



Brazil

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SHETRADES OUTLOOK | 2024



International
Trade
Centre

SheTrades



UK International
Development

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity



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TIMEFRAME

**March
2018**

**March
2025**

OBJECTIVE

To increase economic growth and job creation in Commonwealth countries by enabling the increased participation of women-owned businesses in international trade. The project is funded by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and implemented by ITC under the framework of the SheTrades Initiative.

ACTIVITIES

- Provide governments with the tools, information and capacity to implement gender-responsive policies. Also offer a platform for governments to work collectively and share best practices, including through SheTrades Outlook and in-country technical assistance on policy reform.
- Provide direct support to women-owned businesses. Build their competitiveness and their capacity to participate in trade through intensive training, mentoring and coaching.
- Work with business support organizations to improve the service offering for women entrepreneurs.
- Engage private sector partners to adopt business practices that create economic opportunities for women-owned businesses.

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INTRODUCTION

SHETRADES OUTLOOK

Creating Trade Opportunities for Women in Brazil

This policy brief presents an analysis and recommendations for Brazil to unlock women's participation in trade by improving the policy ecosystem. It is based on the results of the SheTrades Outlook tool in Brazil, which collected and analysed data from 18 national institutions and five private sector organizations.

WHY DOES WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT MATTER?

Brazil is the largest economy in Latin America, with a large and diverse population that can be harnessed to drive economic growth. Women comprise more than half of the Brazilian population but their labour-force participation rate was only 53% in 2023, compared with 73% for men. Low access to education and health care, and systemic barriers such as discrimination, may contribute to women's limited participation in the economy.

Entrepreneurship can provide an avenue for women's economic inclusion and boost Brazil's economic output. Recognizing this, the [Transversal Women's Agenda \(Agenda Transversal Mulheres\) 2024–2027](#) focuses on increasing women's formal employment and promoting innovation. It addresses the specific challenges facing women by improving their access to skills and technical education, and ensuring care policies are in place that target women and reduce the burden of domestic and care work.

The Brazilian Government is also implementing the [National Strategy for Female Entrepreneurship \(Elas Empreendem Strategy\)](#). It focuses on improving women's access to markets, technology, finance and entrepreneurial skills through interministerial collaboration. The aim is to provide women entrepreneurs with targeted support and create a conducive business environment. In addition to this, the Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services (*Ministério do Desenvolvimento, Indústria, Comércio e Serviços*, MDIC), implements the [They Export \(Elas Exportam\)](#) programme which aims to increase the participation of women in international trade through skills training and networking opportunities. Tailored support and gender-responsive policies like these will be crucial in increasing women's participation in the economy through labour, entrepreneurship and trade, and ensuring Brazil's equitable growth.

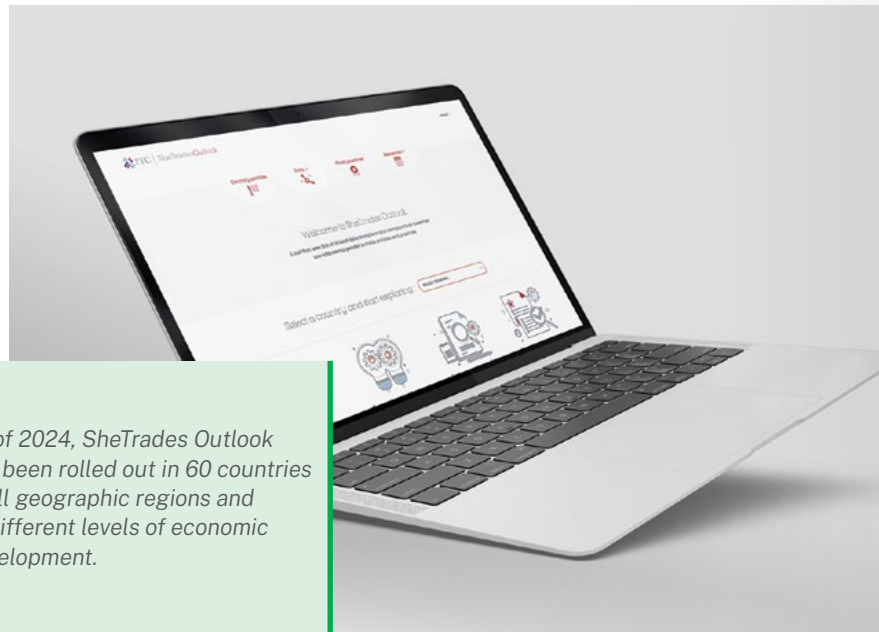
SheTrades Outlook identifies priority areas for improvement and good practices regarding women's economic empowerment in Brazil. It can, therefore, provide critical data to help policymakers implement these strategies in a way that benefits women's economic inclusion and ensures that women's economic empowerment is at the centre of Brazil's economic development agenda.

WHAT IS SHETRADES OUTLOOK?

SheTrades Outlook is an innovative, evidence-based policy tool designed by the International Trade Centre (ITC). It identifies policies, laws or programmes that contribute to or prevent women’s participation in the economy and in trade. This first-of-its-kind tool is based on 55 indicators. These are grouped under six interlinked pillars—Trade Policy, Business Environment, Legal and Regulatory Framework, Access to Skills, Access to Finance and Work and Society.

SheTrades Outlook is based on data collected by national consultants from an average of 20 national institutions and organizations per country. Data are collected through interviews based on semi-structured questionnaires. Examples of institutions surveyed include ministries of trade, education, finance, technology and women’s affairs; public procurement authorities; Customs authorities; central banks; national statistics offices; business associations; chambers of commerce; and other trade support institutions.

SheTrades Outlook also uses reliable, publicly available and recently updated databases from the Inter-Parliamentary Union; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Statistics Division; the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Additionally, national experts have identified an average of three good practices per country.



