



PROJECT

Promoting Gender-Responsive Public Procurement
in the Agri-Food-Sector

GLOBAL FUND

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IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

International Trade Centre (ITC)

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Ecuador

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AS PART OF:



Promoting Gender-Responsive Public Procurement in the Agri-Food-Sector

As part of the Special Initiative *Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems*

THE CHALLENGE

Women face significant discrimination and barriers related to public procurement in the agri-food sector.

Governments spend 12 % of global GDP on public contracts, but women-led businesses account for only 1 % of public procurement. Yet women represent about half of the adult population and in many countries are predominantly engaged in agri-cultural activities.

There is a common perception that public procurement is largely focused on non-agricultural sectors. However, governments also source inputs from the agriculture and food sector. For instance, school feeding projects, social security programs and food services for hospitals and prisons require procurement of agricultural products. This presents opportunities for women-led businesses. In general, women-led businesses face several barriers when competing for public tenders. On the one hand, governments often lack targeted outreach to women-led or women-owned businesses, while public procurement systems are typically complex and fail to integrate gender considerations into their approach. On the other hand, women are missing tender opportunities because of limited information and tendering experience. Also, they tend to experience corruption and sexual harassment more than men. In the agricultural sector, these challenges may be intensified for women because many work in remote or underserved areas, and women-led

businesses are often smaller and less formalized compared to male-led businesses, making it harder for them to meet the requirements for public procurement.

Gender-responsive public procurement or incorporating a gender equality perspective into the public procurement process, is key to addressing these issues.

Promoting gender-responsive public procurement in agriculture can help women expand their networks, improve their competitiveness, and generate higher incomes.

Promoting gender-responsive public procurement in agriculture can help generate local jobs and enhance livelihood opportunities for women, which can alleviate rural poverty. By harnessing women's potential, governments can enhance their contributions to the economy, promote fairer and more diverse competition, and ultimately drive overall economic growth.

Furthermore, gender-responsive public procurement for school feeding and social security programs provide an important mechanism to promote food and nutrition security in times of crises. However, there is a lack of information to understand the specific challenges faced by women and their capacity building needs to successfully participate in public procurement markets for agricultural products. More information is also needed to identify entry points for an improved competitiveness of women in public procurement.



THE INNOVATION

Potentials, methods, and instruments as innovative approaches in policy advice.

Through gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP), governments can increase the participation of women-led/-owned businesses in public procurement markets. The benefits of awarding more government contracts to women-led/-owned businesses go beyond the corporate level. Apart from facilitating the growth of women's businesses, GRPP can be transformative at three levels:

1. Benefits from a development perspective:

Including more women in the agricultural sector brings a wide range of skills, experiences, and perspectives ultimately advancing the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5: Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. By enabling the growth of women-led businesses through GRPP, governments can achieve sustainable and widespread impact.

2. Benefits from an economic perspective:

When women-led/-owned agribusinesses win more contracts, they have more resources to grow and increase farm productivity. At the country level, this creates jobs in the agricultural sector.

3. Benefits from a public procurement perspective:

Encouraging the participation of more women entrepreneurs in public tenders fosters competition that is both fierce and diverse.

Methodological Approach

The project plans to:

- Identify public procurement opportunities in the agri-cultural sector and capacity-building needs in the selected country to address current gaps of women's participation in government procurement;
- Build capacities of public, private and civil society sectors in an attempt to enhance successful participation of women-led SMEs in public tenders;
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder discussions on potential areas for policy reform and build a network of practitioners;
- Contribute to the improvement of the regulatory framework for gender-sensitive public procurement systems.

In the pursuit of GRPP, it is essential to recognize that the responsibility for its success extends beyond governments alone. The active involvement and commitments of all stakeholders are fostered through various innovative participation processes (expressions of interest, collaborative analyses that include input from diverse stakeholder partnerships, etc.).

IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES

- Awareness raising campaign
- Creating knowledge resources on leveraging inclusive procurement strategies for economic development
- Analysis of barriers and opportunities for women's participation in public procurement in agricultural value chains
- Training for women and government stakeholders on identified opportunities
- Creating national-level dialogues and sharing of experiences and good practices across countries.

Public procurement can be an important tool to promote local economic development opportunities for women.

The project contributes to the achievement of the following **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**:



THE MAIN OBJECTIVE

Promoting gender-responsive public procurement for agricultural products, through research, advocacy, and capacity-building for policy-makers and women's organizations.

INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. It assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and least developed countries to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development. With its SheTrades Initiative, ITC targets all stakeholders across the trade and business ecosystem to create the right conditions and build capacities for woman.

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Author/Contact Vivian Schlegel

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Department G530 / Global Agendas for Food and Nutrition Security /
Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag)
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36, 53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 228 44 60-0, F +49 228 44 60-17 66
E i4Ag@giz.de, I www.giz.de/en/worldwide/94538.html