



POLICY BRIEF

**Enhancing Female
Recognition in Public
Procurement in Nigeria**



Introduction

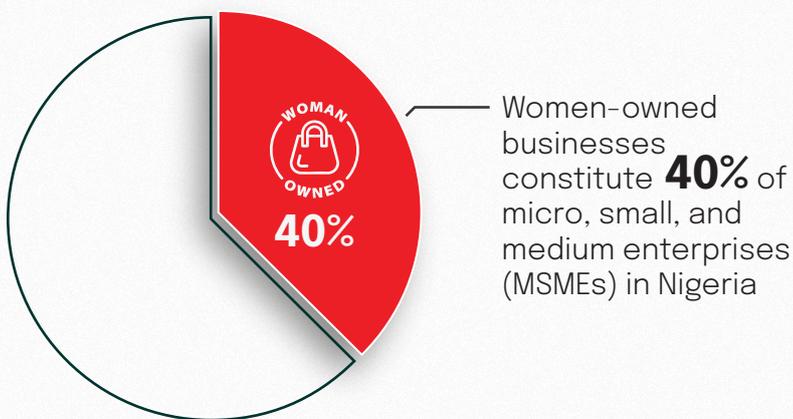
Public procurement in Nigeria remains one of the largest economic activities, **constituting up to 15% of the GDP**. However, women are significantly underrepresented in this space, with limited access to contracts and decision-making processes. **The Sustainable Women Economic Empowerment and Procurement (SWEEP) project has laid the groundwork for addressing these issues**, yet a more comprehensive policy approach is necessary to ensure equity and inclusivity in public procurement.





Problem Statement

Women's representation in public procurement in Nigeria is disproportionately low, perpetuating economic exclusion and limiting their contribution to national development. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), women-owned businesses constitute approximately 40% of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria. Yet, only 1% of public procurement contracts are awarded to women, highlighting a significant gap between their economic potential and participation.



Several systemic and structural barriers contribute to this disparity:

Policy Gaps: Procurement laws and frameworks lack explicit provisions for gender inclusion.

Cultural and Societal Norms: Deeply rooted patriarchal norms deter women from engaging in traditionally male-dominated spaces like procurement.

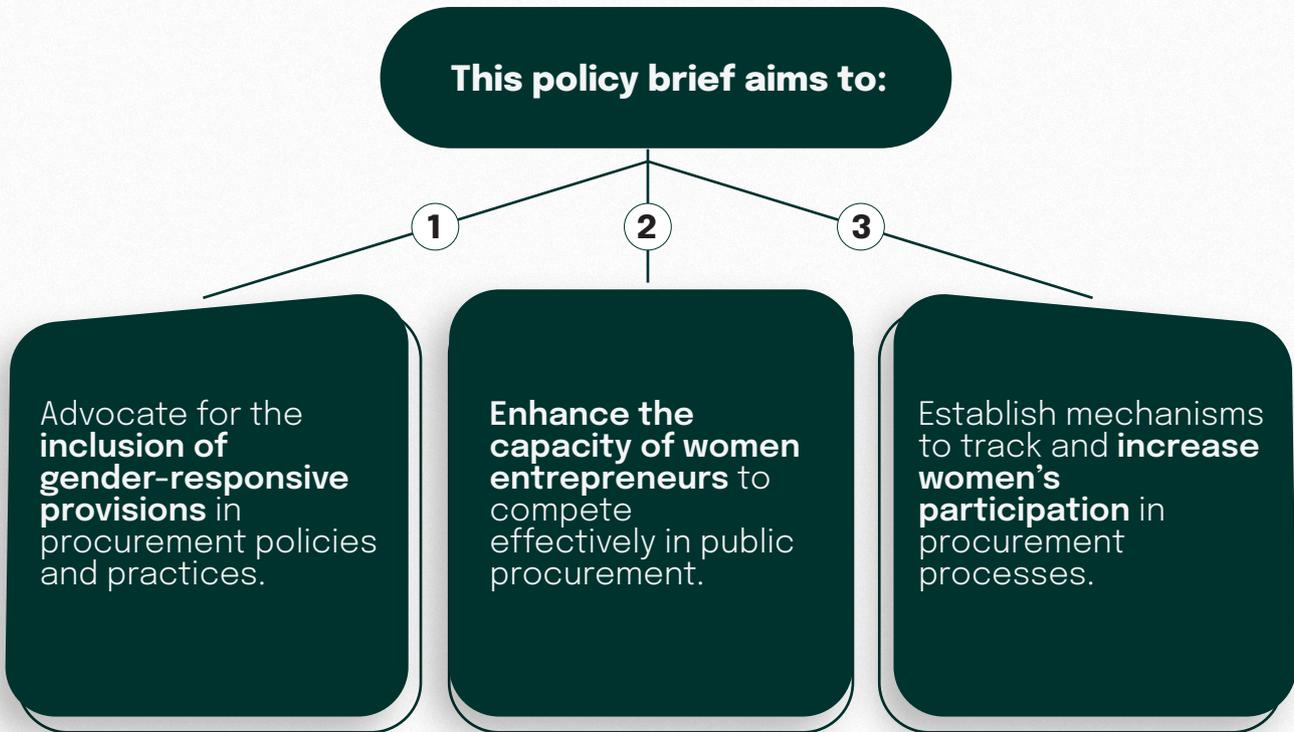
Financial Exclusion: Women face significant challenges in accessing credit, collateral, and financing, critical for bidding on procurement contracts.

Awareness Deficit: Many women entrepreneurs lack awareness of available procurement opportunities or the skills to navigate complex bidding processes.

Limited Data: Gender-disaggregated data on procurement participation is scarce, making it difficult to measure progress or identify areas for improvement.

This systemic exclusion not only undermines gender equity but also hinders national development by limiting the diversity and innovation women can bring to public procurement.

Objectives



Policy Options and Recommendations

1. Adopt Gender-Responsive Procurement Policies

- Mandate that at least 30% of government procurement contracts are awarded to women-owned businesses.
- Review and revise procurement laws to incorporate gender-responsive provisions.
- Require government agencies to report annually on the percentage of contracts awarded to women.



2. Build Capacity for Women Entrepreneurs

- Conduct nationwide training programs on procurement procedures, proposal writing, and financial literacy.
- Partner with civil society organizations to establish mentorship programs for women entrepreneurs.
- Create resource centers to provide information on procurement opportunities and support services.

3. Facilitate Access to Financing

- Develop government-backed loan schemes and credit facilities specifically for women-owned businesses bidding for contracts.
- Partner with financial institutions to offer reduced collateral requirements and flexible repayment terms for women entrepreneurs.

4. Promote Public Awareness and Advocacy

- Launch public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of gender equity in procurement.
- Leverage traditional and digital media to showcase success stories of women entrepreneurs in procurement.
- Partner with stakeholders to organize annual events, such as “Women in Procurement Summits”, to foster dialogue and build networks.

5. Institutionalize Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms

- Develop a national database to track the participation of women in public procurement.
- Establish performance dashboards for government agencies to monitor compliance with gender inclusion targets.
- Implement penalties for non-compliance with gender quotas in procurement processes.

Expected Outcomes

1. Increased participation of women in public procurement, contributing to a more inclusive economy.
2. Strengthened capacity and competitiveness of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria.
3. Enhanced transparency and accountability in procurement processes.
4. Progress toward achieving Nigeria's National Gender Policy target of 35% female inclusion in public and economic activities.





Recommendations

Government

1. Revise procurement policies to include explicit gender-responsive provisions.
2. Allocate funds to support women entrepreneurs through training and financing initiatives.
3. Enforce penalties for non-compliance with gender quotas in procurement processes.

Civil Society and Development Partners

1. Advocate for legislative reforms to institutionalize gender inclusion in procurement.
2. Support capacity-building programs for women entrepreneurs.
3. Provide technical assistance to government agencies for the development of monitoring systems.

Private Sector

1. Establish mentorship programs linking women entrepreneurs with established businesses.
2. Fund initiatives promoting gender equity in procurement.
3. Collaborate with government and civil society to drive awareness and advocacy campaigns.



Conclusion

The low level of female recognition in public procurement undermines Nigeria's efforts to achieve gender equity and sustainable economic development. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this brief, stakeholders can address systemic barriers, promote inclusion, and harness the full potential of women entrepreneurs. Public procurement offers a strategic opportunity to drive gender equity, and urgent action is required to bridge the gap and ensure a more inclusive future for Nigeria.



DO

**Policy
Brief**