As of 2024, SheTrades Outlook has been rolled out in 60 countries in all geographic regions and of different levels of economic development.

RESULTS

SheTrades Outlook – results

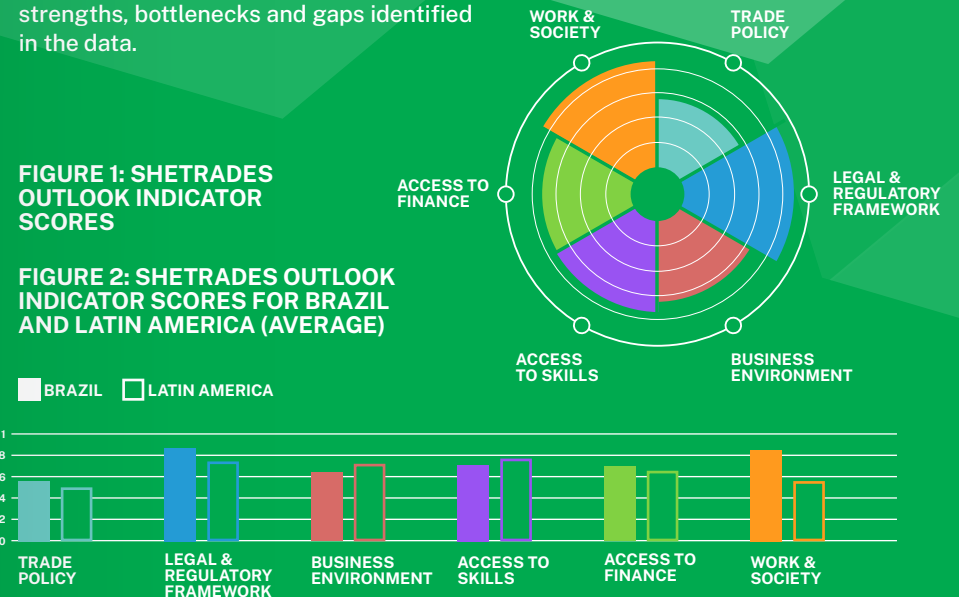
For the data collection, 23 organizations – 18 national institutions and five private sector organizations – were interviewed. Institutions were chosen based on their strategic objectives and relevance for the six pillars of the initiative. The institutional survey was conducted in 2024. This policy brief presents the latest available data.

The SheTrades Outlook indicator scores range from zero to one. Brazil performed the highest in Legal and Regulatory Framework and Work and Society. This was followed by Access to Skills, Access to Finance, Business Environment, and Trade Policy. Brazil’s performance across the six pillars is similar to the averages of Latin American countries on the SheTrades Outlook tool.¹

Detailed information on the scores under each pillar is presented below. This includes strengths, bottlenecks and gaps identified in the data.

FIGURE 1: SHETRADES OUTLOOK INDICATOR SCORES

FIGURE 2: SHETRADES OUTLOOK INDICATOR SCORES FOR BRAZIL AND LATIN AMERICA (AVERAGE)



1. These countries are: Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Mexico, and Uruguay.

TRADE POLICY



Consultation process



Initiatives or mechanisms are in place to include women's associations/organizations in consultation processes



Women's associations/organizations participate in consultation processes



Trade and gender-related concerns are included in policies and agreements



Policy or action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment includes trade-related concerns



Trade agreements or regional economic integration agreements include gender provisions



Assessment, monitoring and evaluation



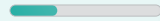
Ex-ante and ex-post gender impact assessments of trade agreements are carried out



Trade policy uses gender indicators



Gender-disaggregated data



Law or regulation mandates the collection of gender-disaggregated data



Gender-disaggregated data is collected on companies



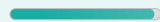
Women's participation in strategic roles



Women are represented in ministerial and parliamentary positions



Capacity building on gender issues



Trade Ministry staff receive training on gender issues



A gender focal point focusing on trade and gender issues has been established



The Trade Policy pillar focuses on the inclusiveness of trade policies, agreements and practices. It also includes the adoption of gender-responsive practices in trade and trade-related institutions.

Brazil exhibits medium performance in this pillar. There are areas where Brazil is doing well, such as:

- Including women's business associations in consultation processes
- Collecting gender-disaggregated data on companies
- Using of gender indicators in projects and programmes
- Conducting trainings for MDIC staff on trade and gender issues
- Establishing a trade and gender focal point.

However, opportunities for improvement exist in areas, such as:

- Including trade-related concerns in the national strategy on gender equality
- Incorporating gender provisions in trade policy and agreements
- Undertaking gender impact assessments of trade agreements
- Adopting an internationally recognized definition of a women-owned or women-led business
- Mandating the collection of gender-disaggregated data.

WHAT WORKS?

In Brazil, public consultations on trade agreements are made available on the Brasil Participativo platform, run by the federal government. The platform is open to any individual or legal entity. The MDIC has started cooperating with women's business associations such as Women Inside Trade and Women in Comex (*Mulheres no Comex*) to invite women to participate in public consultations. The Foreign Trade Chamber (*Câmara de Comércio Exterior*) and the Secretariat of Foreign Trade (*Secretaria de Comércio Exterior*) are prioritizing gender equality and female representation in forums such as the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (*Comitê Nacional de Facilitação de Comércio* (CONFAC)). So far, four women's business associations from the private sector have applied to join CONFAC and the Association of Women Experts in Foreign Trade has been approved. Women's participation in consultation processes on trade policies and agreements can help ensure that the specific needs and challenges that women face are addressed by policy. MDIC can also consider collecting gender-disaggregated data on participants in consultations.

