

TECHNICAL NOTE N° IDB-TN-3291

Participation of Women in Public Procurement

Experiences and Lessons from
Latin America and the Caribbean

Sabrina Comotto
Leslie Harper
Trinidad Inostroza

Inter-American Development Bank
Fiscal Management Division
Institutions for Development Sector

January 2026



Participation of Women in Public Procurement

Experiences and Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean

Sabrina Comotto
Leslie Harper
Trinidad Inostroza

Inter-American Development Bank
Fiscal Management Division
Institutions for Development Sector

January 2026



<http://www.iadb.org>

Copyright © 2026 Inter-American Development Bank ("IDB"). This work is subject to a Creative Commons license CC BY 3.0 IGO (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/legalcode>). The terms and conditions indicated in the URL link must be met and the respective recognition must be granted to the IDB.

Further to section 8 of the above license, any mediation relating to disputes arising under such license shall be conducted in accordance with the WIPO Mediation Rules. Any dispute related to the use of the works of the IDB that cannot be settled amicably shall be submitted to arbitration pursuant to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL rules). The use of the IDB's name for any purpose other than for attribution and the use of IDB's logo shall be subject to a separate written license agreement between the IDB and the user and is not authorized as part of this license.

Note that the URL link includes terms and conditions that are an integral part of this license.

The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Inter-American Development Bank, its Board of Directors, or the countries they represent.



Abstract*

This study addresses the low participation of women in public procurement markets in Latin America and the Caribbean, where significant gender gaps in access to economic opportunities persist. The work identifies and systematizes initiatives implemented in the region to incorporate public procurement policies that encourage the participation of women-owned and women-led companies. The authors used a qualitative methodology based on a documentary review of regulations, public procurement portals, official programs, and available statistical data. The analysis identifies the main approaches, instruments, and policy experiences—such as the *Sello Empresa Mujer*—implemented in Argentina, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and others. The study documents a growing adoption of both horizontal (training, certification, transparency) and vertical measures (quotas, preferences, special clauses), which have increased the visibility and participation of women in public procurement. In the case of Chile, for example, the participation of women-led companies in public procurement grew by 38.5 percent from 2022 to 2023. These results demonstrate that public procurement can be an effective tool for reducing gender inequalities and promoting inclusive development. The research offers useful lessons for formulating more inclusive public policies and shows that, with the appropriate design of incentives and implementation mechanisms, it is possible to strengthen the economic role of women at the state level.

JEL classification: I38, H53

Keywords: public procurement, gender, gender parity, gender equity, women's participation, gender approach, Latin America and the Caribbean

* The authors wish to thank Philip Keefer, Claudia Piras, Ana Lucía Paiva, Andrea López, and Evelyn Cermeño for their excellent comments during the review process, and Patricia Ciria for her assistance in refining the text in the final edits. We also express special recognition and gratitude for their contributions and collaboration to Marisa Tojo, General Director of Procurement and Contracting GCABA; Verónica Valle, Director of ChileCompra; and Carlos Pimentel, Director of the General Directorate of Public Procurement of the Dominican Republic. Any errors are the sole responsibility of the authors.

INDEX

Acronyms.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Part I.....	7
2.1 Approaches and Instruments to Promote Women's Participation in Public Procurement.....	7
3. Part II.....	9
3.1 Strategies to Promote the Participation of Women in Public Procurement.....	9
3.2 Country Strategies	13
3.3 Notable Experiences in Programs for Women Suppliers: <i>Sello Empresa Mujer</i> and Other Good Practices	13
i) Chile	16
ii) Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (Argentina).....	20
iii) Honduras	24
iv) Dominican Republic	26
3.4 Countries and Provinces that Have Implemented Actions to Promote the Participation of Women in Public Procurement	30
i) Argentina	30
ii) Bolivia.....	32
iii) Colombia	33
iv) Costa Rica	35
v) Ecuador.....	36
vi) El Salvador.....	37
vii) Panama.....	37
viii) Paraguay	38
ix) Peru	38
x) Uruguay.....	39
xi) Venezuela	40
4. Part III	41
4.1 Conclusions.....	41
4.2 Lessons Learned and Recommendations.....	41
References	44

Acronyms

DGCP	General Directorate of Public Procurement (Dominican Republic)
DNCP	National Directorate of Public Procurement (Paraguay)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MSME	Micro, small, and medium enterprise
SPP	Sustainable public procurement

1. Introduction

Women have historically faced significant challenges in terms of economic and financial inclusion. Only 14 percent of firms in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region are owned by women; 15 percent of the boards of directors of LAC companies have female participation; and only 11 percent of companies have women in the position of chief executive officer (Basco et al., 2021). Cultural and regulatory biases and barriers in access to capital and information are among the causes of these gaps (ibidem). The COVID-19 pandemic deepened inequalities between men and women, due to the increased burden on women of caregiving tasks as well as a greater presence of women in the informal labor market and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), sectors hit hard by the health crisis (UN Women, 2022).

Public procurement can be a particularly relevant market for promoting gender equality, representing, on average, 30 percent of central government spending in the LAC region (UN Women, 2022). Greater participation of women in the public procurement market can have a positive impact on the direct beneficiaries of these policies and on the State, increasing competition and making it easier to obtain the best value for money (Harper and Inostroza, 2023). Expanding opportunities for women to become public sector suppliers can also drive positive externalities in terms of social and economic development and poverty alleviation (VFW and OCP, 2020).

The availability of data on women's participation in public procurement in Latin America and the Caribbean is limited. Gender-disaggregated data alone is not sufficient; it is essential to understand their role in public contracts—whether they are the owners of the firm, majority partners, or simply acting as representatives of the company during the procurement process (Ruiz, 2020). In this regard, the difficulty in identifying women-owned businesses is one of the main obstacles to implementing measures that could improve their positioning in public procurement markets. (Harper and Inostroza, 2023).

In recent years, a growing number of LAC countries have begun to include a gender perspective in their public procurement policies. A variety of instruments have been adopted, including awareness and training campaigns (aimed at both the public and private sectors), preferences and quotas, recognition of good business practices, and the *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs, which identify and create certifications for women-owned companies or those in which women play a predominant management role. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) supports several of its member countries in implementing these types of initiatives, such as Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras at the national level and the City of Buenos Aires (Argentina) at the subnational level. In addition, in 2015, some member countries of the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement signed a declaration to promote the incorporation of women in public procurement and a toolkit was developed to help broaden the gender perspective within procurement agencies (Harper, 2018).

This paper analyzes activities and programs that promote women's participation in public procurement across Spanish-speaking Latin American countries.¹ The analysis considers policies aimed at individuals as well as the owners, leaders, and/or legal representatives of companies.

The study identifies countries with initiatives of this type and existing *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs² and compiles their experiences, with particular attention to good practices,³ the institutional framework managing these initiatives and the regulations that govern them, and the reported results. For example, in 2018, only two years after implementing the *Sello Empresa Mujer*, Chile had certified more than 41,000 women suppliers. In addition, between 2022 and 2023, there was a 38.5 percent increase in the participation of women in public procurement processes. It should be noted, however, that this work is not intended to measure the impact or degree of progress of the measures adopted but rather to identify and describe experiences, highlighting good practices and systematizing lessons learned. With more available data, researchers can evaluate the results obtained in the region and investigate how policy interventions that address market failures increase the efficiency of public procurement and the value for public money that citizens receive for their taxes, as well as quantify or characterize the extent of potential savings.

The methodology used by the authors in this study was qualitative, based on a documentary review. Information was gathered from public procurement portals and other official websites of the countries, and the applicable regulations on government procurement were analyzed, including specific rules on gender-responsive public procurement (GRPP), regulations for MSMEs, as well as guidelines and manuals issued by the governing bodies for public procurement and sustainable public procurement (SPP), in addition to gender equity plans and programs, among other sources. The qualitative analysis was complemented with statistical data on women's participation in public procurement and, in the cases studied in greater depth, with indicators on the overall situation of women's socioeconomic inclusion, as context that may influence the implementation of specific measures.

The paper is structured as follows: Part I summarizes GRPP internationally and outlines its evolution and the strategies most used to promote women's participation. It continues with a focus on how Spanish-speaking IDB member countries received the topic, offering an aggregate overview and summarizing the actions implemented by the 14 countries that have adopted some measure or provisions in this area (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela). In addition, it analyzes those countries and

¹ Although Brazil was not included in the analysis, it is important to highlight the launch of a technical booklet in March 2024 by the Ministry of Management and Innovation of Public Services (MGI) that provides guidance on how to apply the rules set forth in Decree No. 11,430/2023, a rule that reserves a portion of vacancies in public administration contracts for women in situations of domestic violence, stands out.

² This is the case of Chile, the Dominican Republic, the City of Buenos Aires and, more recently, Honduras.

³ The corresponding section defines good practices and lists some of the criteria considered for their selection.

cities that have made progress in implementing certifications and registries such as the *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs (City of Buenos Aires in Argentina, Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras). This is followed by a review of experiences in other countries and provinces that have developed similar programs. It concludes with a discussion of lessons learned and some preliminary reflections on where things stand in the LAC region.

2. Part I

2.1 Approaches and Instruments to Promote Women's Participation in Public Procurement

Box 1: What is Gender-Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP)?

GRPP refers to measures that leverage government purchasing power to advance women's socioeconomic inclusion. These initiatives have been described using different terms, such as *gender-sensitive public procurement* (Orser et al., 2021), *gender-based public procurement* (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Kinoti, 2015), or *gender-smart public procurement* (Harris Rimmer, 2017). Beyond these terminological differences and varying policy approaches, they share a common goal: to contribute to women's economic empowerment by increasing their opportunities to participate in public procurement markets. In this regard, UN Women (2022) defines GRPP as “a strategy to ensure that the selection of services, goods, and civil works considers its impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. These policies aim to promote and guide procurement processes to foster the inclusion of women-led businesses, particularly MSMEs.

According to McCrudden (2004), public procurement has been a tool to achieve social justice objectives since the 1960s, when some governments (e.g., in the United States and the United Kingdom) began to implement affirmative action to benefit women employed under federal government contracts—in particular in terms of minimum wage and working hour limitations—and to ensure that women-owned businesses would receive a proportion of government contracts. Initially, the gender and public procurement interventions developed by the U.S. government operated under a self-certification system—that is, it was sufficient for women-owned businesses to declare their status as such (Zurbuchen, 1979). However, due to a rise in fraudulent practices, in 1961 the Small Business Administration issued guidelines for obtaining the certification. To prevent malpractices and improve the visibility and positioning of women's enterprises in the public market, certification programs were developed that allow contracting entities to identify women-led or women-owned businesses through the accreditation of the requirements demanded.

