This document describes ‘good practices’ in gender-responsive procurement. The practices listed are not mandated or currently implemented by WFP. The practices are ‘food for thought’ in how WFP can contribute to SDGs 2 and 17 through its purchasing power.

**WHAT**

Gender-responsive procurement, also referred to as ‘gender-smart procurement’ and ‘gender-inclusive procurement’, is the selection and purchase of goods and services taking into consideration the impact on gender equality.

**WHY**

The purposes of WFP are: (a) to use food aid to support economic and social development; (b) to meet refugee and other emergency and protracted relief food needs; (c) to promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations and FAO. (WFP Regulations and Rules, Article 2, page 5)

As a UN entity, WFP has committed to supporting the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with particular emphasis on SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships). In doing so, there is recognition that: “Of particular importance to WFP, the 2030 Agenda recognizes that some countries and people are more vulnerable than others, face greater challenges in achieving sustainable development, and require special attention to ensure that no one is left behind.” Accordingly, the current Strategic Plan (2017-2021) "seeks to leverage WFP’s strengths to maximize the organization’s contribution to achievement of the SDGs", with the integration of “gender equality and women's empowerment into all of its work and activities.”

The recognition that gender equality is needed in order to realise sustained food security and nutrition is cross-cutting; including procurement. Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP) has been identified as an effective tool for economic prosperity (with, for example, direct links between gender equality and GDP), women’s economic empowerment, and mitigating business risks.

For example, within the UN Global Compact there is a set of seven women’s empowerment principles; with the fifth principle being “Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.”

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In the UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook it is noted that: “Mainstreaming of gender responsiveness in procurement is part of this general trend, and best practices are growing. As billions of dollars are spent on procurement of goods, services and civil works in the UN system annually and less than 1% of the contracts are awarded to women-owned businesses.”

Acknowledging the 2030 Agenda principle of ‘leave no one behind’, and recognising the large gender gaps in economic opportunities and outcomes in almost all countries, the UN Secretary General’s High-Level Political Forum on Women’s Economic Empowerement (HLF-PWEE) includes gender-responsive procurement among its recommendations in two out of seven ‘drivers of change’. The HLF-PWEE recommendations to adopt gender-responsive procurement underline both the business case (Driver 5) and alignment with the principles of quality and efficiency (Driver 6).

As for other actors in the UN system, and those engaged in humanitarian and development (rather than for-profit) work, WFP can contribute to reducing inequalities and advancing sustainable development through its procurement. As stated in WFP’s Food Procurement Policy: “The main objective for WFP food procurement is to ensure that appropriate food commodities are available to beneficiaries in a timely and cost-effective manner. Consistent with this, WFP purchases should also be fair and transparent.” For food commodities to be “appropriate”, gender must be included in planning, assessment and purchase. For WFP purchases to be “fair”, both women and men must benefit. Particular companies, vendors, suppliers etc. profit from WFP’s ‘purchasing power’. Gender is part of the policies, standards, workforce, workplaces and profiting of the entities which supply food and are contracted for other services.

**HOW**

Gender-responsive procurement can be applied through vendor sourcing, selection and contracting; with performance tracked using key performance indicators and user-friendly dashboards.

**Vendors**

**Selection**

**Pre-qualification:** In procurement advertisements, minimum sustainability criteria can be included in the eligibility requirements. Gender equality can be among the minimum standards for a bid to be considered; with questions related to a potential supplier’s gender equality-related policies and practices.

The heading of a procurement advertisement can be written to signal sustainability considerations. In the case of gender equality this could be “gender-transformative” or “gender-responsive”.

**Evaluation:** Gender equality considerations can be included in evaluation criteria.

As advised in the UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook, sustainability evaluation criteria should “be formulated in such a way as to reward higher performance in terms of sustainability. UN organizations should determine environmental and social evaluation criteria to suit their own needs. They can refer to… Social performance in terms of labour and working conditions, health and safety standards, employment opportunities to promote gender equality and diversity, training women’s ownership and control in the firms, etc.”

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4 UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook, page 179
5 UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook, page 190 & 194
6 UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook, page 195
Gender criteria can relate to:
- gender policies being in place, such as on parental leave, prevention of sexual harassment / abuse / exploitation, anti-discrimination
- proportion of women personnel, including at senior / managerial levels
- sub-contracting of women-owned businesses
- gender parity in the project team
- willingness to sign a voluntary agreement for supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment

Example weighting scores:
- Enterprises with gender equality policies – 2 points
- Enterprises with women in half of the executive positions – 4 points
- Enterprises with at least 51% women ownership – 6 points

Tie-break: If two proposals are evaluated as equal in terms of quality and price – and one of the bids is from a woman-owned company – the choice can be to select the woman-owned company, in accordance with sustainability criteria (where the ‘value-addition’ is contribution to economic empowerment).

Sourcing from women-owned businesses

For detailed information about sourcing from women-owned enterprises, see the UN Women publication The Power of Procurement.

A business is considered to be women-owned if at least 51 percent of the legally registered business is owned, managed and controlled by one or more women. Ownership is direct and not subject to conditions; where a woman, or women, manage the day-to-day operations of the business, including making decisions.