Several national institutions in Brazil collect different types of gender-disaggregated data on companies. For instance, MDIC conducted a study in 2023 on women in the exporting sector in Brazil and found that 14% of exporting companies in Brazil have women-majority boards. The Ministry of Labour and Employment (*Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego*, MTE), and the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (*Agência Brasileira de Promoção de Exportações e Investimentos*, ApexBrasil) also collect gender-disaggregated data on company employment and ownership.

Trade policies and projects in Brazil use gender indicators for monitoring and evaluation. For instance, MDIC implements the *Elas Exportam* programme which provides skills training and networking opportunities to women to increase their participation in foreign trade. It has a target of supporting 100 women every year. The National Committee for the Promotion of Export Culture's (CNPCE) work plan includes an indicator on the number of exporting companies with a female-majority ownership between 2022 and 2025. The National Foreign Trade Strategy proposal, submitted for public consultation, also includes an indicator on the implementation of commercial intelligence and training actions to boost exports of women-led companies, under the Export Competitiveness thematic pillar.

MDIC provides trainings to its staff on trade and gender issues. In 2024, it has collaborated with the Brazilian National School of Public Administration (Enap) to organize an online training on gender leadership for its staff. MDIC has also collaborated with the Inter-American Development Bank to organize a training on trade and gender for partners and staff. Staff from MDIC also attended training courses with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Gender (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) on trade and gender.



Finally, the Department of Promotion of Exports and Trade Facilitation (DPFAC), under MDIC, is tasked with planning and executing inclusion initiatives in international trade, considering factors such as gender disparity, among others. This provision has enabled the department to carry out a series of activities aimed at promoting women's participation in foreign trade. The Department of International Negotiations under the MDIC is in charge of negotiating trade and gender provisions in free trade agreements. As a result, DEINT is Brazil's focal point in the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement, along with DPFAC.



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WHERE IS MORE PROGRESS NEEDED?

Some national institutions use a variety of definitions to identify a woman-owned business. For instance, when extracting information on company ownership from the National Register of Legal Entities (*Cadastro Nacional da Pessoa Juridica*), a woman-owned business is identified as one where the person designated in the company's articles of incorporation as the managing partner or the president is a woman. In limited liability companies, if the majority owner is a woman, the business is considered a woman-owned/led business. ApexBrasil defines a woman-owned/led business as a company with 100% ownership by a woman or at least 51% of its share capital held by one or more women; or that has one or more women on its main leadership board or in key decision-making positions. The Bank of Brazil (*Banco de Brasil*) defines a company as women-owned if women hold at least 40% of the company's shares. Brazil can consider adopting an internationally recognized standard definition of a woman-owned² or women-led³ business as prescribed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) [International Workshop Agreement \(IWA\) 34: Women's entrepreneurship – Key definitions and general criteria](#). Using such a standard definition across institutions can help better target beneficiaries of women's economic empowerment programmes and monitor the impacts of these programmes.

2. Women-owned business – business that is over 50% owned by one or more women, whose management and control lie with one or more women, where a woman is authorized to sign the legal documents and financial accounts of a business, and which is operated independently from businesses that are not owned by women.

3. Women-led business – business that is at least 25% owned by one or more women; whose management and control lie with one or more women; which has at least one third of the board of directors comprised of women, where a board exists; where a woman is authorized to sign the legal documents and financial accounts of a business; and which is operated independently from businesses that are neither led nor owned by women.

The government can consider establishing a law to mandate the collection of gender-disaggregated data across all agencies and departments.

The Government of Brazil launched the Transversal Women's Agenda in 2024. It is the country's gender equality strategy, which aims to improve women's access to formal employment and business as well as innovation. It also sets a target to increase women's entrepreneurship in the country by accelerating 30 women-led start-ups per year. However, given the export potential of Brazil, there is also an opportunity to include trade concerns in the Transversal Women's Agenda.

In SheTrades Outlook, the levels of gender responsiveness in trade agreements are rated as 'limited', 'evolving' or 'advanced'. Brazil is party to 10 free trade agreements. Only the Free Trade Agreement between the Republic of Chile and the Federative Republic of Brazil has an advanced level of gender responsiveness. However, Brazil is increasingly negotiating to include gender provisions in its trade agreements. For instance, Brazil has proposed the inclusion of a trade and women's empowerment chapter in all future trade agreement negotiations between Mercosur and partner countries, and has already drafted a proposal for this chapter for review and discussion among the bloc's members. In Mercosur's ongoing negotiations with Canada and the United Arab Emirates there's a dedicated chapter on trade and gender/women economic empowerment included. Mercosur is also in the final stages of the negotiation with the European Union, which has several provisions on trade and gender. In addition to this, Brazil supported the creation of the Working Subgroup on Women and Trade within Mercosur which is an exclusive forum aimed at addressing the participation of women from Mercosur in trade. Brazil has also recently joined the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement. Incorporating gender equality issues in trade agreements can enable women's participation in the economy through trade and increase opportunities for decent work. The government can also refer to the ITC policy guide, [Mainstreaming Gender in Free Trade Agreements](#) for specific recommendations and model clauses to improve women's participation in trade through trade agreements.

Lastly, MDIC can consider conducting gender impact assessments before and after signing a trade agreement, to ensure that the benefits for women of trade agreements are maximized, while minimizing the negative impacts.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Signing, ratification and enforcement of key international conventions

Country has ratified the CEDAW and CEDAW optional protocol



Country has ratified and enforced ILO Conventions 100, 111, and 183



Gender-responsive budgeting approach

Government uses gender-responsive budgeting approach



Laws that facilitate access to productive resources

Law provides women and men with equal rights to property and access to financial services



Laws that facilitate access to the labour market

Law mandates non-discrimination in employment based on gender, protection from sexual harassment and equal remuneration for work of equal value



Paid parental leave policies

Maternity leave benefit is mandated



Paternity leave benefit is mandated



Childcare and education support and facilities

Parents receive childcare and education support



This pillar assesses a country's adoption of laws and regulations protecting and promoting women's rights. It also covers laws and policies encouraging women's entry into, and continuity and advancement in, labour markets. An example would be laws that support women to combine work with childcare responsibilities.

Over 50% of the data for this pillar was sourced from the World Bank Women, Business and the Law; the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Information System on International Labour Standards.

Brazil's performance in this pillar is the highest. This is linked to the ratification of international conventions and the establishment of national laws that provide men and women with equal rights to ownership and inheritance of property as well as to open a bank account, provide equal remuneration to men and women for work of equal value and prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. The government also provides paternity leave and childcare benefits, and has adopted a gender-responsive budgeting approach.



WHAT WORKS?

Internationally, Brazil has demonstrated its commitment to gender equality by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the CEDAW Optional Protocol, as well as the ILO Conventions 100 (equal remuneration) and 111 (non-discrimination in employment and occupation).

Domestically, the government has legislated to ensure women and men have equal ownership and inheritance rights to property. Brazil also has laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender both when opening a bank account and in employment, ensuring equal remuneration for equal work for men and women, and protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.

The Government of Brazil uses a medium-term planning tool called the Pluriannual Plan, which is used along with the Budgetary Guidelines Law and the Annual Budget Law. This Plan outlines the strategic direction for the federal government over a four-year period. It includes a gender agenda where all federal government initiatives for women over the next four years are identified and outlined. The gender agenda includes goals related to enhancing women's socioeconomic inclusion and economic autonomy, health, well-being, education, training and caregiving, as well as violence prevention. The Government of Brazil is undertaking a review process to benchmark the progress made on gender-responsive budgeting against other countries such as Australia, Canada and Iceland. Preliminary findings have recognized substantial strides made by Brazil in structuring the budget to address the needs of women. In addition to this, the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (*Ministério do Planejamento e Orçamento*, MPO) has been publishing an annual report since 2019 called 'Budget for Women', which details the indirect and direct benefits of the expenditures on women's economic empowerment programmes.

The Consolidation of Labour Laws (*Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho*) mandates maternity leave for four months (16 weeks) with full pay. Fathers also receive paternity leave of five days with full pay. National legislation mandates companies with 50 employees or more to provide daycare facilities or offer financial assistance to their formal employees to cover partial or total childcare costs.



WHERE IS MORE PROGRESS NEEDED?

Brazil can consider ratifying ILO Convention 183 on maternity protection.

The government can also establish a law to prohibit discrimination in access to credit.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



Representation of women business associations	
Women's business associations are represented at the national level	
Women-led businesses participate in activities conducted by chambers of commerce	
Business start-ups	
Support services are available when establishing a company	
National institutions implement incubator/accelerator programmes	
Access to trade and customs information	
Help and information desks are available at government offices to assist companies in complying with national regulations and export/import requirements	
Information on changes in customs procedures and trade regulations are announced in a timely manner	
Public procurement	
Information on public procurement process, vendors and transactions are available	
Preferential scheme on public procurement for women-led businesses is implemented	
Reporting and monitoring unfair practices in trade	
Means exist for women and men to report complaints on wrongdoing on trade regulations or procedures	
Trade facilitation and gender-responsive framework in customs	
Single-window electronic interface is available	
Gender-sensitive guidelines by the World Customs Organization or other national monitoring framework is implemented	
Border-level customs agents and officials receive training on gender-sensitive practices	



A business ecosystem conducive to resilient growth is essential throughout the business cycle. This pillar focuses on the inclusiveness of the business ecosystem and covers the industry bodies supporting women's entrepreneurship. It also assesses the ease and cost of establishing and running a business, trading across borders, and accessing information and public procurement markets.

Brazil has a medium score in this pillar. This is due to the existence of women's business associations in Brazil; the availability of business support services, incubators and accelerator programmes; and the establishment of help desks and grievance redress mechanisms. Information about changes in Customs rules and public tenders is published online. Brazil has also fully implemented a single window electronic interface. However, opportunities for improvement exist, such as adopting gender-sensitive practices in Customs and training Customs officers on gender issues, collecting gender-disaggregated data on suppliers in public procurement, raising awareness on gender-responsive public procurement, and adopting a preferential scheme for women-owned businesses in public procurement.

WHAT WORKS?

There are several women's business associations in the country at the national level, such as Women Inside Trade, the Association of Women Experts in Foreign Trade, Women in Comex (*Mulheres no Comex*), and the Business Convergence of Brazilian Women in the Southern Common Market (*Convergência Empresarial de Mulheres Brasileiras no Mercosul*).

Women-led businesses regularly participate in activities organized by the American Chamber of Commerce. These activities include webinars on business development, the Diversity Forum on developing women's leadership, and a webinar on the Brazil-United States agreement on trade and economic cooperation, among others.

Business support services are available when establishing a company in Brazil. For instance, the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (*Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas*, SEBRAE) has 3,000 Entrepreneurial Service Points located throughout Brazil. These points provide support to entrepreneurs via chat services, toll-free numbers and WhatsApp, as well as on-site business consulting. SEBRAE also provides online information on the registration process for a company and implements SEBRAE Start-ups, which supports innovative start-ups throughout Brazil through training, fundraising, internationalization and networking. In total, SEBRAE has assisted more than 4,000 start-ups across all regions of the country.

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship, Microenterprise and Small Business (*Ministério do Empreendedorismo, da Microempresa e da Empresa de Pequeno Porte*, MEMP) provides support services to individual microentrepreneurs through online information about the registration process, and collaborates with the Government of Brazil to help with seamless business registration. The Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock in Brazil (*Confederação da Agricultura e Pecuária do Brasil*, CNA) provides counselling and information support through its rural unions and through its website.

Incubator and accelerator programmes are also available for start-ups, with some targeting women entrepreneurs. For instance, MDIC and SEBRAE along with the National School of Public Administration and Impact Hub Brazil implement the [Tech Female Entrepreneurs \(*Empreendedoras Tech*\)](#) programme, which aims to accelerate projects focused on technological innovations led or co-led by women. In 2024, the programme had 70 female participants and awarded the three best projects R\$50,000 each. The Funding Authority for Studies and Projects and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation implement the [Innovative Women Programme](#) that provides acceleration, training and networking for 30 start-ups led by women from all regions of Brazil. The prizes range from BRL 52,000 to BRL 100,000 for all companies that complete the acceleration process.

The Women Entrepreneurs Network (*Rede Mulher Empreendedor*, RME) also implements two accelerators targeting women entrepreneurs:

- I. The [RME Take Off Girl Acceleration Programme \(*Decola Garota*\)](#), in partnership with Amazon, which is a free and virtual accelerator.
- II. The [She Can \(*Ela Pode*\)](#) programme, which provides women entrepreneurs with financial support worth BRL 2,000 to invest in their businesses. The objective of the *Ela Pode* programme is to reach 300,000 trained women across the five regions of Brazil. Out of the 300,000 women, 2,670 will be selected across multiple cycles for acceleration and provided seed capital by the end of 2025.

[InovAtiva](#) and the CNA Hub are also accelerator programmes available in Brazil.

The Federal Revenue Service has an [online portal](#) dedicated to information regarding foreign trade, Customs procedures and import/export regulations.



MDIC, along with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under the Brazil-United Kingdom Trade Facilitation programme, created the *Brasil Exportação* platform, together with partner institutions. The platform, operated by ApexBrazil, connects Brazilian companies – especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) – to export service providers. Services provided include business training, market intelligence, trade promotion, financing, insurance and guarantees, logistics, Customs clearance, and documentation. MDIC also implements the [Access the World \(*Acesse o Mundo*\)](#) programme, which is a digital service provided by the federal government that enables any Brazilian company (particularly MSMEs) from any region or sector to receive a free and automated assessment of their export readiness. The programme also provides a personalized list of actions for internationalization. This includes identifying the export services necessary to access or expand sales in international markets.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministério das Relações Exteriores*) provides support services to Brazilian companies interested in expanding their operations or even establishing themselves in international markets. This support is offered through the Trade Promotion and Investment Sectors (SECOMs) located in Brazilian embassies across 126 countries. Through SECOMs, companies can access step-by-step guides on how to enter specific international markets, submit online support requests, and utilize digital materials such as studies produced by SECOM. They can also receive market advice and information on trade rules in their target export/import markets.

The Brazilian International Tourism Promotion Agency (*Agência Brasileira de Promoção Internacional do Turismo*, EMBRATUR), CNA, the National Confederation of Industry (*Confederação Nacional da Indústria*, CNI) and the Brazilian Network of International Business Centres also provide online information and counselling support to businesses trying to export.

Updated information about Customs changes is visible at borders. It is also published online on the *Sistema Integrado de Comércio Exterior* ([SISCOMEX portal](#)). In addition to this, the SISCOMEX portal sends notifications when regulations are updated online. Private paid tools also generate alerts for users on changes in Customs regulations.

The [Public Procurement Law No. 14.133](#) mandates that information on all public procurement processes must include clear rules for companies to participate, and institutions must adhere to deadlines for the publication and receipt of supplier proposals. Information on application and selection processes for public tenders is therefore regularly published online on the [Compras \(Federal Government Purchasing Portal\) website](#). It is also widely published in newspapers and the Official Gazette of the Union. Federal agencies have also started publishing procurement forecasts for the upcoming year to enable businesses to prepare for their participation. However, some business associations feel that the system is complex and needs constant navigation in order to find the correct information.

Brazil has fully implemented a [single window electronic interface](#). It is currently in the process of integrating import services. At present, nine trade and Customs procedures can be completed online:

1. Electronic Customs declarations
2. Electronic application for and issuance of import and export permits
3. Electronic submission of sea/air cargo manifests
4. Electronic application for and issuance of a preferential certificate of origin
5. Electronic application for and issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates
6. E-payment of Customs duties and fees
7. Electronic application for Customs refunds
8. Electronic exchange of Customs declarations / certificates of origin / sanitary and phytosanitary certificates between Brazil and other countries
9. Import and export licences

There are mechanisms in place in Brazil to register complaints about wrongdoing in trade regulations and procedures, such as the [Electronic System for Monitoring Barriers to Exports](#). This channel allows for dialogue with the federal government to address measures that hinder Brazilian exporters' access to international markets. Complaints can also be filed through the Federal Revenue Service website.

WHERE IS MORE PROGRESS NEEDED?

The Compras website centralizes information on all public procurement transactions conducted by federal, state, and municipal governments. However, there is no gender-disaggregated database on vendors. Having gender-disaggregated data on suppliers can help map women's participation in government procurement and identify women-led businesses that should be notified regarding smaller public tenders.

