1–24% ☐ 25–49% ☐50+

*Evidence: Organizational chart or policy link (no names required)

B2. Occupational segregation (by function)

4. Women in technical/operations roles (e.g., engineering, maintenance, production) ☐0% ☐ 1–24% ☐ 25–49% ☐50+
5. Women in commercial roles (sales, procurement, customer care) ☐0% ☐ 1–24% ☐ 25–49% ☐50+
6. Women in support roles (finance, HR, admin) ☐0% ☐ 1–24% ☐ 25–49% ☐50+

1. Commitment of leadership/management to gender equality

The company is a signatory to WEPs or an equivalent framework. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

The company has a gender-equality policy or strategy. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

Gender equality targets are established. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

The company has a public commitment to gender equality. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

Resources are allocated for gender equality. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

The company reports on gender equality goals and progress. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

2. Non-discrimination at work (human rights)

A non-discrimination policy explicitly mentions gender. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐

Complaints and resolution mechanisms exist. Yes ☐ No ☐In progress☐



3. Representation in leadership

A gender-diversity policy exists for leadership.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Leadership receives diversity and inclusion training.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Gender diversity is reported to stakeholders.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

4. Compensation

The company has a strategy/policy to close the gender pay gap.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Gender pay gap audits are conducted.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Gender pay gap results are reported.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

5. Recruitment, promotion & career opportunities

DEI training and career development programmes exist.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

A mentoring/leadership coaching programme for women exists.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

6. Work-life balance

There is a paid maternity leave policy.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

There is a paid parental leave policy.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Flexible working arrangements are in place.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Breastfeeding policy and/or accommodation are in place.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Availability of childcare.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Employee feedback is collected on work-life balance.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Reporting on work-life balance metrics.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

7. Zero tolerance for abuse, violence & sexual harassment

Policy prohibiting all forms of workplace violence and harassment.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

GBV awareness training provided.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Confidential reporting mechanisms available.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Workplace culture surveys include GBV.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Reporting on GBV measures.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

8. Health, safety & well-being

On-site health services (reproductive, maternal, newborn).

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Adequate and safe toilets for all genders.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Reporting on gender-related incidents, services, etc.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

9. Gender in procurement

Supplier code of conduct includes gender requirements.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Gender equality criteria integrated into supplier evaluation.

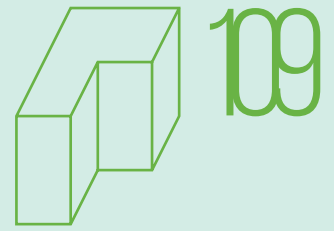
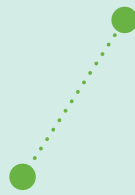
Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Procurement staff trained on GRP.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Gender-responsive procurement targets are reported.

Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐



10. Commitment to gender equality in the community

Programmes support women's decent employment and entrepreneurship. Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Partnerships with local women-business/industry groups. Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

Reporting on gender-specific community initiatives. Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐

SECTION D – SCORING (Optional)

You can apply a (weighted) scoring to each section. This can be **equal weighting** (1 point per indicator) or **weighted scoring** (based on importance)

Your tool may also categorize results into: **Starter – Intermediate – Advanced**

SECTION E – FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (for internal use)

Please answer as needed for calibration of the diagnostic tool.

1. Are the indicators for each maturity level (starter/intermediate/advanced) appropriate?
2. Are any essential indicators missing?
3. Should specific indicators apply only to certain company sizes?
4. Should sector-specific indicators be added? Which ones?
5. What documentation (evidence) should be required for each indicator?



APPENDIX 6. SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Gender-responsive supplier engagement is not a single activity but a continuous process that expands access, sets clear standards, rewards positive behaviour, measures progress and strengthens supplier capabilities – ensuring that inclusion becomes part of everyday procurement practice.

Supplier engagement is how GRP moves from policy into real market change. It ensures that women entrepreneurs can access opportunities, that suppliers adopt fair and inclusive practices, and that progress is continuously measured and strengthened. This guide presents five core pillars that buyers can use to structure inclusive, effective supplier engagement across the procurement cycle.

Pillar 1: Identify and attract new suppliers

Purpose: Expand the supplier base and make women entrepreneurs visible and enhance their ability to access procurement opportunities.

Key actions for buyers: Procurement teams should go beyond existing supplier lists and actively search for women enterprises through market mapping, supplier registries, certification systems, and partnerships with women's business associations, ministries, chambers of commerce and development organizations. Outreach activities such as supplier roadshows, "meet the buyer" sessions and open market briefings should explicitly welcome women entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Pillar 2: Clarify expectations early and throughout the relationship

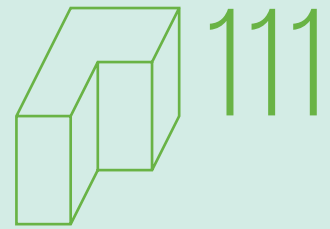
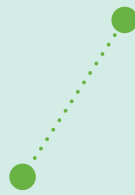
Purpose: Ensure suppliers understand and meet gender equality standards from the start.