Organizations such as the International Trade Center and UN Women have emphasized the importance of women's participation in the public market. At the regional level, in the framework of a meeting led by the IDB in May 2015, member states of the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement signed a declaration promoting inclusive economic development and increasing public procurement opportunities for women.⁴ In May 2022, the Declaration of Panama, approved at the fourth plenary session of the thirty-ninth meeting of the Inter-American Commission of Women (May 2022), states among its purposes the strengthening of legal and regulatory frameworks to

⁴ Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Peru, and Uruguay signed the declaration, as did the IDB, the IGCN and the OAS.

facilitate labor insertion and reinsertion and entrepreneurship for the full exercise of women's economic rights. It includes initiatives to increase the participation of women-led companies in public procurement processes. Moreover, the Model Directive encourages a broadened gender perspective as one of the criteria to ensure greater sustainability in procurement and contracting (OAS, IDB, IDRC, and IISD, 2021). European Union (EU) member countries also recognize the importance of these criteria through the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, which stresses the need to combat discrimination and promote gender equality in public procurement.⁵ The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021) and the Asian Development Bank and UN Women (2022) have expressed similar views.

Based on this international consensus, countries have deployed different strategies to increase the participation of women in public procurement markets. Table 1 identifies the most common approaches and measures, summarizing the objectives of each one. The instruments are grouped into two broad categories:

- **Horizontal measures:** generating conditions to increase the participation of less favored sectors in public procurement (Harper and Orjuela, 2018). These interventions are based on an approach focused on market failures, pursuing the elimination of legal, administrative, and procedural barriers that may limit competition (Rozenwurcel and Drewes, 2012). These include implementing certification programs; proactive transparency programs, data collection, and access to information; outreach, awareness, training, and capacity building initiatives; as well as programs for financing, tax incentives, and the granting of subsidies. These instruments tend to favor competition and transparency and promote better management of procurement procedures, benefiting not only potential suppliers in specific sectors but also procuring entities in general. However, these measures alone may be insufficient to overcome existing obstacles and may need to be complemented by targeted, direct interventions. In addition, some of them—since they are based on voluntary mechanisms (e.g., guides and manuals)—may be less effective than specific legal obligations and goals.
- **Direct measures, also called vertical measures,** involve a deliberate intervention in the market to benefit specific sectors (Ávalos, 2023). They include bid selection programs or measures, such as special clauses and preferences; market shaping measures, such as special processes, quotas, or market reserves and offsets (i.e., obligations to subcontract or partner with women-owned companies to execute contracts or to employ a certain number of women for its fulfillment). Unfortunately, these measures are prone to produce distortions, as both agencies and companies may engage in compliance-driven practices to comply with their provisions.⁶

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/682425/en>

⁶ For example, a supplier of pharmaceuticals to the prison health service in Philadelphia was found liable for using a woman-led business to take advantage of local regulatory provisions relating to the participation of minority-, women- and disability-owned businesses. In this case, it paid the women-led business for the use

Table 1. Approaches and Instruments to Promote the Participation of Women in Public Procurement

Approach	Types	Subtypes	Objectives
Horizontal	Certification programs or measures	<i>Sello Empresa Mujer</i> Programs	Identify companies owned by women, or where women play a central role in their management and administration.
		Good business practice certification programs	Identify businesses that have gender standards and/or certifications (e.g., company free of gender-based violence).
	Proactive transparency and data collection programs or measures	Proactive transparency programs	Make public sector contracting opportunities more visible and accessible.
		Programs for measuring the participation of women in public procurement	Generate reliable data to estimate women's participation in public procurement and to assess the impact of implemented actions.
	Outreach and awareness-raising programs or measures	Training, education, and technical assistance to the private sector	Provide women with knowledge and tools to strengthen their abilities to participate in public procurement processes.
		Training and capacity building for contracting entities	Train and build awareness among those involved in the procurement process about the potential of GRPP and the tools available for its implementation.
	Training and education	Preparation of guides or manuals	Develop materials to raise awareness and guide public entities on how to integrate a gender perspective into their purchasing decisions.
		Special credits	Increase women's opportunities to access financing to expand or consolidate their businesses.
Direct or vertical	Bid selection programs or measures	Special clauses	Establish requirements that facilitate the participation of women-owned companies (e.g., in terms of experience, seniority, guarantees, etc.).
		Preferences	Give priority to bids made by companies owned or led by women. Preference may function as a tiebreaker or be applied up to a certain percentage.
	Offsets	Employability (quota policies)	Require the selected company to include a certain quota of women in its workforce or ensure that women fill a percentage of the staff employed for contract execution.
		Subcontracting	Ensure that the awarded company partners for contract execution or subcontracts parts of it to businesses owned or led by women.
	Market shaping programs or measures	Quotas	Reserve a certain percentage of the processes or of the total amount traded in the public market for companies owned or led by women.
		Special processes	Create specific processes reserved for women-led businesses (e.g., in sectors where women are particularly underrepresented).

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Harper and Orjuela (2018) and UN Women (2023).

3. Part II

3.1 Strategies to Promote the Participation of Women in Public Procurement

This section describes the status of measures aimed at promoting women's participation in public procurement in Spanish-speaking IDB member countries. It summarizes the main findings in aggregate form and then provides a brief overview of the progress made

of its name. See: <https://www.phila.gov/media/20181127105426/Prison-Health-Services-Settlement-Agreement.pdf>

by each country that has adopted actions or provisions in this area. To provide a comprehensive perspective, the analysis includes countries that are at least in an initial phase of awareness or recognition—meaning those whose regulations, plans, or other documents (such as guidelines or manuals) refer to the need to incorporate a gender perspective in public procurement decisions or actions. Based on this criterion, it was determined that at least 14 of the 17 countries analyzed (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela) have some type of provision or measure aimed at promoting women’s participation in public procurement. Regarding the specificity of these provisions or their thematic focus,⁷ Table 2 illustrates how different countries address this issue:

Table 2. Provisions to Promote the Participation of Women in Public Procurement, by Country

Argentina (public works) Chile Ecuador Panama Peru	Differentiated area within public policies.
Argentina (goods and services) Costa Rica Paraguay Uruguay	As an aspect of its sustainable public procurement actions.
Colombia Dominican Republic El Salvador Honduras	As part of the provisions or programs related to MSMEs or ventures.
Bolivia	By leveraging a special contracting modality—reverse procurement fairs—to foster closer engagement between public entities and women-owned businesses. ^a
Venezuela	As part of the national gender equality policy.

Source: Authors’ elaboration based on Harper and Orjuela (2018) and UN Women (2023).

^a Reverse procurement fairs (“ferias a la inversa”) are events where public entities present their procurement needs—such as goods, services, or works—to potential suppliers, reversing the traditional dynamic of trade fairs. This modality promotes transparency, accelerates contracting processes, and facilitates the participation of small and women-owned businesses by creating direct engagement opportunities and reducing barriers to entry.

Moreover, based on an analysis of awarded contracts, most of the countries mentioned apply the gender perspective in the contracting of goods and services as well as in public works. In some cases, the measures are the same for both types of contracts (Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, and Uruguay). In other countries, differentiated programs or clauses have been developed for the infrastructure sector (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Paraguay). Following the classification presented in Table 1,

⁷ The predominant perspective or theme has been considered in the approach because some countries consider the issue from more than one perspective (for example, SPP and MSMEs).

the panorama is divided as follows: some have implemented horizontal measures⁸ (Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama); others have adopted a combination of horizontal and vertical instruments (Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru); and only one (El Salvador) has implemented exclusively direct or vertical measures.⁹ Among those that have adopted a horizontal or mixed approach, five have *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs (Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Panama); five have proactive transparency programs and/or data collection on women's participation in public procurement (Chile, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Peru); three have preference or quota policies (Chile, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador); three have special processes or clauses (Chile, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic); and a large majority also apply other types of instruments such as guides, manuals, training, and financing measures, among others (Table 3).

⁸ The approach is horizontal when the country has adopted guidelines or a manual on the subject, even when they recommend the application of vertical measures. In other words, the approach is vertical only if the preference or other vertical measure arises from a binding standard.

⁹ It is worth noting, however, the recent regulation enacted in Ecuador has weakened the quota policy by replacing the obligation to allocate a specific percentage of public procurement to women-led MSMEs with a best-efforts obligation.

Table 3. Measures to Encourage Women's Participation in Public Procurement in Latin America and the Caribbean

Country or jurisdiction	Types of contracts		Horizontal measures			Vertical measures		
	Goods and services	Works	<i>Sello Empresa Mujer</i>	Proactive transparency and/or data collection	Training for companies	Preferences or quotas	Processes or special clauses	Others
Argentina	✓	✓			✓			
Bolivia	✓	✓			✓			
Chile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Colombia	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Costa Rica	✓							
Dominican Republic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ecuador	✓	✓		✓	✓			
El Salvador	✓	✓				✓		
Honduras			✓	✓				
Panama			✓					
Paraguay	✓	✓			✓			
Peru	✓	✓		✓				✓
Uruguay	✓	✓						
Venezuela	✓							

Source: Authors' elaboration.

3.2 Country Strategies

Among the countries that have available data, there is a notable difference between the participation of men and women in public procurement. In Peru, for example, according to information from the Business Intelligence System CONOSCE of the Supervisory Body for State Contracting of Peru, under the contracting regime regulated by Law 30.225, the amounts awarded according to the leadership of the companies expressed in Soles were S/ 24,350.50 for men and S/ 5,784.50 for women in 2023.¹⁰ In the Dominican Republic, according to the National Directorate of Public Contracting, in the period 2020-24, more than RD\$183,414 million were awarded to women suppliers (22 percent of the total awarded) and RD\$645,583 million to men (78 percent).¹¹ In Chile, the participation of women in the amounts transacted on the www.mercadopublico.cl platform during 2023 was US\$3.255 million in sales of goods and services to State entities. This represented a growth of 11.9 percent over the previous year. However, it only represents 20 percent of the total amount transacted, which amounted to US\$16.288 million, compared to the 17.2 percent recorded in 2022 (US\$2.579 million).

The experiences in closing gender gaps in this area are presented below. The authors begin with an analysis of programs implemented for women suppliers and continue with those that promote women's participation in public markets.

3.3 Notable Experiences in Programs for Women Suppliers: *Sello Empresa Mujer* and Other Good Practices

This section presents the results of an in-depth study of countries and cities that have implemented policies to promote the participation of women in public procurement, particularly *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs (Chile, City of Buenos Aires, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras) as well as the good practices developed, and the results obtained. To establish the concept of good practices and define the selection criteria, the study considers the definitions and standards proposed by Austin (2018), UNDESA and UNDP (2021) and OECD (2022).

