

# SHETRADES

## PROMOTING SME COMPETITIVENESS IN KENYA





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IN KENYA

## About the paper

Women make up almost half of Kenya's labour force, yet they remain on the margins of business ownership – only 9% of Kenya's firms are majority women-owned.

Kenyan women entrepreneurs say they need better access to loans, business registries, patents, quality certifications and affordable internet access to address the gap, according to this new ITC SME Competitiveness Survey of women-owned businesses in Kenya's services sector. The survey was carried out as part of the SheTrades initiative to connect one million women to markets by 2020.

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For more information on SheTrades, see: <https://shetrades.com>

For more information on the SME Competitiveness Survey, see: <http://www.intracen.org/SMECS>

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## Foreword

Women continue to be one of the greatest untapped resources in the economic and development arsenals of governments. Unlocking the economic potential of women entrepreneurs can add up to \$28 trillion to the world's GDP by 2025, according to the McKinsey Global Institute. Yet legal, regulatory, cultural, financial, and digital barriers continue to prevent women from fully contributing to our economies.

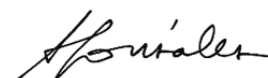
In an effort to dig deeper into this phenomenon, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the joint development agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, has undertaken a series of data gathering exercises and analyses to better understand the barriers that continue to prevent women from reaching their full potential as equal economic actors.

We are pleased to launch this report as one in a series of three publications examining women entrepreneurship in the services sector in Kenya, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. This report builds on ITC's SME Competitiveness Survey and leverages the SheTrades country experience to highlight the barriers to growth for women-owned micro, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (MSMEs) in Kenya's services sector. It highlights how policymakers, development actors, trade and investment support institutions and the private sector can build upon the recommendations to set policy and design interventions to support greater women's economic empowerment.

Launched in 2010, ITC's SheTrades Initiative aims to connect 1 million women to markets by 2020, by linking them to trade and investment opportunities. The initiative has mobilized a network of more than 800,000 women entrepreneurs, facilitated access to markets for more than 15,000 women in business, and has helped generate more than \$70 million in trade for women.

With support from the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the SheTrades Indian Ocean Rim Association project improves the competitiveness of women-owned MSMEs in Kenya, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka and helps them reach international buyers.

The findings in this report feed into the ongoing, global work on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and it is our hope that it can be an important resource to support greater integration of women into the services sector.



Arancha González  
Executive Director  
International Trade Centre

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## Contents

About the paper	ii
Foreword	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Acronyms	vii
Executive summary	viii
<b>CHAPTER 1 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KENYA</b>	<b>1</b>
ITC's SheTrades Initiative	1
More women-owned enterprises, more growth	1
The role of women and women-owned firms in Kenya's economy	2
Women tend to own and lead smaller firms	2
Women-owned firms in the informal sector	4
The benefits of micro, small and medium-sized firms	4
Kenya's vibrant services sector	5
Women-owned services firms in the retail sector	6
<b>CHAPTER 2 BARRIERS TO GROWTH FOR WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS IN KENYA</b>	<b>7</b>
ITC's SME Competitiveness Survey	7
Key features of the survey sample	8
Securing access to finance	8
High interest rates and collateral requirements	8
Loans for women-owned firms	9
Relationships with banks	10
Inheritance laws	10
Difficulties with certification bodies	10
Improving technical infrastructure	11
Meeting cost and production requirements	11
Intellectual property laws	12
Weak intellectual property protection systems	12
Poor access to information on intellectual property protection	13
Access to information and communications technology	14
Government investment	15
Keeping updated client or market information	15
Advertising through social media	17
Support from trade and investment institutions	17
Addressing bottlenecks for women entrepreneurs	17

<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS</b>	<b>19</b>
	Bringing women-owned enterprises into the formal sector	19
	Meeting financial requirements	19
	Certification and standards	20
	Cost and production requirements	20
	Intellectual property requirements	20
	Information and communications technology	21
	Linkages to institutions	21
	<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>24</b>

#### Boxes, Tables and Figures

Box 1	SheTrades in Kenya	2
Box 2	SheTrades testimonial: SendFlowers and Tando Commerce	3
Box 3	The IORA project	6
Box 4	The SheTrades web and mobile app	16
Box 5	SheTrades testimonial: Asilia Safaris	18
Table 1	The SME Competitiveness Grid	7
Table 2	Key features of the survey sample	8
Table 3	Loan applications	9
Table 4	Firm Performance by knowledge of domestic IP systems	14
Table 5	Productivity regression results	22
Table 6	Women-owned firms one tail test	23
Table 7	Men-owned firms one tail test	23
Table 8	Marginal effects from Probit model	23
Figure 1	Countries with more women-owned firms grow faster	1
Figure 2	Kenya has fewer women-owned firms than in the region	3
Figure 3	Countries with more small and medium-sized firms are richer	4
Figure 4	Overview of the services sector	5
Figure 5	Overview of the services exports	5

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