Key actions for buyers: Expectations on gender equality should be clearly embedded in supplier codes of conduct, pre-bid briefings, tender requirements and contract clauses. These should cover non-discrimination, safe workplaces, equal pay for work of equal value, and respectful behaviour. On-going engagement through audits, performance reviews and corrective action plans helps maintain standards over time.

Pillar 3: Incentivize gender-responsive practices

Purpose: Encourage suppliers to actively improve rather than simply comply.

Key actions for buyers: Buyers can use preferential scoring in tenders, faster payment terms, public recognition, simplified administrative processes, and access to larger opportunities as incentives for suppliers that demonstrate strong gender-responsive practices or subcontract with women entrepreneurs.



Pillar 4: Collect data and track performance

Purpose: Measure progress, identify barriers and guide continuous improvement.

Key actions for buyers: Suppliers should report agreed gender indicators, such as ownership status, workforce composition, women in leadership roles, training completion, grievances and compliance with contract clauses. These data should be reviewed regularly and integrated into supplier performance management systems. (see also Module 5)

Pillar 5: Build capacity and support supplier development

Purpose: Strengthen supplier capabilities and remove structural barriers, particularly for women entrepreneurs.

Key actions for buyers: Capacity-building can include training on tendering and quality standards, mentorship programmes, technical assistance, financial literacy, support for certifications and connections to financial institutions. Commercial support such as advance payments, pilot contracts and prompt payment policies are also critical.

APPENDIX 7. GENDER-RESPONSIVE CONTRACTS CHECKLIST

This checklist can be used to identify contract clauses and processes that may unintentionally exclude women enterprises by creating disproportionate cash-flow, timing, risk or power asymmetries.

How to use: Review the (draft) contract *after award but before signature*. For each section, flag clauses and/or processes that create disproportionate financial, legal or administrative burden relative to contract value and risk.

A. Cash flow & payment

- ☐ Payment clock starts from delivery or milestone completion, not discretionary approval.
- ☐ Payment timelines are clearly defined and enforceable.
- ☐ Maximum payment period is proportionate to contract size (≤ 30 days preferred).
- ☐ Advance or mobilization payments are provided where upfront costs are significant.
- ☐ Invoicing requirements are simple and clearly documented.
- ☐ Late payment triggers interest or remedies.
- ☐ Buyer set-off rights are limited and proportionate.

Risk indicator: Supplier must pre-finance delivery for extended periods

**B. Timing & contract readiness**

- ☐ Reasonable time allowed between award and contract signature.
- ☐ Compliance requirements are phased rather than fully upfront.
- ☐ Timelines reflect capacity of SMEs, not only large firms.
- ☐ Cure periods exist before penalties or termination.
- ☐ Procedural delays do not automatically trigger default.
- ☐ "Time is of the essence" clauses are limited or balanced.

Risk indicator: Supplier failure due to timing, not capability

C. Risk allocation

- ☐ Risks assigned to the supplier are within its control.
- ☐ Liability is capped and aligned with contract value.
- ☐ Indemnities are proportionate and insurable.
- ☐ Force majeure and relief events are clearly defined.
- ☐ Supplier is not liable for buyer-controlled decisions.
- ☐ Risk is shared where outcomes depend on both parties.

Risk indicator: Existential or uninsurable supplier exposure

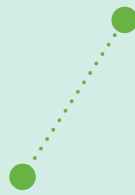
D. Insurance & financial guarantees

- ☐ Insurance thresholds are scaled to contract risk and value.
- ☐ Guarantees or bonds are proportionate and phased.
- ☐ Alternatives to bank guarantees are permitted.
- ☐ Insurance and guarantees are not required fully upfront.
- ☐ Local insurance market realities are considered.

Risk indicator: Awarded supplier cannot meet insurance requirements in time

E. Buyer discretion & power balance

- ☐ Buyer discretion is clearly defined and limited.
- ☐ Acceptance criteria are objective and transparent.
- ☐ Scope changes require mutual agreement.



- ☐ “Reasonable” judgments are defined or bounded.
- ☐ No clauses allow silent delay or informal pressure.

Risk indicator: Supplier performance depends on buyer goodwill

F. Termination & default

- ☐ Termination for convenience is limited.
- ☐ Notice periods are reasonable.
- ☐ Supplier is compensated for verified sunken costs.
- ☐ Default penalties are corrective, not punitive.
- ☐ Escalation steps precede termination.

