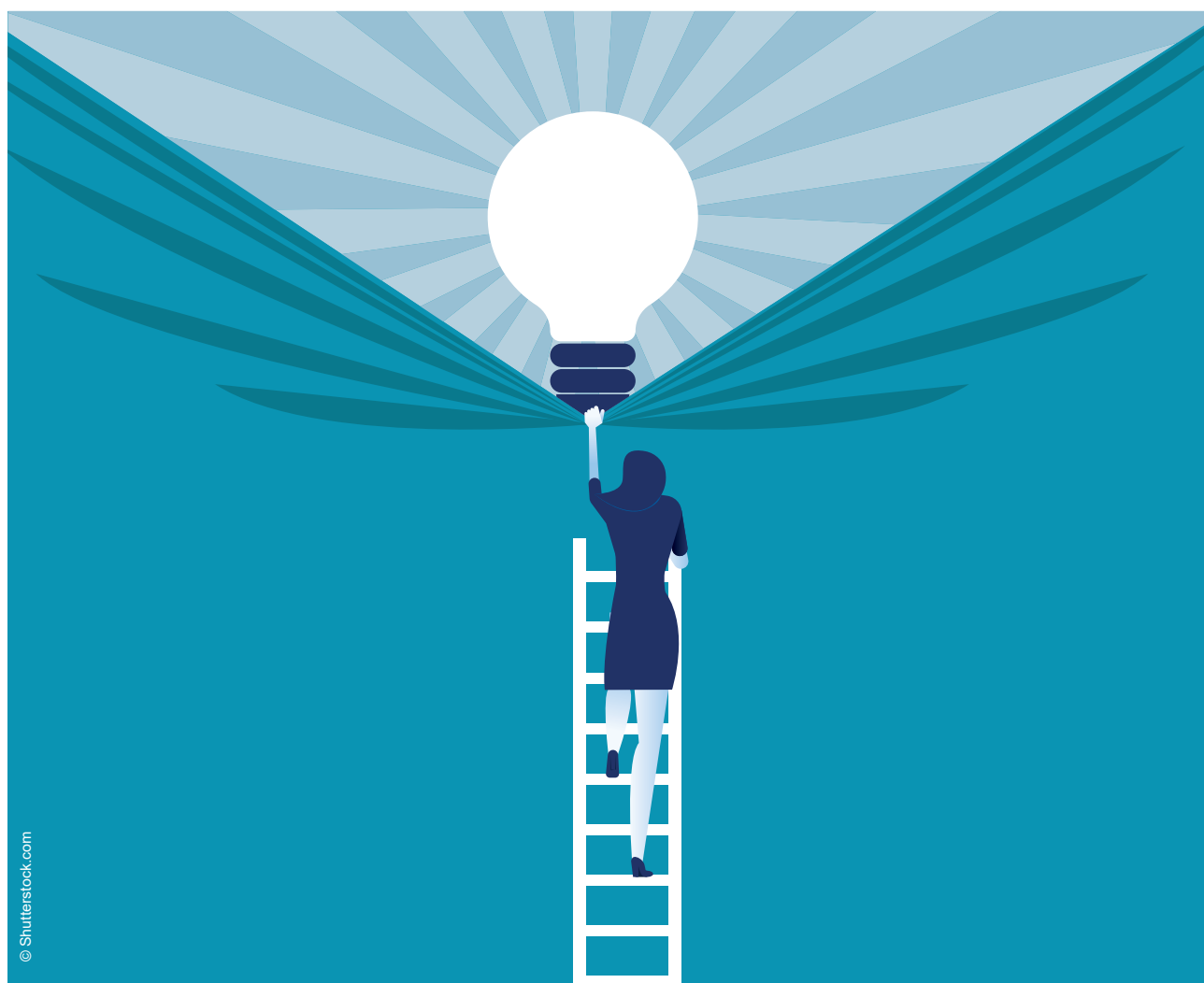


MAKING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WORK FOR WOMEN



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MAKING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WORK FOR WOMEN

ABOUT THE PAPER

Women-owned businesses account for only 1% of public procurement.

This report provides policymakers, statistical offices and procurement officers with tools for reform. It advises on how to design a roadmap, implement preferential policies and other measures, and monitor progress, drawing on case studies for best practices.

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Foreword

The year 2020, in addition to other memorable developments, marks the beginning of the global community's journey through the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals. To succeed, we must leave no one behind and must create equitable opportunities for all.

At this juncture, we should no longer be debating the economic, social and political benefits of supporting women's economic empowerment. It has been enshrined in international conventions and declarations, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and all available evidence confirms that supporting women's entrepreneurship and women-owned businesses helps to increase the pie for all to benefit. More importantly women's economic empowerment is a *sine qua non* for long term sustainable development, the ultimate goal of the SDGs.

In developed countries, public procurement accounts for almost 15% of gross domestic product; in some developing countries, this figure can reach as high as 40%. It is shocking that women-owned businesses account for a mere 1% of this critical sector. Women-owned businesses often cite lack of information about opportunities and requirements, complex procedures, and strict financial and qualification requirements as barriers to winning public tenders.

But governments have a responsibility. They can act as both buyers and advocates in increasing women's participation in public procurement. They can increase the proportion of women in direct and indirect sourcing and create supplier diversity by considering options such as minimum targets, subcontracting plans and focused capacity building initiatives. Equally important, they can lead from the front in showing why investing in women-owned businesses through procurement makes good business sense.

This publication guides policymakers, procurement officers and other stakeholders on ways that they can contribute to improving women's participation in public procurement. It provides a step-by-step guide to assess the state of their inclusion in public procurement, to identify barriers that women face, to understand policy options and procurement opportunities, to design a roadmap, and to monitor progress over time.

It also features case studies from three countries at the forefront of this initiative – Chile, the Gambia and Nigeria – which are all finding solutions to these challenges.

The International Trade Centre's extensive work to promote women in public procurement includes the 2014 guide '*Empowering Women through Public Procurement*', an e-learning course on women and procurement, a Procurement Map that indicates specific legislation for women-owned businesses, as well as in-country advisory work. This provides a foundation for crucial insights and targeted technical support that will enrich the recommendations included in this guide. Our hope is that this publication inspires discussions for policy reform to support women-owned businesses and women entrepreneurs through public procurement.

I would like to thank the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for its commitment to this work and to the larger SheTrades Initiative, which aims to connect three million women to markets by 2021.

Together, through shared knowledge and combined action, we can make a difference in supporting women-owned businesses and contributing to economic development outcomes nationally, regionally and globally.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the stark reality that women have been the most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the impetus to act is now more urgent than ever before.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton

Executive Director
International Trade Centre

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