According to Austin (2018), good practices are those experiences that are advisable in each field because they have yielded positive results and demonstrated their success and usefulness, so that they are worth repeating and sharing. UNDESA and UNDP (2021) and OECD (2022) coincide in pointing out that, to identify a good practice, it is important to evaluate factors such as user participation and empowerment, transparency and accountability, and the capacity to contribute to the improvement of public services. Table 4 compares the main characteristics of the programs and determines the following:

¹⁰https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/osce.bi/viz/PARTICIPACION_MUJER_COMPRAS_PUBLICAS/Dashboard?publish=yes%20

¹¹ Contracting Bulletin in figures special edition four years of management 2020-2024. General Directorate of Public Contracting. Available at: https://www.dgcp.gob.do/cat_publicaciones/contrataciones-en-cifras/.

- i) Five of the seven initiatives are national in scope, one is provincial (Río Negro), and one is local (City of Buenos Aires).
- ii) Regarding the implementing authority, in three cases (Chile, Buenos Aires City, and Honduras), the certification is managed by the governing body for public procurement and contracting, while in the remaining cases it is overseen by other entities, such as social or economic development agencies.
- iii) There are also significant differences in the requirements for granting certification, although in almost all cases the aim is for women to hold most of the shareholding and/or occupy key roles in the management of the firm. In five of the cases studied, certification is available to women-owned businesses in general, while in one (Colombia) it is reserved for women in vulnerable situations¹² and in another (the Dominican Republic) for firms that, in addition to meeting the requirement that women hold the majority of the share capital, meet the requirements to be considered MSMEs.
- iv) All programs require prior application for the granting process, except for Chile, which, as will be seen below, with the regulatory update approved in 2022 has become the first country in the LAC region to have an automatically granted *Sello Empresa Mujer*.
- v) There are also important differences in the benefits available under this certification. The Dominican Republic is the country that grants the widest range of benefits and incentives to companies that are certified as women MSMEs.
- vi) Regarding impact measurement, Chile and the Dominican Republic are the only two jurisdictions that have a concrete weighting of the results of their programs. In the case of Honduras and Panama, some of the experiences are too recent to provide measurable results.

¹² The case of Colombia is because, although there are benefits for women-owned businesses in general, as will be seen below, they operate under a system of self-accreditation and not through a certification issued by the State, which is why it has not been considered a *Sello Empresa Mujer* program per se.

Table 4. Comparison of *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs

Country, province or city	Name of program or certification	Start year	Scope	Implementing Authority	Eligibility requirements	Requires prior application	Benefits	Measures results
Chile	<i>Sello Empresa Mujer</i>	2016	National	ChileCompra	Natural person: registered sex. Legal entities: a) more than 50 percent of the company's ownership must be held by women; b) the company must have a female general manager; c) more than 50 percent of the company's legal representatives are women (one is sufficient)	No	Access to special training and inclusive direct contracts under certain amounts	Yes
City of Buenos Aires (Argentina)	<i>Sello Empresa Mujer</i>	2019	Local	General Directorate of Purchasing and Contracting	a) Individuals whose legal administrator is a woman; b) legal entities if 50 percent or more of the capital is owned by one or more women or 50 percent or more of the control and administration of the business is in the hands of women.	Yes	Access to training	No
Colombia	Certificate for MSMEs led by women in vulnerable situations	2021	National	Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Tourism	Led by women who fall into one of the following categories vulnerability listed in Article 18 of Law 2125, or others identified by the National Government.	Yes	Access to other instruments or programs and/or services available to support women's entrepreneurship.	No data
Dominican Republic	Women-Owned MSME Certification	2021	National	Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and MSMEs	They must meet the requirements to be considered MSMEs, and women must have a shareholding or equity interest of more than 50 percent.	Yes	Quotas in public procurement, confirming, special credits, training, technical assistance, reduction of guaranteed percentages.	Yes
Honduras	<i>Sello Empresa Mujer</i>	2022	National	Regulatory Office for Contracting and Procurement of the State of Honduras	Women entrepreneurs identified by public entities.	Yes	Access to training	No data
Panama	Woman-Owned Business	2023	National	Ministry of Social Development	a) The company must be owned by a woman; b) more than 50 percent of the shareholders must be women; c) more than 50 percent of the company's board of directors must be women.	Yes	Access to training	No data
Province of Río Negro (Argentina)	Single Registry of Women Entrepreneurs	2021	Provincial	CREAR Río Negro Agency (Provincial Ministry of Economy)	They must be at least 51 percent owned by women, be managed by women, exceeding 25 percent of the shareholding, and not be dependent on other companies (all three must be met).	Yes	Access to training and tax benefits	No data

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the information collected for this document

i) Chile

In recent years, Chile has experienced significant improvements in its socioeconomic situation and gender equity indicators. The country ranked 27th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2023, positioning it among the countries with the greatest positive evolution in general terms (WEF, 2023). In this regard, according to emerging data in Chile, the number of companies with at least 20 percent women on their board of directors increased steadily between 2019 and 2022 (from 100 to 137, respectively), reaching 37.7 percent of the companies analyzed (ChileMujeres, Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Finance, Development, and Tourism, 2022). During the same period, the average number of women on the boards of directors of large companies in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries reached 28 percent, while in Chile it was 15.2 percent (ibidem).

Legal and Institutional framework

Article 19 of the Chilean Constitution declares that there are no privileged persons or groups, ensuring equal treatment of women and men under the law. The national government created the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity in 2015 through Law No. 20,820. This norm assigns the primary competence of collaborating with the president in the design, coordination, and evaluation of policies, plans, and programs to promote gender equity and equal rights, eliminating all forms of arbitrary discrimination against women. Chile has also ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol.

In 2023, public procurement accounted for 4.5 percent of Chile's GDP, equivalent to more than US\$ 16 billion¹³ transacted by public entities on the e-procurement platform www.mercadopublico.cl. Public procurement is regulated by Law 19.886,¹⁴ enacted in 2003, which applies to contracts for the supply of movable goods and services. Given Chile's character as a unitary state, the law applies to the national government as well as to regional and municipal governments. The regime is regulated by Decree No. 250/2004.¹⁵ Recently, the country has initiated the reform and modernization of its public procurement regulations under Law 21.634,¹⁶ which amends Law 19.886, with the aim of achieving greater environmental and social sustainability, as well as promoting the participation of MSMEs and companies led by women in the public market.

Origins and the Legal-Institutional Framework of Public Procurement with a Gender Perspective

Chile was one of the first LAC countries to integrate a gender perspective into its public procurement policies. In 2014, the Directorate of Public Procurement and Contracting, ChileCompra, together with the civil society organization Comunidad Mujer and the

¹³ <https://www.chilecompra.cl/2024/05/mas-de-16-mil-millones-de-dolares-fueron-transados-en-2023-a-traves-de-mercado-publico/>

¹⁴ <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?i=213004>

¹⁵ <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=230608>

¹⁶ <https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=1198903>

IDB, initiated the design and implementation of a comprehensive program to boost the participation of women in the public market (Comunidad Mujer, 2019). In this framework, actions were taken to establish the baseline for interventions. The data obtained were overwhelming: the participation of women in the public procurement market reached only 26 percent of the amounts awarded and represented, on average, 65 percent of the value transacted by men (according to the recitals of ChileCompra Directive No. 20/2015).

Between 2014 and 2015, ChileCompra issued two directives that marked the first steps toward creating a regulatory framework for incorporating a gender perspective into public procurement.

The first, Directive 17, provided instruction for inclusive public procurement that promotes equal opportunities in the public market, issued in 2014. The instruction cites evaluation criteria related to women and gender equality and states that the contracting entity may seek greater integration and inclusion of the persons, through evaluation criteria that reward those employers that provide favorable conditions or policies.

In 2015, amendments were introduced to Decree No. 250, which regulates the Public Procurement Law, incorporating the possibility for bidding terms and conditions to include “criteria and weightings assigned to bidders based on matters of high social impact.” Additionally, the option was added to use direct contracting for low-value procurements “that prioritize matters of high social impact, such as those related to inclusive development, support for small businesses, decentralization and local development, as well as those that promote environmental protection, the hiring of persons with disabilities, or individuals in situations of social vulnerability

In the same year, Directive No. 20 was issued, becoming the first guideline specifically aimed at the incorporation of criteria that promote gender equity in public procurement processes carried out by State purchasing entities.

The preamble of this directive refers to the growing international importance of the concept of “inclusive public procurement,” understood as procurement that seeks an appropriate balance between the social, economic, and environmental aspects of contracts carried out by state institutions, aiming to provide equal access, participation, and opportunities to bidders who face certain disadvantages (...) and to reduce barriers that, for various reasons, prevent them from competing on equal terms. The directive also draws on the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, and a ruling by the Chilean Constitutional Court that expressly recognized the possibility of adopting measures involving positive discrimination in favor of women.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ruling No. 2777-15-CPT on unconstitutionality request regarding the bill that replaces the binominal electoral system with an inclusive proportional system and strengthens the representation of women in the National Congress.

Against this backdrop, ChileCompra encourages procuring entities to apply inclusive evaluation criteria—for example, considering the bidder’s sex (for natural persons) or whether the firm is women-led (for legal entities). It further allows agencies to include criteria that reward bidders promoting gender equity and women’s labor-market participation, as well as those demonstrating that women hold decision-making roles within the company.

The directive permits using the bidder’s sex or the presence of women in managerial positions as a tie-breaker and authorizes direct awards to women-owned firms for low-value procurements involving ‘matters of high social impact,’ as defined in Decree No. 250/2004. In March 2016, further intensifying this line of work, ChileCompra launched a *Sello Empresa Mujer* program with the aim of identifying companies owned by women and the consequent implementation of the recommendations contained in Directive 20.

In 2022, Chile automated the *Sello Empresa Mujer* and updated Directive 20,¹⁸ providing automatic validation of sex via civil registry data for natural persons and verification via official sources for legal entities, particularly the Internal Revenue Service and the information provided by users in their Affidavit of Partners. At least one of the following conditions must be met: a) women own more than 50 percent of the company, b) the company has a female general manager; c) women have more than 50 percent of the legal representatives of the company. No formalities or applications are needed to carry out this validation.

Chile is modernizing its public procurement framework through Law No. 21,634 (Official Gazette, December 11, 2023), which consolidates and advances prior reforms. Law No. 21,634 explicitly strengthens the participation of women-led micro and small enterprises. In fact, as of December 2024, the provisions establishing that agile purchasing becomes a procedure for these enterprises and the amounts for using this modality are increased from 30 monthly tax units to 100.¹⁹ This translates into greater business opportunities for this segment, which can be used largely by businesswomen in small and micro enterprises. Likewise, the possibility of establishing complementary criteria to the technical and economic evaluation to promote women-led companies is introduced in public bids. For bids of less than 500 monthly tax units, only in the case of territorial organizations (i.e., municipalities, regional governments, and territorially decentralized public entities), preference may be given to local suppliers, which could favor women entrepreneurs. However, these criteria may not be the only ones set by bidding entities.

