**Study on Government Procurement Policies for Women-Owned Businesses in Rwanda**

**National Individual Consultant**

**Terms of Reference**

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**Background**

Government procurement, referring to the purchase by government and state-owned enterprises of goods, services and works, accounts for a substantial portion of national economies. The procurement market often makes up 10 to 15 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of developed countries and a comparatively even larger portion in developing countries. However, women entrepreneurs often find themselves excluded from this market, due to a lack of information on and limited familiarity with public procurement tenders as well as to difficulties in meeting the required standards. Through their procurement policies, governments are in a unique position to address this issue and to increase the opportunities for more economic agents to engage in the delivery of goods and services.

Several studies have rendered evident the positive correlation between gender equality and a country’s level of economic competitiveness, GDP and Human Development Index. While correlation does not prove causality, these findings are consistent with the theory and mounting evidence that empowering women leads to a more efficient use of a nation’s human capital endowment and that reducing gender inequality enhances productivity and economic growth (World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2013, p.31). Worldwide, it is estimated that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with full or partial female ownership represent 31 to 38 percent of formal SMEs in emerging markets. Women owned firms therefore represent a significant share of employment generation and economic growth potential. As such, governments and the private sector recognize that empowering women and women-owned businesses is a catalyst for achieving goals and commitments towards social, human and economic development. Given the importance of government spending, public procurement has the potential to be a policy tool to promote such gender inclusive entrepreneurship. Thus, rendering government procurement processes more accessible to businesses owned by women
could be one way to drive positive gender equality outcomes and to increase the overall societal benefits of economic development.

To harness the potential of women-owned businesses, procurement policies must be gender sensitive. Businesses owned by women and those owned by men are not the same (Kepler and Shane, 2002; National Women’s Business Council, 2009; World Bank, 2012). Women owned business:

- Tend to be smaller;
- Are often less experienced;
- Have less access to human, financial and social capital;
- Tend to be in less profitable sector, such as retail sales and services;
- Have owners who tend to have more family and care responsibilities.

A lack of gender disaggregated data available to governments often obscures the actual number of women owned businesses competing in their economies and the sectors in which they compete. As a result, governments may incorrectly perceive that there are not enough qualified women owned businesses in their economies or that they are not bidding for government contracts (BWASA, 2013). A representative from Ghana public procurement authority indicated that the absence of data on qualified women owned businesses was a major political hurdle to moving forward with preferential procurement policies for women entrepreneurs. This situation underscores the need to capture gender specific information on companies during the normal business registration process and the contractor registration process. In Rwanda, there is limited gender differentiated data available on government contractors. This suggests that policy-makers are unlikely to know the extent to which women entrepreneurs, many of whom own or run small or medium-sized businesses, are able to successfully win government contracts. As such, the requirements of reaching equality of opportunity in the pursuit of procurement contracts is unidentified and large potential in terms of improved outcomes for equitable and sustainable economic and social growth may remain untapped.

Within this backdrop, a study is required to analyze the procurement policies applied within Rwanda, to understand the capacities and constraints of women-owned enterprises in the country to successfully compete for public contracts and to assess the gains of an increased engagement of women-owned enterprises in procurement tenders. Based on this reliable background information, further steps towards achieving gender equitable economic development may be identified.

**Overall objective of the study and expected use**

The study will provide decision makers in the government, women entrepreneurs and stakeholders engaged in promoting gender equality with a coherent proposal for furthering women entrepreneurs’ engagement in public procurement tenders in Rwanda. It will provide sufficient background information and justifications to enable the Government of Rwanda, women entrepreneurs and development partners to make an informed decision on future cooperation. The study should facilitate the continuous dialogue between the partners and improve the participation of all stakeholders in this process. Furthermore, it should identify concrete approaches and steps to be
undertaken to improve women owned businesses’ capacities to successfully compete in public tenders.

**Scope of the study**

This research will consider the current policy and business situation in Rwanda. The main elements of this study are outlined below:

- An analysis of the current governmental procurement process and its gender responsiveness;
- An assessment of women-owned businesses in Rwanda in terms of number, size, the sectors the businesses are involved in and overall business capacities;
- An assessment of the potential social and economic gains of an increased and equitable inclusion of women-owned enterprises in public procurement processes;
- An assessment of the compatibility of national priorities with the strategic principals of gender affirmative procurement policies;
- Based on above, an analysis of the principal policy, institutional and operational constraints women-owned businesses face in competing for public tenders.
- Based on this assessment, a proposal on how to overcome key barriers and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs to access government supply chains.

