



The Importance of Gender Responsive Procurement: A Way to Advance Women's Entrepreneurship

13:00 - 14:00 (Bangkok Time, GMT+7), 28 October 2021



With the support of
 UK Government

Organized by
WeEmpowerAsia



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Gender equality means good business



SESSION BRIEF

The importance of gender-responsive procurement – A way to advance women's entrepreneurship

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Background: Regional Dialogue

The regional dialogue is organized by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its FairBiz – Promoting Fair Business environment in ASEAN, in partnership with UN Women, Open Government Partnership, Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (COST) and Open Contracting Partnership. The FairBiz project is supported by the UK Government, ASEAN Economic Reform Programme.

The regional dialogue will bring together government representatives from the region along with private sector leaders and civil society representatives interested in learning more about and/or implementing the sustainable public procurement agenda via the SDGs, integrity and value-for-money lenses.

This regional dialogue will contribute to:

- Promoting sustainable public procurement as a strategic tool in achieving progress on the SDGs
- Introducing new resources advocating for a collective action approach and multi-actor collaboration to improve the procurement ecosystem.
- Building community of practice and learning for procurement practitioners and reformers in Asia
- Understanding and managing integrity risks in public procurement vis-à-vis SDG attainments.

- Inspiring the community of practitioners and reformers in the region to adopt innovative solutions
- Facilitating knowledge exchange by showcasing relevant use cases and case studies
- Sharing emerging technology trends in public procurement

(Full agenda at the end)

The Session: **Importance of gender-responsive procurement**, October 28th, 13:00 - 14:00, is organized by [WeEmpowerAsia](#), a UN Women programme funded by and in partnership with the European Union, that seeks to increase the number of women who lead and participate in business in Asia. The programme works to achieve its vision through three interrelated outcome areas:

- **Creating an Enabling Environment** in which women’s networks, public institutions, and the private sector collaborate and share expertise and knowledge to promote women’s economic empowerment in the workplace and in the marketplace.
- **Promoting Gender-Inclusive Entrepreneurship** by developing the capacity of women-led/benefitting businesses and women entrepreneurs and promoting gender-inclusive policies and practices for men-owned businesses and men entrepreneurs.
- **Advancing gender-inclusive business** by mobilizing private sector organizations to implement gender-sensitive practices and culture within their businesses through commitment and implementation of the [Women’s Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\)](#)

Session Description

Across the Asia Pacific, women’s entrepreneurship is emerging as a critical policy and business priority given its recognized potential contribution to regional and national economic growth, and as a means to support and create new employment opportunities for women. Across the region, approximately 60% of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) are owned/led by women.⁶ Yet, while the numbers appear high, the overwhelming majority are microenterprises, with low rates of female ownership of small and medium enterprises (SME). **Gender-specific constraints, exacerbated by intersecting discriminations, contribute to the gender-specific “missing middle” phenomenon, with growth-oriented women owned/led SMEs (WSMEs) struggling to scale up.**⁸

Women’s businesses struggle to access markets. This is due to a combination of factors, such as their smaller size, position within value and supply chains, and prevailing gender inequalities (e.g. lack of networks), inter alia. At the same time larger Asian and multi-national companies sourcing footprints across the Asian geography is huge. Exports include various sectors differing country per country. Some examples are jewelry, garment and textile and the agriculture, seafood and other Fast-Moving Consumer Goods. Especially, multi-national and larger Asian companies are increasing their efforts towards creating more gender-inclusive companies.

This session discusses **entry points for advancing women’s businesses in the Asia Pacific region through gender-responsive procurement**. Gender-responsive procurement is emerging as a powerful mean to act as a bridge women’s businesses to markets and support their viability and growth and will allow larger companies to put a gender-lens to their sourcing footprint and ultimately allow international trade to become more gender-equal. This session will facilitate a multi-stakeholder conversation to understand challenges and opportunities for all actors on how the Asia Pacific, addressing both the public and private sectors.

Session Objectives

The key objectives of this session are to:

- Create a common understanding on **what** gender-responsive procurement (GRP) is
- Raise awareness about the **economic opportunity** for women, business and society to advance GRP
- Understand **barriers and challenges** to advance GRP
- Learn from examples on **how to** advance GRP

Questions

Panelists will reflect on the following questions:

- Where does Asia stand on GRP?
- What are the biggest challenges and opportunities to advance leverage the power of procurement to advance gender-equality?
- How can incentives in public and private procurement schemes stimulate a more equal playing field for Women-owned enterprises?
- What can we learn from existing platforms, networks, good practices in the region and beyond?
- What role does target-setting, reporting and transparency play to advance GRP?