The law also grants legal status to low-value direct contracting for matters of high social impact—already addressed in Decree No. 250/04—and explicitly includes contracts that promote women-led businesses. The amendment also incorporates Chapter IX into Law

¹⁸ <https://www.chilecompra.cl/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Directiva20-Perspectiva-de-Genero.pdf>

¹⁹ Unit defined in Chile that corresponds to an amount of money expressed in pesos and determined by law, which is permanently updated by the Consumer Price Index and is used as a tax measure.

No. 19,886, titled: “On the Promotion of Participation of Small Enterprises and Cooperatives in the Public Procurement System.” This chapter requires State agencies to promote the participation of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in public procurement processes, with special mention of those led by women (Article 47).

Good Practices

Along with the *Sello Empresa Mujer*, ChileCompra implemented training for women-owned firms focused on both technical competencies and soft skills needed to succeed as public suppliers. Likewise, it has developed training and awareness-raising campaigns for buyers and included questions regarding the gender perspective in the certification test—governed by Law No. 19,886—for public entity procurement officials.

In 2022, the update of Directive 20 automated the granting of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* without the need to apply or submit additional documentation, in the case of legal entities. This was achieved by cross-referencing information from the civil registry and the Internal Revenue Service.²⁰ Chile has achieved a breakthrough in terms of bureaucratization and administrative simplification: suppliers do not have to submit documents and buyers can more easily identify women suppliers through the evaluation criteria they establish in their purchasing processes. These updates have led to new developments in the recognition of the right to gender identity by providing that those persons who had obtained the rectification of their registered sex, within the framework of the provisions of Law No. 21,120, would benefit from the *Sello Empresa Mujer*.

In 2023, ChileCompra created the Gender Participation Index in Public Procurement, which measures the opportunities for women-led companies to succeed in the public procurement system compared to those led by men. For this purpose, the present study considers the dimensions of the offers of female suppliers in the public market (if they participate in any purchasing procedure) and of the award (if they receive a purchase order from a state entity). Thus, the closer to 1, the greater the chances of success for women-led companies compared to those led by men, with 1 being the ideal value for this index, as it represents equal conditions for both groups. When comparing 2022 and 2023, the Index went from 0.31 to 0.39, which represents a 25.8 percent growth and a substantial improvement in opportunities for women-led companies.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the specific actions in public works and gender. In 2021, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development launched the *Sello Empresa Mujer* in Construction, which allows companies that commit to hiring at least 5 percent women for contract execution to obtain additional points in the Ministry's tenders. Companies that commit to hiring 10 percent or more women will receive five additional points, while those with less than 10 percent and up to 7 percent will receive two points. Those with less than 7 percent and up to 5 percent will receive one point.²¹

²⁰ <https://www.chilecompra.cl/requisitos-para-obtener-el-sello-empresa-mujer/>.

²¹ <https://minmujeryeg.gob.cl/?p=51677>

Aligned with this measure, the ‘Women in Public Works’ portal was launched by the Ministries of Public Works, Labor and Social Security, and Housing and Urban Development, in partnership with private entities. Its purpose is to promote job postings, training courses, career guidance, and certification opportunities for specific skills in the construction industry, aiming to foster greater inclusion of women in the infrastructure sector.²²

Results

The following results suggest a significant improvement in opportunities for women-led companies in the public market:

- By May 2018 (i.e., only two years after the initial implementation of the *Sello Empresa Mujer*), 41,000 natural persons had been certified and 650 legal entities had applied for it, reflecting the positive reception of the initiative among the supplier sector.²³
- The participation of women (natural persons) in amounts transacted increased by 25.1 percent between 2013 and 2017 (Comunidad Mujer, 2019).
- The average amount transacted per provider increased by almost US\$1,500 between 2013 and 2017, equivalent to 11.2 percent.²⁴
- In 2023, women-led firms sold US\$3.26 billion to public entities, out of US\$16.29 billion transacted overall, reflecting a real growth of 11.9 percent from 2022. The number of women-led companies that submitted bids and received purchase orders increased by 38.5 percent in the same time frame, from 24,344 to 33,723.²⁵ The Gender-Perspective Public Procurement Participation Index increased 25.8 percent, from 0.31 to 0.39, respectively, between 2022 and 2023.

ii) Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (Argentina)

General Context

The Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (hereafter, the City) is one of the 24 jurisdictions²⁶ and the capital of the Republic of Argentina. The reform of the National Constitution enacted in 1994, through Article 129, granted it the status of Autonomous City, a unique category within the federal organization of the Argentine State. Its government has its own powers of legislation and jurisdiction, and its leader is directly elected by the people (Article 129 of the National Constitution). The autonomy of the City includes the powers to enact and administer its own public procurement regime, which is currently

²² <https://www.mop.gob.cl/lanzan-portal-web-mujeres-en-obra-para-aumentar-participacion-en-la-construccion/>

²³ Source: ChileCompra

²⁴ Source: ChileCompra

²⁵ Source: ChileCompra

²⁶ The Argentine Republic is organized into 23 provinces and one Autonomous City.

regulated by Law No. 2095, enacted in 2006.²⁷ This law establishes the public sector guidelines for the purchases, sales, and contracting of goods and services in the City.

Regarding regulatory aspects, the Constitution preserves, in its ninth chapter, the equality between men and women. In 2018, the Legislature of the City sanctioned Law No. 474,²⁸ which approved the "*Plan real de igualdad de oportunidades y de trato entre mujeres y varones*" (plan for equal opportunities and treatment between women and men), whose general objective is to ensure the full recognition, enjoyment, and exercise of the rights and guarantees of women and promote equality in terms of opportunities and treatment, as established in the City's constitution, the National Constitution, and international treaties. In addition, Argentina has ratified the "*Convención Internacional sobre Eliminación de todas las Formas de Discriminación contra la Mujer*" (an international convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women) and its optional protocol. By virtue of Article 75, paragraph 22 of the National Constitution, the convention has constitutional hierarchy.

The data published by the "*Sistema de indicadores de género de Buenos Aires*" (gender indicator system) present a favorable picture regarding equal opportunities in access to education. For example, the average level of schooling for those both men and women over 25 is equal, and the percentage of employed women with completed higher education is higher than the percentage of employed men (50.6 percent and 40.1 percent, respectively).²⁹ However, they also reveal the persistence of gender gaps at the level of socioeconomic inclusion. For example, while the percentage of labor income as a percentage of total income is 83.5 percent for men, for women it is more than 10 points lower at 72.1 percent, while the percentage of households with income below the food basket according to the sex of the head of household is 5.5 percent in households headed by men and 6.7 percent in those headed by women.³⁰ Regarding specific indicators on public procurement, UN Women (2020) show that of the total number of suppliers, only 22.2 percent were women. Of these, only 10.4 percent received final transactions (ibidem). In relation to legal entities, only 10 percent were women-owned companies (ibidem).

Origins and Legal-Institutional Framework of Public Procurement with a Gender Perspective

In 2019, the Ministry of Economy and Finance and Ministry of Habitat and Human Development made an official agreement to incorporate the gender perspective in public procurement. In line with this commitment, the Ministry of Economy and Finance drafted Resolution No. 2302/2019, by which it instructed the General Directorate of Procurement and Contracting, in its capacity as the governing body of the City's

²⁷ <https://boletinoficial.buenosaires.gob.ar/normativaba/norma/91501>

²⁸ <https://boletinoficial.buenosaires.gob.ar/normativaba/norma/8264>

²⁹ <https://www.estadisticaciudad.gob.ar/si/genero/principal>

system of procurement and contracting of goods and services, to carry out the following actions:

- a) Create mechanisms for the voluntary identification and certification of women suppliers registered in the single and permanent registry of suppliers.
- b) Develop recommendations for the incorporation of sustainability criteria that promote the gender perspective in the contracting of goods and services.
- c) Establish training instances in coordination with other government agencies and/or academics to inform users about the gender perspective in public procurement policy.
- d) Increase opportunities, training, and programs that competitiveness and improve the levels of participation of companies of women suppliers of the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

In compliance with this instruction, in 2019 the *Sello Empresa Mujer* Program was created through Provision No. 100 of the General Directorate of Purchasing and Contracting, issued on October 2 of that year. The measure cites as its direct regulatory background the provisions of the City's Constitution and Law No. 474. It also relies on Article 7, paragraph 9 of Law No. 2095, stipulating that the authorities shall promote gradually and progressively the adequate and effective implementation of environmental, ethical, social and economic criteria in sustainable public procurement (SPP). According to Article 1° of Provision No. 100/19, the objective of the above-mentioned program is to identify in the single and permanent registry of suppliers the women-owned companies according to the criteria adopted by this General Directorate of Procurement and Contracting. This provision also approves the guidelines for obtaining a *Sello Empresa Mujer*. According to the latter, a woman-owned company is those suppliers registered in the single and permanent registry that have their information updated and meet the following requirements:

- Individuals: women, whose legal administrator is a woman.
- Legal entities: if either 50 percent or more of the capital is owned by one or more women, and/or 50 percent or more of the control and management of the business is in the hands of women

To avoid the improper or fraudulent use of this figure, the following are excluded from the program: "legal entities that depend on or are controlled by other company/s under the terms of Article 33 of Law No. 19,550 of Commercial Companies, with the exception of those cases in which the controlling company has also obtained the *Sello Empresa Mujer*, complying with the requirements established above. It is also important to point out that this is a voluntary mechanism for suppliers registered in the single and permanent registry—that is, it is not a requirement for submitting bids, but simply a program in which those individuals or legal entities that may participate if they wish to do so.

The procedures to obtain the *Sello Empresa Mujer* are carried out electronically, through the Buenos Aires Compras platform and consist of applying for access to the program, accompanied, in some cases, by documentation that accredits the conditions necessary for the company to be considered women-owned or managed by women (according to the nature of the applicant entity).

Good Practices

One of the most notable aspects of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* Program lies in its emphasis on the principles of graduality and progressivity, as guidelines that should steer the implementation of actions in this area. In line with the principles set forth by the local public procurement law, the guide of recommendations for incorporating sustainability criteria in the procurement of goods and services (annexed to Resolution No. 1280/19 of the DGCC, later replaced by Annex I of Resolution No. 603/22) highlights the need to send signals to the markets so that they gradually develop an offering capable of meeting the stated policy objectives.

The guide defines itself as a tool for purchasers and decision makers in the procurement system and contracting of goods and services of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires to facilitate the incorporation of sustainability criteria with a gender perspective in the different procurement processes. The document is addressed to authorities, officials, and staff of the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, who directly or indirectly participate in the planning and implementation of public policies with a gender perspective in the procurement and contracting of goods and services; and to suppliers and companies committed to actions in favor of gender equality, thus highlighting the importance of involving in these actions all the actors who perform functions with potential impact on gender and public procurement.

The guide also provides specific recommendations regarding, for example, the inclusion in the bidding documents of evaluation criteria that consider gender aspects, including the bidding company's gender equality policies. In addition to suggesting criteria, it identifies possible elements to verify compliance with them, which facilitates the operators' actions. The Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires complements the program implementation with training and dissemination activities, both for purchasers and for women-led enterprises.

Results

Publicly available indicators on the concrete impacts of the program are limited. However, some data provide indications of the initiative's scope. According to information from the City's official website, by November 2021, 24 percent of the City Government's operational procurement units had been trained on the *Sello Empresa Mujer* Program.³¹

³¹ <https://buenosaires.gob.ar/haciendayfinanzas/compras/compras-publicas-sustentables/noticias/capacitaciones-brindadas-del-sello>

As for the receptiveness of the program by the local supplier market, in September 2022, 87 of the 4,669 SMEs registered in the single and permanent registry had obtained the certification.³² As of June 2024, according to information provided by the General Directorate of Purchasing and Contracting, there are 11,082 suppliers in the registry and, of these, the results of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* are as follows:

Sello Empresa Mujer in effect: 237

Sello Empresa Mujer (individuals): 117

Sello Empresa Mujer (legal entities): 120

Sello Empresa Mujer (SMEs): 117

iii) Honduras

General Context

In Honduras, 51.3 percent of the approximately 9.6 million people (National Institute of Statistics, 2022) are women.³³ Honduras ranked 53rd in the Global Gender Equity Ranking 2023 and is among the LAC countries that have experienced an improvement in this area (WEF, 2023). Nevertheless, deep gender gaps persist, which are manifested in indicators such as the percentage of unemployment. In 2020, 45.2 percent of men were unemployed compared to 54.8 percent of women.³⁴ Gender inequality in Honduras is evident in both economic and fiscal policies, as well as in access to political power and the limitation of women's economic autonomy, leaving them exposed to greater violation of their rights and higher levels of poverty" (CEDAR, 2022: 19).

The Constitution of Honduras recognizes legal equality between men and women in marriage. Through Decree No. 232/1998,³⁵ the National Congress created the National Institute for Women (INAM), with the aim of achieving the full integration of women into the sustainable development process with gender equity—socially, economically, politically, and culturally. Honduras has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, although it is not yet a party to its Optional Protocol.

In 2010, the Institute prepared the “Política Nacional de la Mujer: II Plan de Igualdad y Equidad de Género de Honduras 2010-2022.” The document defines gender equality as the full enjoyment of equal rights and development opportunities for women and men, applying affirmative action measures in some sectors of the population given the

³² <https://www.open-contracting.org/es/2022/09/08/como-abrir-oportunidades-para-las-pymes-en-el-mercado-de-compras-publicas-la-experiencia-de-la-ciudad-de-buenos-aires/>

³³ <https://ine.gob.hn/v4/docs/poblacion/poblacion-por-sexo-segun-grandes-grupos-de-edad-anos-2016-2022/>

³⁴ <https://ine.gob.hn/v4/docs/empleo/poblacion-en-edad-de-trabajar-pet-y-poblacion-economicamente-activa-pea-segun-rango-de-edad-y-sexo-ano-2017-2022/>

³⁵ <https://www.informea.org/fr/legislation/decreto-n percentC2 percentBA-23298-ley-del-instituto-nacional-de-la-mujer>

circumstances of discrimination and exclusion they have experienced throughout their lives (INAM, 2010: 31).

Honduras is a unitary state, which nevertheless recognizes some autonomy for municipalities.³⁶ Government procurement and contracting account for about 8 percent of GDP (OCP and Spend Network, 2020). Government procurement is regulated by Legislative Decree No. 74/2001,³⁷ which applies to public works, supply of goods, or services and consulting contracts entered into by the bodies of the centralized and decentralized public administration (including municipalities), and similar contracts entered into by the legislative and judicial branches or any other State agency that is financed with public funds, with the modalities specific to its structure and budgetary execution. Executive Agreement No. 5/2002 regulates the law.

Origins and Legal-Institutional Framework of Public Procurement with a Gender Perspective

In 2021, the Superior Court of Accounts published an audit on sustainable public procurement, noting that if MSMEs had greater support in their business and financial strengthening, they could become suppliers and increase the competition of supply in the public market. It also highlighted the role of international cooperation in establishing public procurement measures with a gender perspective (Superior Court of Accounts, 2021).

In 2022, Honduras launched an action plan to promote women's participation in public procurement. The Oficina Normativa de Contratación y Adquisiciones del Estado de Honduras (Regulatory Office for Contracting and Procurement of the State of Honduras) developed the plan, which includes, among its actions, the implementation of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* program. Honduras was the first country in Central America to have such an initiative (Harper and Inostroza, 2023). This initiative is in the development and strategic definition phase and is scheduled to be implemented over two years considering the following four components³⁸

a) Diagnostic evaluation. Developed in collaboration with the Regulatory Office for Contracting and Procurement and the Secretaría de la Mujer (Women's Secretariat), this component consists of mapping and prioritizing the plan's activities and reviewing and evaluating sectoral and legislative issues. The diagnosis revealed a participation gap of 14 percentage points between MSMEs led by men and those led by women (Harper and Inostroza, 2023). One of the causes of this difference is the technological gap:

³⁶ Article 12 of the Municipalities Law establishes the postulates of its autonomy: free election of its authorities by direct and secret suffrage; free administration and the power to collect its own resources and invest them; the preparation, approval, execution and administration of its budget; the planning, organization and administration of municipal public services; and the power to create its own administrative structure and form of operation. See: https://www.tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/Ley_de_Municipalidades.pdf.

³⁷ <https://www.sefin.gob.hn/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/LeyContratacionEstado.pdf>

³⁸ Presentation by Gessenia López (Regulatory Office for Contracting and Procurement of the State of Honduras), at the launch of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* Program.

women have, in general, less access to technology and the necessary skills for its management, which entails disadvantages when it comes to knowing about contracting opportunities with the State and taking part in them (CEDAR, 2022). The amount of paperwork required, and payment terms are two other factors that discourage women-led MSMEs from participating in the public market (ibidem).

b) Digital tools in gender. The aim is to promote the participation of women through innovative digital tools, particularly the *Sello Empresa Mujer*. To this end, the development of a new institutional website is being considered.

c) Capacity building. Support for the institutions involved in the successful implementation of the plan and training for women to increase their opportunities for insertion in the public market. This component also includes the preparation of guides, training programs, pilot projects for the acquisition of products made by women-owned enterprises, etc.

d) Knowledge and dissemination. Basis for the implementation and evolution of the program, documenting, and systematizing experiences and disseminating information on the products achieved.

Good Practices

Honduras has created a *Sello Empresa Mujer* Roundtable as a space for dialogue and coordination. The program promotes conditions under a systematic scheme of inclusive procurement to accelerate the participation of women in public procurement and purchases.³⁹ Likewise, the roundtable gives concrete operability to the action plan to promote the participation of women, applying, for this purpose, the initiative's resources as well as those from the entities that coordinate the roundtable: the Secretaría de Transparencia y Lucha Contra la Corrupción (Secretariat for Transparency and Fight against Corruption) through the Regulatory Office for Contracting and Procurement together with the Women's Secretariat and the Servicio Nacional de Emprendimiento y de Pequeños Negocios (National Service for Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses).⁴⁰

Results

The new website has been launched and training for women entrepreneurs and contracting agencies is under way. However, as this is an ongoing initiative, data on results are not yet available.

iv) Dominican Republic

General Context

In the Dominican Republic, 50.5 percent of the roughly 10.8 million inhabitants are women, according to the results of the Informe general del X Censo Nacional de

³⁹ <https://senprende.hn/?p=12728>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Población y Vivienda 2022 (National Population and Housing Census).⁴¹ It ranks 81st in the global ranking on gender equity, placing it among the LAC countries that have made the most progress in equity in economic participation (WEF, 2023). However, gaps persist in terms of income (women earn 89 percent of the average hourly wage of men), number of hours spent in unpaid work, and time it takes for a woman who loses her job to find a new one (4.4 months compared to 3.4 months, respectively) (Urquidi, Serrate, and Chalud, 2019E).

Article 29 of the Dominican Republic Constitution protects the equality of men and women under the law. Likewise, Article 62 recognizes gender equality in terms of the right to work and Article 74 grants constitutional hierarchy to the human rights instruments signed by the country, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol. The Dominican Republic has a Ministry of Women's Affairs, which is responsible for establishing norms and coordinating the execution of policies, plans, and programs at the inter-institutional and sectoral levels, to achieve gender equality and equity and the full exercise of women's citizenship.⁴² In this line, Law No. 1/2012 approved the Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo 2030 (National Development Strategy), which establishes the principle of gender mainstreaming, providing that it must be incorporated into all plans, programs, projects, and public policies.

Public procurement represents just over 9 percent of GDP (OCP & Spend Network, 2020) and is regulated by Law No. 340/06 on contracting goods, works, services, and concessions, applicable to the central government, decentralized and financial institutions, public enterprises, municipalities, and the National District.

The Modelo Dominicano de Compras Públicas Inclusivas (Dominican Model of Inclusive Public Procurement) identifies the gender gaps that existed in the country before implementing policies for the inclusion of women in public markets and the obstacles that prevented their full participation (DGCP, 2020). It notes, for example, that in 2012, many women were excluded from the public market due to lack of access to information on tenders, knowledge of procedures, ability to meet requirements, and, above all, the lack of policies and programs that would allow them to fully participate in that market. Only 1,748 women-owned MSMEs were registered as suppliers to the State at that time.

Origins and Legal-Institutional Framework of Public Procurement with a Gender Perspective

In 2008, the National Congress of the Dominican Republic enacted Law No. 488/08, which establishes the Regulatory Framework for the Development and Competitiveness of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Article 26 of this law set a 20 percent quota in government procurement for MSMEs in which women hold

⁴¹<https://one.gob.do/publicaciones/2024/informe-general-del-x-censo-nacional-de-poblacion-y-vivienda-2022/?altTemplate=publicacionOnline>.

⁴² <https://mujer.gob.do/index.php/sobre-nosotros/quienes-somos>

more than 50 percent of the shares or equity, provided that the goods and services required by these institutions are offered by MSMEs. To comply with this measure, the Government's Electronic Public Procurement System (SECP) was configured to enable institutions to issue exclusive calls for MSMEs and women.