Risk indicator: Supplier exits due to fear of termination

G. Administrative burden

- ☐ Reporting requirements are proportionate to contract value.
- ☐ Documentation requirements are realistic for SMEs.
- ☐ Compliance costs are not front-loaded unnecessarily.
- ☐ Support or guidance is provided for compliance.
- ☐ Audit rights are reasonable and notice-based.

Risk indicator: Administrative overload before revenue begins

H. Subcontracting & supplier autonomy

- ☐ Supplier retains control over subcontracting decisions.
- ☐ Buyer cannot impose preferred subcontractors without justification.
- ☐ Supplier is protected from post-award displacement.
- ☐ Subcontracting terms do not squeeze supplier margins.

Risk indicator: Supplier reduced to pass-through role



I. Language & framing

- ☐ Contract uses gender-neutral language by design.
- ☐ Obligations reflect partnership, not only control.
- ☐ “Standard supplier” assumptions are challenged.
- ☐ Inclusion commitments are reflected beyond policy clauses.

Risk indicator: Inclusion is symbolic rather than operational

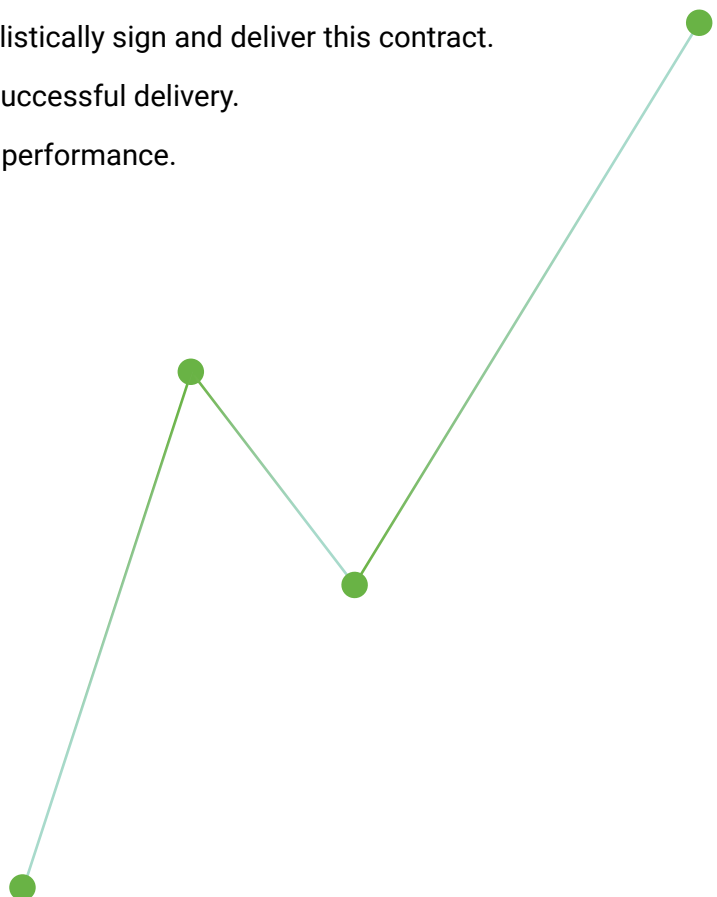
J. Contract conversion & monitoring

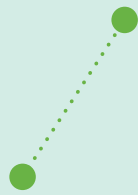
- ☐ Risk of award-to-signature drop-off is assessed.
- ☐ Contract readiness barriers are documented.
- ☐ Time-to-signature is monitored.
- ☐ Sex-disaggregated supplier data are captured where possible.

Risk indicator: women entrepreneurs disproportionately fail post-award

Final check

- ☐ A capable women entrepreneur could realistically sign and deliver this contract.
- ☐ The contract increases the likelihood of successful delivery.
- ☐ Inclusion is sustained beyond award into performance.





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APPENDIX 8. TRAINING EVALUATION FORM

*(The form includes ratings for usefulness to work,
structure, admin/logistics and trainers.)*



1: Please rate the following items by circling the relevant number for your answer.

1.1. How useful was this training to your work?

Not at all Extremely useful

1 2 3 4 5 6

1.2. Please rate the overall logic and sequence/structure of the training to meet the learning objectives

Poor Excellent

1 2 3 4 5 6

1.3. Please rate the usefulness of training methods for your learning (presentations, exercises, etc.)

Not at all Extremely useful

1 2 3 4 5 6

**1.4. Please rate the admin and logistical arrangement and support**

Poor Excellent

1

2

3

4

5

6

1.5. Please rate the trainer/s

Poor Excellent

1

2

3

4

5

6

1.6. Please rate the training as a whole

Poor Excellent

1

2

3

4

5

6

2: Which part(s) of the training did you find the most useful and why?

120



3: Which part(s) of the training did you find the least useful and why?

4: For future training, what changes would you recommend for improvement, and why?

5: What needs do you have to support smooth implementation of GRP at your company?

6: Any other comments: