



**SOURCING2EQUAL- Harnessing Procurement Opportunities to Create Markets for Women Entrepreneurs in Emerging Markets Terms of Reference for Request for Proposal (TOR)**

**Expected materials in response to this TOR:**

- Proposal – include a description of approach, methodologies, previous experience – including references and/or case studies and a writing sample, and estimated project timeline. Can be submitted in Word, PowerPoint or PDF.
- A draft budget of all costs (in USD) associated with producing the key deliverables outlined below
- Email to [procurement@weconnectinternational.org](mailto:procurement@weconnectinternational.org)
- Subject line in email: Ecosystem Research – SOURCING2EQUAL\_ YOUR NAME

**Application deadline:** August 6, 2021

WEConnect International is seeking applications from professionals, either individuals or firms, with global research experience for a short-term contract to deliver the tasks outlined in the TOR on behalf of WEConnect International and our funders. WEConnect International does not sponsor employment visas.

**Context**

WEConnect International is partnering with a Fortune 500 consulting and professional services firm on a research project, "SOURCING2EQUAL- Harnessing Procurement Opportunities to Create Markets for Women Entrepreneurs in Emerging Markets." The research will seek to i) demonstrate that gender-inclusive sourcing can yield business benefits, ii) encourage buyers to make more inclusive procurement decisions, and iii) encourage financial intermediaries to provide financing solutions to women-owned small to medium enterprises (WSMEs) that will enable them access to supply chain finance and procurement contracts. This research will focus on 6 of these 8 countries - Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Turkey, and Vietnam, and although not required, preference will be given to proposals indicating experience and language capabilities within these countries and/or regions.

The Researcher will work closely with WEConnect International to provide qualitative research through surveys, interviews, and desk research and provide feedback of quantitative data in coordination with project partners. The Researcher will be expected to meet weekly to contribute to the iterative research framework, report on progress and milestones, and discuss challenges. The Researcher will attend 2 half-day and 2 full-day workshops with project partners and stakeholders to present progress and findings. The Researcher will also be responsible for finalizing a literature review with an annotated bibliography and literature map and drafting the final report, participating in peer reviews, and providing edits to the report for 3 submissions.

This project will be completed in 3 Phases over the course of 9 months (July, 2021 – March, 2022). The Researcher will report directly to the WEConnect International project lead and collaborate during meetings with other stakeholders. The tasks and deliverables are described below.

## Tasks and Deliverables

### Phase 1. Preparation, Hypothesis and Research Framework

#### Research Framework

During the first phase of work, the Researcher will provide desk research and review and provide feedback on research questions and the outline of the evidence gaps to be answered in Phase 2 of work as necessary in support of the overall Research Framework (to be presented in PowerPoint). The Researcher may be needed to develop and speak to slides and/or information for presentation to project partners and stakeholders. To contribute to the Research Framework development, during Phase 1, the Researcher will also conduct the following activities:

- a) **Country and Sector Selection** – The Researcher will be expected to provide input and recommendations based on information gathered from the Literature Review to select final countries and sectors included within the study and final report.
- b) **Literature Review** – The Researcher will create a literature review including a visual literature map, as well as an annotated bibliography. The Literature Review will be used and finalized in the report writing phase. The literature review will be based on various existing reports, data analyses, country-specific studies, and other relevant materials. Guiding questions will be used for the Literature Review, including:
  - What are the main questions and problems that have been addressed so far in the supplier diversity and gender-inclusive sourcing space?
  - What are key concepts, theories, and ideas regarding the business case for supplier diversity and inclusion, especially as it relates to WSMEs?
  - How does the publication relate to other literature in the field? How does it add to, or challenge established knowledge regarding the benefits of gender-inclusive sourcing?
  - What are major issues and debates about supplier diversity and gender-inclusive sourcing?
  - How is knowledge about these fields structured and organized?

The review will serve as a helpful guide to what knowledge exists and how this research contributes to this knowledge. An important aspect of the process will be to organize the literature review's argument and structure to understand the linkages and relationships among the sources and the data, looking for trends and patterns, themes, conflicting ideas, and research gaps.

- c) **Interim Workshop #1.1 (to discuss initial findings and agree on the hypothesis)** – The Researcher will participate in a half-day collaborative workshop with project partners and stakeholders to present initial findings and agree on the research hypothesis. The Researcher will work with the WEConnect International project lead prior to the workshop to aid in drafting the agenda and the preparation and implementation of a presentation and/or materials. The focus of the first half of the workshop will be to review variables and hypothesis formulated to answer the research questions based on initial review of data sources, literature, and exploration of partners within selected countries. The second half of the workshop will focus on facilitating discussions around initial findings and agree on the hypothesis best suited for further research and the methodology the Parties will use to conduct the research.

- d) Stage Gate Workshop #1.2 (to present the outputs of the Phase 1 and agree on research framework, data sources and shortlist best practices company case studies)** – The Researcher will support WEConnect International by participating in a full-day workshop to present the outputs of Phase 1 and agree on the further approach of the research with project stakeholders. The Researcher will work with the WEConnect International project lead prior to the workshop to aid in drafting the agenda and the preparation and implementation of a presentation and/or materials. The focus of the first half of the workshop will be to review and agree on the research framework and data sources identified in Phase 1. The second half of the workshop will focus on a review of the best practices to gather evidence and shortlist the company case studies and interview list to capture the best gender inclusive sourcing practices.

## **Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis**

- a) Quantitative Analysis** – The Researcher will engage buyers and stakeholder and partner contacts within the selected countries to support data collection by sharing project information, surveys, and updates through email outreach, and phone calls.
- b) Interim Workshop #2.1 (to discuss initial findings and analyses)** – The Researcher will support WEConnect International for a half-day Interim Workshop, a collaborative working session to present the initial findings and analyses to relevant project stakeholders. The Researcher will work with WEConnect International prior to the workshop to aid in drafting the agenda and the preparation and implementation of a presentation and/or materials. The focus of the first half of the workshop will be to present the initial findings and analysis from data collection and analysis phase. The second half of the workshop will facilitate discussion on the results and solicit inputs for further proceedings of the research.
- c) Conduct 5 Company Deep-Dive Case Studies** – The Researcher shall perform in total 5 deep dives with buyers that are practicing gender-inclusive sourcing. The Researcher will work closely with WEConnect International, with input from project stakeholders, to formulate questions presented to the buyers in supplier diversity and inclusion and conduct personal interviews with the identified and agreed on buyers practicing gender-inclusive sourcing as a tool to harness business benefits. These case studies and recordings of the interviews will be provided to the WEConnect International team to garner insights into the causal relationships to explore from the survey data.
- d) Produce 10 short features of buyers and 5 short features of financial intermediaries** – The Researcher will research, write and deliver in total 10 features of global buyers capturing corporate approaches and practices, initiatives, projects, gender-inclusive sourcing insights (where possible), impact, and challenges or barriers on implementing gender-inclusive sourcing prepared through desk research and 1 structured interview for each to validate the information. It is anticipated that continued written communication with targeted buyers throughout the process may be necessary to verify information and to ask follow-up questions. In addition, the Researcher will produce in total 5 features of financial intermediaries or corporations that provide supply chain finance support to WSMEs. This will include types of programs, financial and non-financial services offered to WSMEs suppliers and potential suppliers, their impact, and challenges or barriers. The Researcher will develop a selection framework and present and agree upon this selection framework with WEConnect International, and project partners; shortlist the buyers for data collection, desk research and personal interviews; collect data through desk research and interviews; capture and document the

findings; and validate the findings against the personal interview insights. Features will be delivered in Word or PDF.