Since September 2012, the country has also implemented the Modelo Dominicano de Compras Públicas Sostenibles e Inclusivas (Dominican Model of Sustainable and Inclusive Public Procurement), which seeks for the State to develop and strengthen its national public procurement system to provide opportunities for MSMEs. The policy expressly refers to the use of public procurement as an instrument for the development of women-owned MSMEs through technical assistance, training, and public market business rounds.

In line with this, in 2015, the National Executive Branch issued Decree No. 370, which created the Presidential Initiative for the Support and Promotion of MSMEs. This decree recognizes public procurement and contracting as one of the key pillars for coordinating public policies aimed at MSMEs and women.

To implement the quota policy, in 2021 the country launched MSME certification and MSME-Women certification, issued by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and MSMEs, attesting that an individual or legal entity meets the legal requirements established in the current regulations on the promotion of MSMEs, Law No. 488-08 and its amendments, to be classified as MSME Women.⁴³

In addition to allowing certified firms to benefit from the quota established by law, certification gives access to other benefits: (i) advance of 20 percent of the total amount contracted to be used as working capital to guarantee compliance with the contract; (ii) reduction of the guarantee of faithful compliance of the contract from 1 to 4 percent; (iii) accompaniment by the Dirección General de Contrataciones Públicas (General Directorate of Public Procurement, or DGCP); (iv) accompaniment and free technical assistance through MSME centers nationwide; v) preferential rates for MSMEs through Banca Solidaria, Banreservas, and multiple private capital banks; vi) participation in the different activities organized by public institutions aimed at this business sector, such as exhibitions, talks, fairs, and activities that facilitate access to the different markets for goods and services, both national and international.⁴⁴ The certification is obtained upon request, presenting a series of corporate documents and after verifying that the firm is up to date with its obligations in tax and labor contributions.

Finally, it should be noted that Regulation No. 416/23, enacted in September 2023, approves the new regulations of the procurement regime and modifies some aspects of the public procurement policy with a gender perspective. It provides that those MSMEs in which women have a shareholding or capital stock of more than 50 percent will benefit from a 5 percent quota of the total amount allocated to each agency for

⁴³ <https://www.dgcp.gob.do/wp-content/uploads/page/Certificacion-Mipymes-mujer.pdf>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

procurement and contracting (thus reducing by 15 percent the quota previously provided for by Law No. 488).

Good Practices

The DGCP, a department of the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Finance, has signed several agreements with public and private entities in the Dominican Republic as well as other countries to promote greater participation of women in public procurement and contracting. These actions demonstrate the importance of generating inter-institutional and inter-jurisdictional alliances that support actions to include a gender perspective in public procurement policies.

In 2015, the DGCP signed an agreement with the Centro para la Promoción de la Micro y Pequeña Empresa en Centroamérica (Center for the Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprises in Central America) to design policies that benefit the member countries of the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (Central American Integration System), especially women-owned MSMEs.⁴⁵ In the same year, the DGCP partnered with the Federación Dominicana de Municipios (Dominican Federation of Municipalities) to strengthen the institutional capacity of local governments in public procurement and promote digital inclusion for women and MSMEs in local communities.⁴⁶

In 2021, an agreement was negotiated with the Ministry of Women to create a joint technical coordination team to identify women suppliers of the State with low participation rates in procurement processes, in order to strengthen their capacities in regulatory and technical aspects, as well as in the use of the Portal Transaccional (Transactional Portal).⁴⁷ Through this alliance, the parties will also identify the best valued purchasing units in the national purchasing system, which have a percentage of purchases from women of less than 5 percent, in order to create synergies and include them in the joint work agenda. The agreement also contemplates the organization of virtual meetings with women suppliers aimed at making them aware of public market opportunities in more than 330 procurement units nationwide, promoting, in addition, the participation of women in different activities of the public market, such as business rounds and fairs.⁴⁸

A year later, the DGCP signed an agreement with three business associations creating an accountability and recommendations roundtable that meets every six months to inform the signatory institutions of actions and progress on the inclusion of women in public procurement.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the agreement states that the DGCP must provide suppliers with access to trained personnel, while these associations invite and motivate

⁴⁵ <https://www.dgcp.gob.do/noticias/contrataciones-y-cenpromype-acuerdan-disenar-politicas-beneficien-mipymes-mujeres/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.dgcp.gob.do/noticias/contrataciones-publicas-y-fedomu-acuerdan-fortalecer-alcaldias-mujeres-y-mipymes-locales-2/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.dgcp.gob.do/noticias/rd-tiene-mas-de-22800-mujeres-proveedoras-del-estado/>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ <https://www.dgcp.gob.do/noticias/por-un-sistema-mas-inclusivo-y-transparente-firmamos-acuerdo-con-gremios-de-mujeres/>

businesswomen to participate in DGCP activities.⁵⁰ The DGCP website includes an open-data portal with a women's dashboard that publishes metrics on registration and contracting of women-led firms.⁵¹

Results

The impact of the actions implemented by the Dominican Republic in gender and public procurement can be inferred mainly from two indicators: the number of women registered as suppliers of the State and the participation of women or women-led companies in the number of contracts and total amounts awarded.

a) From the beginning of 2005 to August 2012, 1,748 women were registered as suppliers to the State, while between September 2012 and July 2016, 12,389 women and women-led companies were registered (DGCP, 2016). In total, the number of women registered as suppliers increased from 2,926 in 2012 to 21,674 in 2020, reaching 24 percent of registered suppliers.⁵²

b) According to statistics from the General Directorate of Public Procurement, the average monthly number of contracts awarded to women owners of MSMEs increased from 287 in 2013 to 551 in 2015 (DGCP, 2016). The average monthly amount contracted in favor of women entrepreneurs rose from RD\$162.3 million in 2013 to RD\$227.1 million in 2015 (ibid.). Based on data from the National Public Procurement and Contracting System (SNCCP) for 2022, out of 11,737 awarded suppliers, 3,363 were women.⁵³ When analyzing the distribution of the total amount awarded by gender, women signed contracts worth approximately RD\$53 billion, equivalent to 23 percent of the total amount transacted.⁵⁴

3.4 Countries and Provinces that Have Implemented Actions to Promote the Participation of Women in Public Procurement

This section presents experiences of countries and provinces that have taken action to increase the participation of women and women-owned businesses in public procurement: Argentina and the Province of Río Negro, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

i) Argentina

Argentina is a federal country with a system for distributing powers between the national government and subnational entities (provinces and municipalities), where each level of government establishes its own regulations and public procurement

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ <https://datosabiertos.dgcp.gob.do/.opendata/visualizaciones/reporte-estadistico-registro-proveedores-estado>

⁵² https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ES_BriefComprasPublicasPerspectivaGenero_30MAR2022.pdf

⁵³ <https://www.dgcp.gob.do/noticias/gremios-de-empresarias-e-instituciones-del-estado-pasan-balance-a-participacion-de-las-mujeres-en-las-compras-publicas/>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

policies, including their potential strategic uses. Regarding the national administration, in 2018 and 2019, two bills were processed before the National Congress aimed at establishing a regime for the promotion of State purchases and concessionaires of public services with a gender approach⁵⁵ and to approve a regime for the promotion of gender equality in the procurement of works, goods, and services of the National Public Administration, which granted preferences to women-owned firms in such procurements.⁵⁶ None of them came into force. In 2011, the National Procurement Office developed an SPP guide, which mentions among the social criteria that can be included to promote fair trade those that tend to ensure equality between men and women (ONC, 2011). More recently, the SPP manual points out that incorporating sustainability criteria in public procurement implies, among other aspects, targeting labor equity between men and women (ONC, 2017). In addition, the sustainable procurement and contracting recommendation sheets published by the ONC in June 2023 also include gender-related guidelines (ONC, 2023). For example, whenever possible, hire suppliers that have implemented gender policies.

The Ministry of Public Works, through a partnership with UN Women and the United Nations Office for Project Services, developed the project Infrastructure with a gender perspective, whose overall objective was to develop and implement public infrastructure policies with a gender perspective for sustainable development in Argentina, contributing to the articulation of public works policies with equality at the federal level.⁵⁷ This cooperation generated a series of products and documents.⁵⁸ Given the relevance of the experience of the City of Buenos Aires, it was presented as an outstanding case in the implementation of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* in a previous section.

Province of Río Negro (Argentina)

In 2021, the Agencia de Desarrollo Económico CREAM Río Negro (Economic Development Agency CREAM Río Negro), which operates within the Ministry of Economy, launched a unique registry of women entrepreneurs that would allow them to access tax benefits and greater contracting opportunities with the provincial public

⁵⁵ <https://www.senado.gob.ar/parlamentario/parlamentaria/407065/downloadPdf>

⁵⁶ <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/obras-publicas/genero-y-diversidad/infraestructura-con-perspectiva-de-genero>

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ i) Series of manuals on gender perspective in public works: public works cycle with a gender perspective, care infrastructure, public and urban space, road and transport infrastructure; ii) federal training strategy: training for trainers and trainers, methodologies and key aspects to be included in training and critical competencies in infrastructure and gender; iii) training modules for trainers and trainers; iv) federal network: UN Women accompaniment strategy document for the Federal Constructive Network; v) study on the participation of women and diversities in public works and infrastructure entities and agencies at the federal level; vi) documents analyzing challenges and feasibility for the incorporation of women and LGBTI+ in public works; and vii) systematization of the gender experience of the Ministry of Public Works.

sector. There are three requirements to be part of the registry: (i) at least 51 percent women-owned, (ii) managed by women exceeding 25 percent of the shareholding package, and (iii) not dependent on other companies. The directory of the firms registered is available to the public, together with the contact details of the respective enterprises, so that they can be easily identified and contacted by the officials responsible for managing procurement and contracting at the provincial level.⁵⁹ The Agency also organizes meetings with the registered women to promote their participation in the provincial public procurement market.⁶⁰

ii) Bolivia

The guide for public procurement processes at the municipal level (Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency, 2016) mentions, within the social aspects of SPP, the impact on the generation of employment for women, indicating that municipalities should adopt actions in this area. It is worth mentioning that, in Bolivia, there are civil society organizations that have promoted public procurement initiatives with a gender perspective (Box 2).

