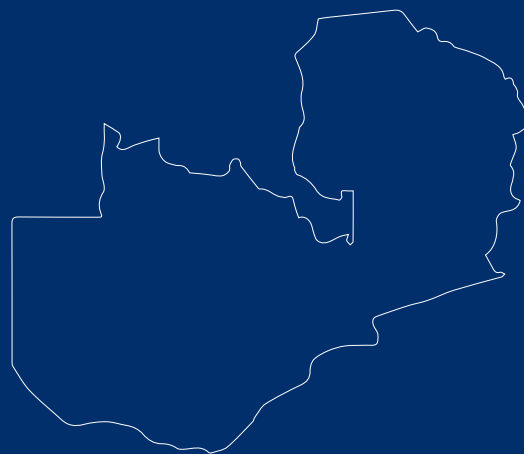


THE TIME IS NOW TO ACCELERATE WOMEN'S PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Snapshot: Zambia



POLITICAL WILL

The Government of Zambia has shown political commitment to the issue of support for women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses. This political will has been demonstrated through the establishment of legislative frameworks such as the Public Procurement Act of 2008, with specific legislation that includes women-owned businesses.



The Zambia snapshot is adapted with permission from the International Trade Centre.

Overview¹

The Public Procurement Act, No 12, 2008 Section 63, provides for preferential and reservation schemes for citizen-owned businesses. To promote women's access to economic opportunities and support Zambian women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and create jobs, the Act stipulates that women-owned businesses may either be granted a margin of preference or have certain procurement requirements set aside or reserved for them during the bidding process. If they meet the technical qualifications, their bid prices are given a discount that makes their bid competitive. To do this, bids are classified into five groups. When bids are being financially evaluated, a discount may be applied to bids from citizen-empowered companies, citizen-influenced companies or citizen-owned companies, proportionally to the applicable margin of preference.

¹ The text in this section has been adapted with permission from the International Trade Centre SheTrades Outlook on Public Procurement, sent to the author by email.



Preference schemes are widely used compared to reservation schemes, which are only used by a few procuring entities in Zambia, such as the Roads Development Agency, which sets aside certain road projects to certain target groups. In general, the Act also provides incentives for citizen-owned firms, citizen-influenced firms, and citizen-empowered firms, whether women-owned or men-owned. The Citizenship Economic Empowerment Commission and the Road Development Agency have been applying the policy to their tenders, reserving some contracts for target groups which include women-owned businesses.

The Zambia Public Procurement Authority has a database created through an online registration system. Vendors register and renew every year. The institution has increased sensitization through its website and the media. However, data on vendors is not disaggregated by sex.

Challenges And Measures Taken

The major challenge identified in supporting women's participation in public procurement opportunities is **improving uptake and implementation**.

- » Many tendering organizations have not fully adopted preferential procurement to empower women-owned businesses. The Zambian government is considering options to improve the uptake and implementation of the Act. For example, this could be addressed through collecting gender-disaggregated data on registered bidders, promoting transparency of information and opportunities, and supporting women-owned businesses to better meet tender needs.
- » Though the information on the public tenders is available in all forms, some private sector organizations mentioned that small and medium enterprises tend to have no information, and they consider the required forms very complicated.
- » There are no champions for this policy who can encourage women-owned businesses to participate and benefit.

The TIME IS NOW for Women's Public Procurement. Read how the stage is set for action!