While the Public Procurement Law No. 14.133 mandates that contracts must include a provision for employing women who are victims of domestic violence, with a minimum quota of 8% of the total number of positions, there is no preferential scheme in public procurement targeted towards women-led businesses. The Government of Brazil also implements a Food Acquisition Programme that allows federal, state, federal district, and municipal agencies to purchase food produced by family farming (a sector with many women entrepreneurs) through public calls, using their own financial resources, and exempt from bidding procedures. The government can also consider adopting a gender-responsive public procurement approach that can ensure that women and men can equally submit bids, win tenders and supply to the government. The first step is to raise awareness on gender-responsive public procurement among the Federal Court of Auditors (*Tribunal de Contas da União*, TCU) and other procurement entities. The TCU can consider implementing targeted measures, such as quotas and targets for women-led businesses in procurement opportunities and requiring suppliers to subcontract women-led businesses. ITC's policy guide, [Making Public Procurement Work for Women](#), provides specific steps to reshape public procurement and improve women's participation.

The government can consider adopting gender-sensitive Customs practices and procedures, and provide training to Customs officials on gender issues. It can also collect gender-disaggregated data on persons reporting trade malpractices. This can help assess women's needs and track how trade policy can be improved to benefit women.

ACCESS TO SKILLS



Education and literacy	
Law mandates compulsory education	
Gender disaggregated data on adult literacy	
Skills programmes for workers and entrepreneurs	
Enrolment rate in technical and vocational programmes (female/male ratio)	
Skills training programmes for workers are conducted	
Business skills training for MSME owners are conducted	
Training to facilitate access to markets are conducted	
Targeted support and capacity building programmes for women	
National institutions provide targeted support and capacity building programmes for women	
Access to ICT and business innovation support	
Policies and programmes are in place to support women's business innovation	
Access to internet	



Improved access to education is essential to building necessary skills and reducing the inequality of opportunities between men and women. It is also vital to break the vicious cycle of poverty. This pillar focuses on measures designed to enhance women's abilities and business-related skills. One objective is to close the education gap. Another is to equip women with the capacity to

compete and succeed in international markets and occupations traditionally dominated by men.

Brazil has a medium-high performance in this pillar. This is related to the availability of upskilling programmes for workers and entrepreneurs, training on trade rules and regulations, and targeted support and incentives for women's business associations. The Brazilian Government also collects gender-disaggregated statistics on internet and mobile phone usage.

WHAT WORKS?

Brazil has a group of institutions that form System S (*Sistema S*). These organizations are maintained using resources from private companies; however, their role is to provide vocational training; promote professional and educational development; improve workforce skills; and support industry sectors through training, research and technical assistance. For instance, under System S, the National Industrial Training Service offers a Catalogue of Professional and Technological Education Courses with educational pathways in 37 technological areas, encompassing 606 courses.

MTE also implements the [Workers' School 4.0 \(*Escola do Trabalhador 4.0*\)](#), which is a platform that offers free courses for beginners on digital literacy, personal productivity, introduction to programming, and collaborative productivity. It also includes advanced courses in IT administration, software development, artificial intelligence and data science, among others.

SEBRAE provides numerous in-person and online courses for entrepreneurs. Examples of course topics include financial management, digital marketing for entrepreneurs, communication in sales for small businesses, and leadership, among many others. It has also collaborated with the Brazilian Association for the Production of Audiovisual Works and EMBRATUR to offer trainings to entrepreneurs.



RME provides trainings targeted at women entrepreneurs. The RME Institute creates a comprehensive map of initiatives in Brazil promoting female empowerment across various sectors. RME also implements the RME Connects programme, which connects women-led businesses with large companies for business-to-business sales.

Training is available to help entrepreneurs navigate trade rules and regulations. Decree No. 9326 of 2018 on the Trade Facilitation Agreement in Brazil mandates all Customs units to hold quarterly meetings with the Customs community (importers, exporters, Customs brokers, warehouse operators, facility administrators, carriers, etc.). Four meetings are held every year at each of the 29 Customs units in Brazil.

MDIC implements the [Learning to Export \(Aprendendo a Exportar\)](#) programme, which focuses on raising awareness on the operational procedures of exporting. It is designed to provide information suitable for users at different knowledge levels and is tailored to their specific interests. Topics include identifying markets, promoting products, learning to export, etc.

ApexBrasil implements the [Export Qualification Programme \(PEIEX\)](#), which helps companies start exporting in a planned and secure manner. ApexBrasil undertakes consultations with the companies and provides them with an export plan to guide their international entry. As part of the programme, companies are also provided with trainings on process and product management improvement. In 2024, out of 2,578 total participants, 703 were women.

CNI and EMBRATUR also provide trainings on trade rules.

MDIC, along with ApexBrasil, implements the [They Export \(Elas Exportam\)](#) programme, which is aimed at increasing the participation of women-led companies in foreign trade. It offers a mentoring programme that connects women entrepreneurs looking to export with experienced women entrepreneurs in international trade. Fifty women-led businesses have benefited from the programme.

ApexBrasil also launched the [Women and International Business Programme](#) in 2023. The programme provides women-led businesses with courses, business matchmaking events, and opportunities to expand their export activities. ApexBrasil and CNI implement the [Global Women programme](#), which selects 20 businesswomen who will be mentored by experts in foreign trade to promote e-commerce as an expansion and internationalization strategy, develop skills in management and digital marketing, and receive trainings on value proposition and business models.

In partnership with ApexBrasil, the Bank of Brazil (*Banco do Brasil*) and CNA also offer capacity-building programmes for women entrepreneurs, such as the First Export Programme – Women in the World Edition and Agro.BR.

SEBRAE implements the [SEBRAE for Women \(SEBRAE Delas\)](#) programme. The programme provides women entrepreneurs with exclusive content on building and managing a business; professional and personal development activities through seminars, mentoring, and consulting services; and networking opportunities. Between 2019 and 2024, close to 17 million women benefited from the programme.

Finally, the government in Brazil collects gender-disaggregated statistics on internet and mobile usage. In 2023, 88% of women had mobile phones compared to 85% of men, and 88.7% of women used the Internet compared to 87.3% of men.