⁵⁹ <https://rionegro.gov.ar/articulo/41426/crear-lanza-una-guia-online-de-empresarias-y-emprendedoras-para-promover-las-compras-publicas>

⁶⁰ <https://rionegro.gov.ar/articulo/41457/a-un-ano-de-lanzamiento-del-rume-el-crear-realizo-el-primer-encuentro-con-mujeres-emprendedoras>

Box 2: Civil Society Organizations as Drivers of GRPP: The Case of Bolivia

In 2001, the Pro-Labor Training Foundation (PROCAL) won a competition for innovation initiatives organized by the IDB in Bolivia, in which it proposed the creation of a reverse fair—that is, a space where the exhibitors are public or private institutions or companies that showcase, in an illustrative way, their demand for goods, services, and works over a given period, usually one year, to ensure the proper execution of their annual plans. At this fair, a negotiation table is set up where projects are publicly awarded (Chávez-Malgiaritta, 2007:1). In 2004, Supreme Decree No. 27,328 of *Compro Boliviano* incorporated the reverse fair as one of the modalities that public entities can use for the procurement of goods, works, services, and consultancies. That same year, the first edition of the fair was held in El Alto, La Paz, and the Vice-Ministry of Women and PROCAL invited women entrepreneurs to receive training in the preparation, presentation, and competition of technical and economic proposals for bids on minor works of the Mayor's Office. As a result of these trainings, a significant percentage of women were able to participate in municipal contracting, reaching 32% female participation in the awarded works.⁶¹

Furthermore, the NGO Red Hábitat has also played a key role in integrating women into the infrastructure sector. In 2011, it launched a program to support job creation for women in construction, which includes joint actions with local governments, providing technical and legal training to women-owned microenterprises, strengthening women's organizations in the sector, and promoting policies and regulations in favor of women in construction.

iii) Colombia

In 2018, Colombia Compra Eficiente, the governing body of the public procurement system, adopted a guide for socially responsible public procurement⁶² which states that state entities should incorporate evaluation factors and favor measures that protect and encourage the participation of national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, as well as women, children, persons with disabilities, and migrant workers and their families. The guide also states that, when defining the evaluation criteria, the procuring entity should contemplate a differential approach that advocates equal opportunities between men and women. In October 2020, the President of the Republic issued Directive No. 11 to moderate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, instructing Colombia Compra Eficiente to adopt a package of measures to boost the participation of women's businesses in the public procurement system. Two months later, Law No. 2,069⁶³ on the promotion of entrepreneurship was enacted, Article 32 of which establishes that, following an analysis of the sector, contracting entities shall

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² <https://colombiacompra.gov.co/manuales-guias-y-pliegos-tipo/manuales-y-guias/guia-de-compras-publicas-socialmente-responsables>

⁶³ <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=160966> - :.:text=OBJETO..bienestar social y generar equidad

include in their procurement processes affirmative action measures aimed at encouraging the participation of women's enterprises and companies in such processes, without prejudice, however, to the commitments acquired by the country within the framework of international trade agreements. This provision is regulated by Decree No. 1,860/21, which establishes that the differential criteria aimed at encouraging the participation of MSMEs and companies owned by women in public procurement may refer to the time of experience, the number of contracts required to prove experience, the financial and/or organizational capacity indexes and the value of the bid bond. This last decree also established the criteria to be applied for a company to be considered a woman-owned company.⁶⁴ In the same year, Law No. 2,125⁶⁵ created a system of incentives for the creation, formalization, and strengthening of women-led MSMEs, whose Article 16 introduces a certification mark aimed at identifying and generating incentives for the formalization and strengthening of MSMEs led by women in vulnerable situations.⁶⁶ Likewise, Article 21 of the same law provides for a certificate for large taxpayers that recognizes the commitment to strengthen gender equity and the

⁶⁴ I) When more than 50 percent of the shares, parts of interest or participation quotas of the legal entity belong to women, and the ownership rights have belonged to them for at least the last year prior to the closing date of the selection process. This circumstance shall be evidenced by means of a certificate issued by the legal representative and the statutory auditor, when required by law, or by the accountant, stating the distribution of the rights in the company and the time during which women have maintained their participation. II) When at least 50 percent of the jobs at the management level of the legal entity are held by women and they have been employed by the company for at least the last year prior to the closing date of the selection process in the same position or another at the same level (...). III) When the natural person is a woman and has exercised commercial activities through a commercial establishment for at least the last year prior to the closing date of the selection process. This circumstance shall be evidenced by a citizenship card, foreigner's card or passport, or copy of the commercial registry. IV) For associations and cooperatives, when more than 50 percent of the associates are women and the participation has corresponded to them during at least the last year prior to the closing date of the selection process. This circumstance shall be accredited by means of a certification issued by the legal representative.

⁶⁵ [https://www.suin-juriscol.gov.co/viewDocument.asp?id=30042097#:~:text=\(agosto%2004\)-,Por%20medio%20de%20la%20cual%20se%20establecen%20incentivos%20para%20la,disposiciones%20%2D%20Ley%20creo%20en%20ti](https://www.suin-juriscol.gov.co/viewDocument.asp?id=30042097#:~:text=(agosto%2004)-,Por%20medio%20de%20la%20cual%20se%20establecen%20incentivos%20para%20la,disposiciones%20%2D%20Ley%20creo%20en%20ti)

⁶⁶ Article 18 of the law establishes that women who fall into one of the following categories will be eligible for this distinctive seal: (i) women recognized by the unit for attention and comprehensive reparation to victims as victims of armed conflict; (ii) women in a situation of disability; (iii) women mothers caring for disabled persons with care dependency; (iv) community mothers accredited before the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare-ICBF; (v) women survivors of attacks with chemical agents, acid and/or similar substances with permanent damage to their body or health; (vi) rural and peasant women; (vii) women who are part of the processes implemented by the Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization (ARN) or the entity that takes its place; (viii) women with ongoing enterprises that were affected by the economic crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the national government will regulate the procedure for their identification; (ix) women registered in the program families in action; x) mothers, daughters and wives or permanent partners of members of the military or national police forces who died due to events occurring for cause and reason of service; xi) women deprived of liberty and released from prison; xii) women inhabitants of municipalities of Development Programs with a Territorial Approach, PDET and sixth category; xiii) women attached to illicit crop substitution programs; xiv) women belonging to indigenous, black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal communities; xiv) women belonging to indigenous, black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal communities; xv) women informal vendors who have been engaged in this work during the five years prior to the entry into force of this law, the National Government will regulate the procedure for their identification; xvi) other groups of women and companies led by women identified, regulated and defined by the National Government within the framework of the public policy referred to in article 4 of this law.

participation of women entrepreneurs in the country's economy. This certificate is available to State entities, among others, that demonstrate a purchase volume equal to or greater than 2 percent of the total amount of operating appropriations with goods and/or services produced by MSMEs identified with the distinctive sign. The regulation of the latter law, approved by Decree No. 761/22, mentions in its recitals Article 32 of Law No. 2,069, and states as benefits for the MSMEs included in Article 16 of Law No. 2,125 the access to other instruments or programs of the offer and/or services provided by the National Government for the support to female entrepreneurship and other initiatives of support to entrepreneurship, complying with the access requirements and the budgetary capacity established for the same. This leaves open the possibility that these companies may have other benefits within the framework of public procurement.

Box 3: Three Colombian Cities Committed to Promoting Gender Equity in Public Procurement: Bogota, Cali, and Palmira

In 2019, the Mayor's Office of Cali adopted the guide for the inclusion of women heads of household in public procurement, which provided the agencies of the Municipal Central Administration with criteria to make inclusive purchases to benefit women heads of household. A year later, the Mayor's Office of Bogotá issued Decree 332, adopting measures to promote the participation of women in the execution of contracts and agreements entered into by the Capital District, as a tool to generate income for women, aimed at reducing their monetary poverty and the progressive implementation of a public procurement strategy that promotes the social and economic recognition of women's work and their access to economic opportunities in conditions of equity. In another Colombian city, Palmira, the implementation of a pilot opens contracting strategy, launched in 2020, allowed expanding the participation of small local producers, including companies led by women, in local government purchases (for example, in the school food sector).

^a <https://www.open-contracting.org/es/2023/03/23/empowering-women-and-rural-farmers-through-procurement-in-palmira-colombia/>

iv) **Costa Rica**

In 2015, through Decree No. 39,310,⁶⁷ Costa Rica approved its National SPP Policy and created the National SPP Steering Committee. Article 4 of said policy establishes that the public sector, when procuring goods, works, and services, shall consider, among other aspects, the provisions of Law No. 7,142 (Promoción de Igualdad Social de la Mujer), on the promotion of social equality for women. In turn, Article 5 states that a key dimension of its national SPP policy should be the promotion of accessible and equitable public procurement processes. Along these lines, Decree 42.709⁶⁸ adopts a series of measures to encourage the participation of companies, SMEs, and social

⁶⁷ http://www.digeca.go.cr/sites/default/files/de_39310_politica_nal_compras_publicas_sustentables-creacion_comite.pdf

⁶⁸ <http://www.digeca.go.cr/legislacion/decreto-no-42709-h-meic-mtss-minae-micitt-medidas-para-incentivar-la-participacion-de>

economy enterprises in the public procurement of the administration, according to localization and sustainability criteria. Specifically, it provides that, when contracting goods, works, and services, public entities must encourage the generation of employment among vulnerable sectors of the population, including women. In addition, in 2022 Costa Rica approved the SPP guide, prepared in collaboration with the National Women's Institute.⁶⁹ The guide includes, within the sustainability criteria sheets, the option for the contracting entity to give weight to the documented actions of the bidder aimed at reducing gender gaps and promoting diversity as well as measures to prevent violence against women (social criteria) and the creation of decent work opportunities for women.

To this end, additional points may be awarded to those bidders that promote job creation for women in non-traditional sectors, as well as to those that encourage value chains with women's entrepreneurship or MSMEs in the regions (economic criteria). In addition, some special provisions are included in the files for the procurement of certain goods or services. For example, in the case of contracting of advertising, it is possible to consider whether it is based on responsible marketing and communication practices, contributing to break stereotypes based on sex or religion, and thus helping to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality.

v) Ecuador

Ecuador is one of the few LAC countries with a quantitative survey of women's participation in public procurement. A report by the National Public Procurement Service (SERCOP, 2021) reveals significant gender gaps. On average, between 2017 and 2020, women participated in 19.65 percent of the total value awarded in public procurement processes while men concentrated 80.35 percent. To reduce these gaps and move toward a more sustainable use of public sector purchasing power, in 2020 the Estrategia Nacional de Compras Públicas Sostenibles en el Ecuador (National Strategy for Sustainable Public Procurement in Ecuador)⁷⁰ (SERCOP, 2022) was adopted. This incorporates, among the parameters for evaluating sustainable goods and services, the verification of aspects linked to the gender approach, such as the prevention of violence against women. Likewise, the actions planned for the short term include the definition of criteria that promote gender equity in public procurement and, in the medium term, the preparation of a normative proposal for the same purpose.