- e) **Conduct 5 interviews to study public policy practices from both, developed and developing countries** - The study of public policy practices of 5 countries will be led by the Researcher through desk research and up to 5 interviews on public sector interventions selected by WEConnect International. The Researcher will prepare interview questions and/or discussion guides, coordinate with buyer points of contact, and schedule and conduct interviews with selected buyers. In addition, the Researcher will provide recordings of the sessions to WEConnect International. Evidence and good practices documented to date from the 5 countries will be examined and the research will identify policies, procedures, regulatory framework, government-funded sectorial programs and other initiatives or interventions that help to create an enabling environment for gender-inclusive sourcing. The interviews will explore the policies that have and have not been implemented, challenges and opportunities, and the impact of the enabling environment on WSMEs. They will also highlight success stories of transformation or potential pitfalls and perceived barriers.
- f) **Stage Gate Workshop #2.2 (to agree on the results of analyses)** – The Researcher will support WEConnect International in the full-day workshop with project partners and stakeholders once the research phase is completed. The Workshop will serve as an opportunity to discuss the findings and results of analyses as well as next steps to finalize the report. The Researcher will work, prior to the workshop, to aid in drafting the agenda and the preparation and implementation of a presentation and/or materials. The objective of the workshop will be to agree on the analyses performed in Phase 2. The focus of the first half of the workshop will be to present the final analysis and recommendations. The second half of the workshop will facilitate discussions on the results and solicit feedback on the recommendations to incorporate in the final report.

### **Phase 3: Report-Writing**

- a) **Produce a Final Report** – On behalf of WEConnect International, the Researcher will lead the report-writing process and will propose the structure of the report, outline, draft, edit and deliver a final report in English. The written report will be up to 60 pages with an executive summary presented in Word and will include the key research components such as description of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The Researcher must also participate in up to 6 opportunities for draft review and iteration by project partners during the writing process.
- b) **Participate in 2 Peer Review Sessions** – The Researcher will participate in up to 2 Peer Review sessions conducted by project partners to guide the development of the final deliverable and to ensure continuous feedback.

## Schedule of Deliverables

\*Specific dates will be finalized upon contract signature.

Deliverables	Phase (s)	Due Date
Literature Review, Annotated Bibliography, and Literature Map	1	Week of August 9th
Interim Workshop #1.1 (Half-Day)	1	Week of August 9th
Interim Workshop #1.2 (Full-Day)	1	Week of August 23rd
Interim Workshop #2.1 (Half-Day)	1	Week of November 1st
5 Company Deep-Dive Case Studies	2	Mid-October
Short Features Framework	2	Mid-October
10 Short Buyer Features	2	Late November
5 Short Financial Intermediaries Features	2	Late November
5 Public Sector Interventions Interviews	2	Late November
Stage Gate Workshop #2.2 (Full-Day)	2	Week of December 20th
Research Report Framework	3	Week of December 20th
1st Draft of Final Report	3	Beginning of January
2 Peer Reviews	3	Beginning of January - Mid-February
2nd Draft of Final Report	3	Beginning of February
Final Report	3	Mid-February
Weekly Meetings	1 - 3	Weekly

## Required Skills and Competencies

- Master's Degree or equivalent
- Full literacy and fluency in English- both written and spoken (proficiency in additional languages is an advantage)
- Minimum 5+ years of experience in conducting research and assessments using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods
- Ability to produce literature reviews with annotated bibliography quickly
- Familiarity with Literature Review mapping
- Experience conducting professional interviews and surveys
- Experience in data analysis and reporting
- Experience in presenting research frameworks and findings to stakeholders
- Experience writing substantial research reports
- Experience collaborating with peer review groups and incorporating feedback
- Capability to translate findings to external, executives outside the research space and participate in meetings through Microsoft Teams and Zoom
- Must be available for weekly meetings and the 4 noted workshops in Eastern Daylight/Standard Time

**Desired Skills and Competencies**

- Experience working on women's economic empowerment or supplier diversity and inclusion projects
- Awareness of issues affecting the WSME sector, particularly barriers faced by women entrepreneurs
- Prior experience in procurement (within government agencies, financial institutions, corporations, NGOs, incubators, etc.)

**Compensation**

- Applicants will propose their fees in USD; fees must include all locally applicable taxes