Speakers and Panellists

Moderator: Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Manager, WeEmpowerAsia, UN Women ROAP

Speakers

- Samantha Hung, Chief, Gender Equity Thematic Group, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Maria Prado, Senior Policy Advisor CoST – The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative
- Mrinalini (Minnie) Venkatachalam, Regional Director, Southeast Asia and Oceania, WEConnect International
- Nusra Chankaew, Procurement Director SEA, Unilever
- Dr. Wimonkan Kosumas, Acting Director General, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP), Thailand

Agenda

Time	Agenda
13.00-13.15	<p>Opening [Katja Freiwald, Programme Manager WeEmpowerAsia]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is in the room? • Wordcloud #1 – ‘What comes to mind when we speak about GRP?’ [1-3 words answers – show results immediately] • Facts & Figures: An Introduction into GRP in Asia
13.15-13.50 (including Q&A)	<p>PANEL – What will it take to turn Procurement into a force for more gender-equality and a more inclusive economy at large?</p> <p>Moderated by: Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Manager, WeEmpowerAsia, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Panelists: (5-minutes every speaker)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samantha Hung, Chief, Gender Equity Thematic Group, ADB</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on GRP work in the public sector, approaches of ADB? ○ ADB’s work in Indonesia learnings and recommendations from and for governments? • <i>Maria Prado, Senior Policy Advisor CoST – The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leveraging the power of data transparency to improve gender equality in the infrastructure sector ○ What kind of data can help further GRP and promote more inclusive infrastructure? • <i>Dr. Wimonkan Kosumas, Acting Director General, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP), Thailand</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At what stage is Thailand when it comes to GRP? ○ What role of the Office of SME promotion can have to advance GRP? Which other ministries are you collaborating with? • <i>Mrinalini (Minnie) Venkatachalam, Regional Director, Southeast Asia and Oceania, WEConnect International</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenges and opportunities on GRP in our region with focus on private sector and WOB ○ What is needed to advance GRP? Certification of WOBs? • <i>Nusra Chankaew, Procurement Director SEA, Unilever</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unilever’s global commitment on GRP? Meaning for the region here? What is the current status for example here in Thailand?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What steps are you taking?
13.55 -14.00	<p>Closing, Reflections, Questions & Recommendations from the Audience</p> <p><u>Audience Wordcloud:</u> What do you feel needs to be done to move the needle from 1% of current gender-responsive procurement spend?</p> <p><u>Each panellist:</u> Please provide 1 closing sentence – from your perspective, what is the one thing that organizations like yours could/ will do to ensure more WOB/Women-led businesses will be connected into markets.</p>

Speaker Profiles

Katja Freiwald, leads UN Women’s commitment under the women’s economic empowerment and migration focus in Asia and the Pacific. She oversees ‘WeEmpowerAsia’, a UN Women programme funded by and in partnership with the European Union that aims to increase the number of women who lead and participate in business China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. A key component of the programme is to mobilize private sector companies to become more gender-responsive by committing to and implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), as well as strengthen links Asian and European markets through gender-inclusive trade and supply chains.



Samantha Hung is the Chief of Gender Equity Thematic Group at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) where she provides leadership for advancing gender equality across all aspects of ADB operations. Samantha has over 20 years of experience in gender equality at project, program and policy levels in the Asia Pacific. Before joining ADB 11 years ago, Samantha held gender specialist roles for the New Zealand Agency for International Development, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, UNICEF, Australian Government and the UK Institute of Development Studies.



Mrinalini Venkatachalam is the Regional Director for Southast Asia and Oceania at WEConnect International, a global nonprofit network that works with multinational corporations and multilateral organizations to generate market-access opportunity for women’s business enterprises in over 125 countries through supplier diversity. The organization identifies, educates, registers, and certifies women’s business enterprises based outside the U.S. that are at least 51% owned, as well as managed and controlled, by one or more women, and then connects them to qualified buyers across the globe.



Nusra Chankaew is Regional Procurement Director: SEA & ANZ, for Unilever. She Lived across the countries, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, England, and Netherland. She is experienced in leading and developing global teams with diverse background and cultures. A mother of one, who has strong passion in Diversity and Sustainability.



Dr. Wimonkan Kosumas is now Acting Director General, has been designated as Deputy Director General of Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion of Thailand since 2010. With her main responsibilities in international cooperation issues, during 2013-2014 she served as a Chairperson of APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group as well as a Chairperson of ASEAN Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group in 2015. She holds Ph. D. in Foreign Affairs (majoring in International Political Economy, University of Virginia, USA). Her 30 years of experience and expertise in foreign affairs and international cooperation as well as solid background in SMEs promotion would allow her to prominently contribute to this event.



Maria Prado is a Senior Policy Advisor at CoST – The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative. Her work focuses on providing evidence-based advice to improve accountability and transparency in public infrastructure. She leads CoST efforts to promote greater gender-equality across its member programmes and the infrastructure sector more broadly.



DRAFT Agenda

Day 1	
Time (Bangkok time)	Session
13.00-13.20	Opening remarks
13.20-14.30	Session 1: Public procurement’s role in achieving the SDGs
14.30-14.45	Q&A
14.45-15.45	Session 2: Public procurement ecosystem: a system approach and collective action
15.45-16.00	Q&A
16.00-16.15	Break
16.15-17.45	Session 3: Technology trends in service of transparent and open procurement
17:45-18:00	Reflections and wrap-up

Day 2	
Time (Bangkok time)	Session
13:00-14.00	Session 4: The importance of gender-responsive procurement
14.00-14.15	Q&A
14.15-16.00	Session 5: Managing Procurement Risks in times of crises
16.00-16.15	Break
16.15-16.45	Session 6: Expanding the knowledge on public procurement
16.45-17:30	Session 7: Event evaluation and closing/ ways forward