WHERE IS MORE PROGRESS NEEDED?

There are programmes in place to support business innovation. For instance, MDIC implements the [Brazil More Productive \(Brasil Mais Produtivo\)](#) programme that aims to support MSMEs throughout Brazil to improve productivity and achieve digital transformation. The goal is to impact up to 200,000 industrial companies.

The Brazilian Industrial Development Agency (*Agência Brasileira de Desenvolvimento Industrial*, ABDI) implements the [Start-up Industry Programme \(Programa Start-up Industria\)](#) which aims to support the implementation of projects and experiments from start-ups and other companies on innovative solutions for industries. ABDI also implements the [Digital.BR programme](#), aimed at stimulating and promoting policies and projects focused on the digital transformation of MSMEs in the secondary and tertiary economic sectors. The Digital Journey is another project by ABDI, which provides business with a shortcut towards their digital transformation. Through this platform, companies have access to self-assessment tools to assess digital maturity, technological solutions and best digital practices. There is an opportunity here for the government to mainstream gender in these programmes to ensure that they benefit women.

National institutions can also consider offering incentives to women to encourage their participation in training programmes.

ACCESS TO FINANCE



Access to financial services	
Digital financial services are available	
There is access to formal financial resources (female/male ratio)	
Financial inclusion strategies and programmes	
Financial inclusion strategy or programme is implemented	
Financial support for women-led businesses and women's business associations	
Women-led businesses receive financial support to participate in trade fairs	
Fiscal and trade finance schemes	
Financial institutions are mandated to report gender-disaggregated data	
Fiscal schemes are available to facilitate entrepreneurial opportunities	
Trade finance schemes are available in the country to facilitate trade	
Financial instruments and other financing opportunities	
Financial instruments are available to support entrepreneurial opportunities	
Venture capital financing opportunities are available to support women entrepreneurs	



This pillar focuses on women's access to formal financial services. It also covers whether governments – alone or in partnership with the private sector – have developed innovative solutions to promote financial inclusion for women. Examples include removing or modifying bank requirements for physical collateral or verifiable cash flow so that women can access finance more easily.

Brazil has a medium–high performance in this pillar. This is related to several factors, including the availability of digital financial services, implementation of financial literacy programmes, providing financial support to women-led businesses to participate in trade fairs, and providing a trade finance scheme as well as financial schemes targeted at women.

WHAT WORKS?

Digital financial services – including mobile banking, online banking, issuing payments and sending/receiving money internationally – are available in Brazil.

There are several financial literacy programmes in the country. The Ministry of Education launched the National Financial Education Strategy in 2010, which aims to promote financial and pension education and improve the efficiency of the national financial system. The Bank of Brazil implements the Women at the Top (*Mulheres no Topo*) programme, which provides financial literacy training to participants. The National Programme for Productive Microcredit by the Credit Guarantee Fund, SEBRAE for Women, and RME also provide financial literacy trainings to women.

Women-led businesses also receive financial support to participate in trade fairs. As part of SEBRAE for Women, SEBRAE provides women-owned businesses with transport costs and booth rentals at trade fairs. As part of Agro.BR Women, CNA cover the travel and flight costs of women agri-entrepreneurs participating in trade fairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides financial support for purchasing exhibition spaces at various international trade fairs. In collaboration with ApexBrasil, the Brazil Speciality Coffee Association supports its members' participation in international trade fairs by purchasing booth space and providing assistance with booth construction. Thirteen women-led businesses were supported to participate in an international mission to Denmark. EMBRATUR also provides subsidies to its members to rent floor space and booths at international trade fairs.

There are several trade finance schemes in the country. For instance, the [Export Financing Program](#) (Programa de Financiamento às Exportações, ProEx) is a programme that supports the internationalization of Brazilian companies by providing them with financial assistance and incentives for exporting. It provides financial resources to cover costs associated with exporting as well as export credit facilities. There is also the [Export Guarantee Fund](#), which provides coverage for guarantees granted by the Union in Export Credit Insurance operations. The Government of Brazil implements the Export Development Support Fund (*Fundo de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento das Exportações*), which offers financial solutions to help manage exchange rate risks and improve export operations. Financial solutions include preferential financing rates, risk mitigation tools and other financial products. Trade finance schemes can help exporters access the capital necessary to sell their products in international markets. The government can consider creating a financing window for women-led businesses, as well as ensuring that women-led businesses are aware of existing trade finance schemes in the country.

Financial instruments to support women entrepreneurs are also available in the country. For instance, the Bank of Brazil implements several initiatives such as the Women on the Top programme, the Entrepreneurial Women's Working Capital initiative and the FCO Female Entrepreneur programme to offer financial support such as microcredit, working capital and financing to women. The Brazilian Development Bank implements the National Programme for Strengthening Family Farming for Women, which is a credit line exclusively for female family producers. RME implements the They Thrive (*Elas Prosperam*) project to empower women entrepreneurs so they can structure their businesses and gain access to the necessary capital to expand them. The programme provides training on knowledge and skills as well as a chance to apply for financial support worth BRL 10,000.



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WHERE IS MORE PROGRESS NEEDED?

The Government of Brazil can consider adopting a national financial inclusion strategy. This can ensure that women are able to access formal financial services and benefit from tailored financial support.

There is an opportunity for the government to provide venture capital financing opportunities, particularly targeted at women.

Lastly, the government can encourage financial institutions to report gender-disaggregated data.

WORK AND SOCIETY



Woman's opportunities in the labour market



Women are allowed to work in the same industries and perform the same tasks as men



Estimated annual earned income, US\$ PPP (female-male ratio)



Labour force participation rate (female-male ratio)



Female share of employment in managerial positions (%)



Time spent on unpaid work



Time-use on unpaid domestic chores and care work (male-female ratio)



This pillar addresses the unconscious or conscious gender biases that prevent women from participating equally in the economy. This includes existing patterns of job segregation and the interventions set up by governments to address these biases. Brazil has a high score in this pillar.