The study will set out to answer the following questions:

- How does the government procurement system in Rwanda work?
- What is the current share of women-owned businesses in government procurement contracts awarded in Rwanda per category (goods, services, consultancies and works)?
- What is the current profile of women-owned businesses in Rwanda?
- Do women-owned businesses face specific barriers and constraints rendering them uncompetitive in comparison with other businesses that hinder them from winning government procurement contracts?
- What is the current capacity of women-owned businesses to embrace e-procurement policies and other digital platforms applicable to the Rwandan procurement system?
- What are the potential economic and social gains of dedicated policies and programs on rendering public procurement processes increasingly gender responsive in Rwanda?
- Are national priorities in Rwanda compatible with the strategic principals of gender affirmative procurement policies?
- How can the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing government supply chains be overcome?

**Deliverables**

The final output of the consultancy will be a comprehensive report, 20 to 30 pages in length, addressing above outlined objectives and research questions. The report will be written in English.
The study will notably deliver the following:

- A schematic overview over the current decision making process in Rwanda with regards to procurement contracts allocation and an analysis of the gender responsiveness thereof, including the current trends in terms of procurement contracts allocated to women-owned businesses as a share of total procurement contracts and per category (goods, services, consultancies and works);
- A series of profiles mapping women-owned businesses in Rwanda;
- An assessment of the economic and social gains of increased gender responsiveness of government procurement processes in Rwanda;
- A comprehensive assessment of the constraints faced by women-owned enterprises in accessing public procurement markets;
- Recommendations for both policy makers towards increased participation of women-owned enterprises in government procurement spending, as well as for women entrepreneurs to improve their competitiveness to access government procurement spending;
- A PowerPoint presentation and two-page summary of the study;
- Recommendations on the further use and dissemination of the study.

Methodology

The study will avail itself of both primary and secondary sources, through desk research and field interviews as applicable. The final methodology used for this study will be agreed upon by the Consultant(s) and New Faces New Voices (NFNV) Rwanda. To the extent possible, NFNV Rwanda will render available data relating to women-owned enterprises in Rwanda and assist with establishing contacts with key stakeholders. It is expected that this research would include:

- A literature review;
- A review of national legislation, policy documents, strategies and academic papers on the current procurement processes;
- Face-to-face interviews and email surveys with women entrepreneurs and other key stakeholders.

Timeline and work plan

The Consultant will undertake the study over a period of 20 working days.

Based on the objectives and methodology outlined in the Terms of Reference, the Consultant will prepare a work plan for the study. The work plan will specify the main activities of the study, detailing the timeframe for each deliverable, the proposed interview partners as well as the support required from NFNV. The work plan will also outline the contact sessions with NFNV for feedback meetings and must allow sufficient time for consultations with and validation of an inception report and the final product by key stakeholders. The work plan will be agreed upon by the Consultant and NFNV in a
dedicated meeting. Any substantial changes to the work plan must thereafter be agreed upon in writing.

Expertise required

- A University Master Degree in economics, social science, development studies or another relevant field;
- At least five years of practical experience in conducting research on national policies, gender equality and economics utilizing a wide range of approaches and methods;
- Excellent knowledge of the Rwandan economic and business landscape and familiarity with Rwandan procurement policies;
- Experience and knowledge on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment issues;
- Excellent analytical and writing skills and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Fluency in English and Kinyarwanda.

Application procedure

Interested candidates should apply by presenting the following documents:

- Letter of Application, briefly describing the motivation behind the application and outlining the candidate’s suitability for the assignment;
- Personal CV, indicating educational background and professional qualification, a list of previous assignments, contact details of three reference persons and contact details of the candidate (e-mail addresses and telephone numbers).

Applications can be submitted through a sealed envelope deposited at the UN Women Office Reception, located in Kiyovu, 12 Avenue de l’Armée; or via email to tumaini.ochieng@unwomen.org. Applications must be submitted no later than Friday, 25 August 2017 at 17h00 Rwanda local time.