

Launch of Global Campaign on Gender-Responsive Public Procurement

BACKGROUND

Despite governments spending 12% of their global gross domestic product (GDP) on public procurement – with some developing countries reaching as high as 40% – only 1% of this goes to women-led/-owned businesses. While some governments take social outcomes into consideration for procurement, gender equality is rarely adequately addressed.

Gender-responsive procurement includes sourcing from women's enterprises and gender-responsive enterprises. Women-led/-owned businesses encounter significant socioeconomic barriers when engaging in public procurement processes, hindering their ability to upskill and actively participate in and contribute to national economic development. Women, particularly those in developing countries, also tend to encounter disproportionate challenges related to accessing financial services, market information, digital tools, and professional networks. Moving the needle on this 1% can lead to transformative outcomes for women's businesses, local communities, and the broader economy. A number of countries have started doing this: Kenya, Republic of Korea, South Africa, the United States of America, among others.

Leveraging public procurement for women's economic empowerment requires governments to take a proactive role as policymakers, buyers, and contracting parties – and this is where **gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP)** comes in.

Through GRPP, governments can increase the participation of women-led/-owned businesses in public procurement markets and promote gender-responsive businesses. Policymakers and procuring entities can design targeted assistance strategies and implement measures that effectively reduce the many barriers that women entrepreneurs face when

competing for public tenders; they can also put pressure on suppliers to improve working conditions for women.

At present, few countries have made significant strides in advancing GRPP – but a growing number has expressed interest in unlocking its untapped potential.

GRPP is a key corporate ambition outlined in ITC's 2022-2025 [Gender Moonshot](#). Additionally, [gender-responsive procurement is a key element of UN Women's Gender Equality Accelerator on Women and the World of Work](#).



Making Public Procurement Work for Women

In 2020, ITC developed a guide to provide policymakers, statistical offices and procurement officers with tools for reform. The tool advises on how to design a roadmap, implement preferential policies and other measures, and monitor progress, drawing on case studies for best practices.

Legal Frameworks for Gender-Responsive Procurement

In 2023 UN Women released a study on legal frameworks for GRP to help governments identify measures to increase procurement from women's enterprises and gender-responsive enterprises drawing on case studies from 30 countries.



Lending your voice to ITC and UN Women's global GRPP campaign

In 2024, ITC and UN Women will be launching our global GRPP campaign at two high-level global events:

- **Soft launch** on the sidelines of the [13th WTO Ministerial Conference](#) in February 2024, hosted in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates
- **Official launch** with country pledges during the [68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW 68\)](#) in March 2024, taking place in New York, the United States of America

There are two ways to show your support. If you are an international or multilateral organization, we welcome **statements of support (in the form of quotes)**. If you are governments with established GRPP programmes or governments who are keen to make their foray into GRPP, we welcome both **statements of support** and **country pledges**.

STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

Your voice matters. By joining ITC and UN Women's GRPP Global Campaign, you become an integral part of our official communication efforts, which will be disseminated across our corporate social media and digital platforms.

In the lead-up to MC13 and CSW68, ITC and UN Women welcome statements of support from Ministers of Finance, Gender, Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and Trade; heads of public procurement agencies and international or regional organizations. This will include:

- A **30- to 50-word quote in English, French or Spanish** about your country's or organization's commitment to implementing GRPP in its policies and promoting women's participation and consideration for gender equality in public tenders, as well as a call to action for other countries to do the same.
- A **high-resolution photograph** of the minister or head of organization.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

ITC and UN Women are accepting submissions of **statements of support** and **country pledges** on a rolling basis.

Kindly email quotes, photographs and/or country pledges to ITC at womenandtrade@intracen.org by 6 March 2024.

COUNTRY PLEDGES

Country commitments are pivotal to the success of ITC's and UN Women's GRPP Global Campaign. Your country can contribute to this movement by pledging to take the following suggested actions:

- **designating a focal person** in your ministry or organization to be responsible for gender-responsive public procurement.
- **implementing one or two of the below country-specific actions by 2025:**
 - adopting a national definition of women-led/-owned businesses;
 - collecting gender-disaggregated data through public procurement database;
 - providing training to ministry staff on GRPP strategies;
 - launching communication campaigns to encourage the participation of women-led/-owned businesses in public tenders;
 - conducting training sessions to enhance the competitiveness of bids from women-led/-owned businesses;
 - establishing a target percentage of government spending to be allocated to women-led/-owned businesses;
 - implementing targeted assistance strategies for GRPP;
 - Introducing standards for procurement from gender-responsive enterprises to enable decent work for women.