WHAT WORKS?

Brazil provides a conducive legal framework that allows women to work in the same industries as men.

Time-use data is collected in Brazil. In 2022, women spent 9.6 more hours than men on domestic chores and/or caregiving. This is a decrease from the 2019 figures that showed that women spent 10.6 more hours than men on domestic chores and/or caregiving.

WHERE IS MORE PROGRESS NEEDED?

Brazil has an opportunity to facilitate the participation of women in managerial positions. In 2023, women occupied only 39.8% of managerial positions.

The gender wage gap persists in Brazil. In 2024, the female-to-male gender wage gap ratio in Brazil was 0.716.



The way forward

The Government of Brazil recognizes that women's participation in the economy is essential to reduce inequalities and ensure better economic outcomes. It aims to invest in the development of women as human capital and promote women's entrepreneurship through programmes such as the National Strategy for Female Entrepreneurship as well as the Transversal Women's Agenda 2024–2027. For instance, the goals of the Transversal Women's Agenda aim to promote women's formal employment through skills training, reduce the burden of unpaid domestic and care work on women, support rural women and women in agriculture through technical assistance, and promote tourism services.

Based on the SheTrades Outlook results, Brazil has made progress on several of these goals. For instance, Brazil has several skills training programmes in place, including some targeting women. The government also mandates the provision of childcare and education support. There are also several programmes and projects to promote women's participation in the agriculture and tourism sectors. In addition to this, Brazil is making progress on women's economic empowerment by providing a conducive business environment and access to finance. Particularly, the government has in place several programmes aimed at supporting women exporters and entrepreneurs. National institutions also implement trade finance schemes and financial support programmes aimed at entrepreneurs. However, the results also point to areas where more progress can be made. Brazil is making progress in the trade policy pillar by ensuring that gender provisions are incorporated in the trade agreements currently under negotiation. Ensuring gender mainstreaming in trade policy and programmes can improve women's economic outcomes and ensure that women benefit from trade.

Women's participation in business and trade can play a key role in ensuring a productive Brazilian economy. Based on the SheTrades Outlook results, the following recommendations can help women become a large contributor to Brazil's economic growth through trade and business.



01

THE WAY FORWARD: MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO TRADE POLICY

Brazil has an opportunity to use trade policy as an instrument to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Specifically, the government could:

- Incorporate gender equality issues in trade agreements
- Conduct gender impact assessments of trade agreements and build government capacity to conduct such assessments
- Adopt a formal definition of a women-owned businesses aligned with the internationally recognized definition of a women-owned business specified in the ISO IWA 34: Women's entrepreneurship – Key definitions and general criteria
- Raise national institutions' awareness about the standard definitions of women's entrepreneurship and the importance of using the definitions in the implementation of projects, programmes and other initiatives on women's economic empowerment
- Providing training to Customs officials on gender issues.



02

THE WAY FORWARD: INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORKS

It is important to ensure that policies, schemes and practices related to business and trade benefit both women and men. To do this, the government can:

- Incorporate trade issues in the Transversal Women's Agenda 2024–2027
- Adopt a national financial inclusion strategy
- Raise awareness on gender-responsive public procurement and the different options and steps to reform the public procurement system to promote greater participation of women in the procurement market.
- Adopt gender-responsive public procurement to promote greater participation of women in the procurement market
- Adopt gender-sensitive practices in Customs.

03

THE WAY FORWARD: MONITORING MECHANISMS

To support the monitoring and evaluation of existing gender-responsive initiatives, the government can:

- Establish a law mandating the collection of gender-disaggregated data across all agencies and departments of the government
- Mandate financial institutions to collect gender-disaggregated data
- Collect gender-disaggregated data on:
 - complainants of trade malpractices
 - vendors in public procurement
 - participants in skills training programmes
 - beneficiaries of business support services and incubators



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04

THE WAY FORWARD: TARGETED INITIATIVES

Initiatives targeting women are crucial to ensure that they benefit from access to skills and finance initiatives. Specifically, national institutions can:

- Provide incentives to increase women’s participation in skills programmes
- Providing training on public procurement processes
- Provide venture capital financing opportunities to women-led start-ups
- Raise awareness among women-led businesses on existing trade finance schemes in the country
- Mainstream gender in business innovation programmes and projects such as Digital BR and Brazil More Productive

GOOD PRACTICE: FACILITATING WOMEN’S ACCESS TO TRADE

MDIC, along with ApexBrasil, developed the *Elas Exportam (They Export)* programme. The programme aims to facilitate the entry of Brazilian women-led businesses into international markets.

As part of the programme, women entrepreneurs are paired with mentors that have previous experience in international trade and expanding in international markets. Women entrepreneurs receive individual and group mentorship on skill development and implementing export strategies. There are also dedicated sessions on pitch training and assistance on creating and delivering presentations for international markets.

By the end of 2024, the program will have supported 100 women entrepreneurs.

Source: MDIC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

More information about this policy brief and the SheTrades Outlook project can be found at: <https://outlook.shetradestrad.com/home>.

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Contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



#SheTrades

HER SUCCESS. OUR FUTURE.

The International Trade Centre's (ITC) SheTrades Initiative is a global platform that empowers women to engage in business, creating value for both them and their communities. The Initiative ensures that the right capacities and conditions are present to foster inclusive and sustainable trade.

SheTrades delivers activities and training that improve women traders' ability to do business successfully. At the same time, the Initiative works to remove inequalities that hinder women's participation in trade and foster a better trade environment for all.



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