An organization, like WFP, may choose to target women-owned businesses because such action aligns with its principles and mandate, recognises the need to redress existing inequalities and helps to achieve corporate objectives.

Through its sourcing process a contractor, like WFP, could actively identify and reach-out to (currently under-represented) women-owned businesses; like WFP does in relation to ‘talent acquisition’.

Example measures
- Classify women-owned businesses based on ownership and control.
- Establish measurable targets. For example: to award at least 20 percent of all contracts to women-owned businesses.
- Introduce subcontracting requirements. For example: suppliers awarded contracts over a certain threshold must submit plans for women-owned businesses to participate in their supply chains and conduct strategies for achieving set targets.
- Provide capacity-strengthening and procurement skills development – such as targeted financial and technical assistance – to eliminate the knowledge barrier and enable women-owned businesses to compete successfully in procurement markets.
- Measure progress – monitor and evaluate to ensure policy compliance and to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

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7 As taken from UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook, page 193
Classifying institutional and individual vendors

The gender ownership profile of businesses can be included in the registration of suppliers in an organisation's vendor database; like UN Women does in its internal Enterprise Resource Planning system, ATLAS. In its e-Procurement Platform, potential vendors provide information about women ownership by completing this tab:

![Gender Details tab](image)

Classification can also be facilitated through entries in vendor profile forms; like in the UN Women Vendor Profile Form (institutional).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION 1  BASIC INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VENDOR TYPE: □ Supplier: Private Sector Co □ Supplier: NGO □ Supplier: Inter-Gov Org □ Supplier: Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Owned Business: □ No □ Yes □ Percentage of Business Owned by Women ________ %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a vendor marks the ‘Yes’ box, then documentation of “women ownership” must be included in the submission, such as a share ledger or official registration certificate.

Contracts

Under the Gender Policy (2015-2020), and reiterated in the corporate Gender Action Plan, WFP “ensures that gender equality and women’s empowerment are included in all manuals, guidance, policies and other guiding documents for activities and clusters, including the logistics, food security and emergency telecommunications clusters; and “standard contract templates are reviewed, and a gender clause included where appropriate.”

The inclusion of gender equality clauses in general conditions of contracts is suggested in the UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook: “UN organizations may seek to support the focus of the SDGs on poverty reduction, gender equality, women’s empowerment, environmental sustainability and child education by stipulating clauses to this effect in the solicitation documents, and by providing greater representation on shortlists of suppliers respecting such goals. For example, contract clauses that prohibit child labour and prevent sexual exploitation or abuse.”

The UN Women “General Conditions of Contract” includes the following clause (or “Special Condition”):

> The Contractor shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that neither it, its parent entities (if any), nor any of the contractor’s subsidiary or affiliated entities (if any) are engaged in any discriminatory employment practices, including those relating to recruitment, promotion, training, remuneration and benefits, against women.

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8 UN Procurement Practitioner’s Handbook, page 7
Another option is a voluntary agreement to promote gender equality. Below is a WFP-adapted version of UN Women’s voluntary agreement.

**VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT**

**BETWEEN**

THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

AND

(Legal Name of Contractor)

The World Food Programme, an autonomous joint subsidiary programme of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with headquarters in Rome, Italy, (hereinafter referred to as “WFP”) strongly encourages legal name of contractor (hereinafter referred to as the "Contractor") to partake in achieving the following objectives.

- Acknowledge the values and principles of gender equality, as expressed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and women’s empowerment;
- Provide information and statistical data that relates to policies and initiatives that promote gender equality and women empowerment, upon request;
- Participate in dialogue with WFP to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in their location, industry and organization;
- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality;
- Treat women and men fairly at work and respect and support human rights and non-discrimination, including through equal pay policies;
- Ensure health, safety and wellbeing of all women and men workers;
- Promote education, training and professional development for women;
- Hold gender-specific trainings or courses for staff;
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women;
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy;
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

On behalf of the Contractor:

Name, Title:

Address:

Signature: _________________________________

Date: DD / MM / YY
Tracking

Tracking of gender-responsive procurement can be done through corporate dashboards. Example of dashboards in WFP are IN/FO, PACE and IRM Implementation.

A gender-responsive procurement dashboard could provide up-to-date information about:
- vendors registered with WFP
- which vendors are women-owned businesses
- the total value of contracts awarded to women-owned businesses
- the percentage share to women-owned businesses of the total value of WFP-awarded contracts
- progress towards achieving targets for contracts awarded to women-owned businesses

The information on a corporate dashboard could be viewed at national, regional and global levels.

Example KPIs
- # of women-owned businesses that have prequalified for the vendor list
- % procurement spent on women vendors, of total procurement expenditures
- % of contracts awarded to women vendors, of total contracts awarded

Example Targets

United States Small Business Act:

The Government-wide goal for participation by small business concerns shall be established at not less than 23 percent of the total value of all prime contract awards for each fiscal year. (page 217)

Within which a minimum of five per cent should be awarded to women-owned and controlled businesses.