In line with these advances, in April 2023 the National Public Procurement Service approved the Estrategia Nacional de Compras Públicas con Enfoque de Género (National Strategy for Public Procurement with a Gender Approach) through Resolution No. 133⁷¹ (SERCOP, 2023). The general objective of this strategy is to decelerate the negative impact of gender inequality by promoting the participation of women in public procurement and strengthening inclusive economic dynamization and

⁶⁹ http://www.digeca.go.cr/sites/default/files/documentos/guia_compras_publicas_sostenibles_2022.pdf

⁷⁰ <https://portal.compraspublicas.gob.ec/sercop/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Estrategia-Nacional-de-CPS.pdf>

⁷¹ <https://portal.compraspublicas.gob.ec/sercop/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/r.e-sercop-2023-0133.pdf>

productivity. To meet this goal, the plan is organized accordingly: (a) short-term actions (one year)—that is, data generation, awareness-raising, and training actions for women and public servants and the inclusion of the gender marker as an indicator associated with the Registro de Contratación Pública (Public Procurement Registry); (b) medium-term actions (two years), which consist of promoting a regulatory reform that contemplates affirmative actions, the generation of impact indicators and coordinated work with local governments, development agencies, and civil society organizations to measure progress and agree on strategies; and (c) long-term actions (three to five years), which consist of reforming the Ley Orgánica del Sistema de Contratación Pública (Organic Law of the Public Procurement System) to give legislative status to public procurement with a gender perspective.

vi) El Salvador

In 2019, El Salvador reformed the Ley de Adquisiciones y Contrataciones de la Administración Pública (Public Administration Procurement and Contracting Law), approved by Legislative Decree No. 240,⁷² and incorporated the obligation for public entities to ensure that at least 10 percent of the budget allocated for procurement and contracting of goods and services is acquired or contracted from MSMEs that are owned, majority-owned, or legally represented by women. In March 2023, Congress enacted a new regulatory framework, approved by Legislative Decree No. 652.⁷³ Article 32 establishes that, in the procurement of goods and services with MSMEs, the entities of the national administration and municipalities must ensure that at least 10 percent of the budget allocated for procurement and contracting of goods and services is acquired or contracted from MSMEs whose owner, majority shareholder, or legal representation is a woman. While the previous regulation established a quota policy with an obligation of results for public entities, the new regime establishes only an obligation of means, by using the word “endeavor” instead of “guarantee”.

vii) Panama

In September 2023, Panama’s Consejo Nacional para la Paridad de Género (National Council for Gender Parity) launched the Women-Owned Business Certification. This initiative consists of the voluntary identification of those companies that are owned by women, with the objective of making them visible to promote their participation in the business and productive sector of the country.⁷⁴ The objective of the certification is to promote the autonomy, empowerment, inclusion, development, and economic integration of women through affirmative actions for the identification, promotion, training, recognition, valuation, and visibility of companies led by women.⁷⁵ To qualify for certification, the following requirements must be met: (i) the company must be

⁷² <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/C948363C-0588-4B33-AC5A-84AA35419350.pdf>

⁷³ <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/26B90245-73DF-4D64-9C1C-79EC207F7839.pdf>

⁷⁴ <https://www.dgcp.gob.pa/sala-de-prensa/1426-dgcp-apoya-el-lanzamiento-de-la-certificacion-empresas-propiedad-de-mujeres>

⁷⁵ Ibid.

owned by a woman; (ii) more than 50 percent of the shareholders must be women; and (iii) more than 50 percent of the company's board of directors must be women. Once the *Sello Empresa Mujer* has been granted, the company can access benefits such as the use of a distinctive logo that allows it to be recognized as such, access to training to strengthen competencies that enhance its opportunities for business development and strategic alliances, and also training in corporate governance, governance and environmental and social responsibility, and regulations and procedures on public contracting and socially responsible and sustainable public procurement, among others.⁷⁶

viii) Paraguay

In 2020, the National Directorate of Public Procurement of Paraguay (DNCP) issued Resolution No. 922,⁷⁷ which approves the new version of the SP policy and includes an express reference to gender equity as one of the dimensions to be considered. The DNCP has carried out training actions to increase the participation of women in government procurement. In 2022, Paraguay approved a new public procurement regime, Law No. 7.021, on public supply and contracting, which introduces advances in inclusion, equity and sustainability. Article 24 recognizes gender equity as one of the guiding principles to be considered in procurement planning. Article 35, paragraph c), incorporates the figure of the inclusive contracting process, defined as one in which “participation is limited to bidders domiciled in a department or municipality, or to the participation of community organizations promoted for the performance of the work or provision of the services required. Finally, Article 38 provides that the DNCP may develop and implement contracting procedures that allow for social and economic development and environmental preservation, aimed, among other aspects, at favoring MSMEs and other specific population groups. The country has also made progress in gender and public infrastructure. The manual on SPP in public works in Paraguay (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, DNCP, and IDB, 2022) stresses the need to implement a sustainable infrastructure policy that considers, among others, aspects related to gender equity.

ix) Peru

In 2020, the Supervisory Body for State Contracting issued a study establishing a baseline for the design of policies aimed at greater inclusion of women in public procurement (OSCE, 2020). It points out that less than 40 percent of the suppliers that have their registration in force in the National Register of Suppliers are women, and that 79 percent of the amount awarded between 2018 and 2019 was assigned to men. The report also provides a disaggregation of women's participation by region and by item, which makes it possible to note regional and sectoral particularities (see Box 4).

Peru has also implemented the “Safe Company Seal, Free from Violence and Discrimination Against Women,” issued by the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ [file:///C:/Users/tinos/Downloads/res_DNCP_922_20%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/tinos/Downloads/res_DNCP_922_20%20(1).pdf).

Populations. Companies that obtain this seal may receive additional points in the evaluation of their bids in processes to contract with the State, according to the standard procedure documents approved by OSCE.

Box 4: Good Practices in Proactive Transparency and Gender Approach: The Supervisory Body for State Contracting (Peru) Public Dashboard on Women's Participation in Public Procurement

The Supervisory Body for State Contracting (Peru) has developed a public access dashboard⁷⁸ that has systematized data on women's participation in public procurement since 2020. This dashboard allows filtering and visualizing information by contracting regime, region, contractual object, item, type of procedure and type of person (natural or legal), obtaining historical indicators and updated data on public procurement and gender. The section on the evolution of the amount awarded according to type of leadership shows a slight improvement in the percentages awarded to women-led companies between 2020 and 2023. Although the indicators continue to reflect a prevalence of male-led firms, the implementation of this dashboard represents an important step forward in the generation and publication of data that will allow the design and implementation of policies based on concrete evidence.

x) Uruguay

In 2018, the Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres y la Dirección Nacional de Economía Social e Integración Laboral (National Women's Institute and the National Directorate of Social Economy and Labor Integration), together with the Ministry of Industry, Energy, and Mining; the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture, and Fisheries; and the Office of Planning and Budget submitted for consideration by the Uruguayan Parliament the bill: Enfoque de género en las compras públicas para el desarrollo (Gender Approach in Public Procurement for Development) aimed at reducing the gender gap in public procurement, facilitating the participation of women's entrepreneurship.⁷⁹ The initiative did not enter into force. However, in the same year, Decree No. 402 was issued, regulating the SPP Policy.⁸⁰ The norm highlights the importance of integrating social implications in public procurement processes, including those related to gender equality.

Additionally, Law No. 19,292⁸¹ declared family farming and artisanal fishing to be of public interest and created a purchasing system benefiting qualified organizations. For

⁷⁸ https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/osce.bi/viz/PARTICIPACION_MUJER_COMPRAS_PUBLICAS/Dashb oard?publish=yes.

⁷⁹ <https://archivo.mides.gub.uy/101257/competir-en-igualdad>.

⁸⁰ <https://www.gub.uy/presidencia/institucional/normativa/decreto-402018-reglamentacion-del-art-23-ley-18834-arts-81-82-ley-18362>.

⁸¹ <https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/leyes/19292-2014>.

food purchases from Qualified Organizations with Gender Equality (OH+G), it reserves at least 50 percent of centralized and decentralized procurement.

xi) [Venezuela](#)

The Plan for Gender Equality and Equity Mamá Rosa 2013-2019 (Ministry of Popular Power for Women and Gender Equality, 2014) establish among its lines of action to coordinate intersectorially State contracting policies for goods and services produced by women's communal socio-productive organizations. Additionally, the Public Procurement Law, Decree No. 5,929 of March 11, 2008, although it does not contain specific prescriptions regarding gender, authorizes the President of the Republic to adopt, in Council of Ministers, margins of preference and categories or amounts of reserved contracts, as an instrument of promotion and development for small and medium industries, as well as the encouragement and inclusion of people (Article 7).

4. Part III

4.1 Conclusions

This study analyzes the activities and programs that help increase women's participation in public procurement in Spanish-speaking IDB member countries. The authors sought to identify countries that have programs and initiatives to promote women's participation and *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs, with emphasis on those that have been supported by the IDB in this area. In addition, the experiences of these countries were analyzed, with special attention to the good practices they have developed, the institutional framework in charge of such initiatives and the regulations that govern them, and the results obtained.

The results show that 14 of the 17 countries analyzed have some action or measure in public procurement with a gender perspective. Although the purpose of the research was not to evaluate the impact or degree of progress of these actions, the information gathered allows us to conclude that the regional panorama is heterogeneous. Some countries have advanced in the development of specific programs—such as Argentina (in public works), Chile, Ecuador, Dominican Republic Honduras and the—while others are still in an initial phase of recognition or awareness-raising, as is the case of Uruguay and Venezuela.

The analysis also shows that the thematic focus and specificity, as well as the approaches and measures adopted, vary from country to country. However, horizontal or mixed approaches prevail. Despite these differences, the overall conclusion is that most countries in the region recognize the potential of public procurement as a tool to promote greater inclusion and economic empowerment of women.

Seven national or subnational jurisdictions were identified as having developed this type of initiative: Chile, City of Buenos Aires, Colombia, Honduras, Panama, Province of Río Negro and the Dominican Republic. Of these, four have received IDB support in the design and/or implementation of such programs: Chile, the City of Buenos Aires, Dominican Republic. The comparative analysis of these experiences made it possible to identify similarities and significant differences in aspects such as the criteria for granting and the benefits granted based on access to certifications. Good practices were also identified, such as the automation of the granting process (Chile), the application of the principles of gradualness and progressiveness (City of Buenos Aires), and the generation of alliances or spaces for consultation with the public and private sectors with a view to strengthening women's participation in the public market (Honduras and the Dominican Republic).

4.2 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The lessons and recommendations that emerge from the experiences analyzed can be summarized in six main areas:

1. The first group of recommendations is aimed at **designing programs** to promote the participation of women-owned businesses in public procurement. The

measures defined should respond to the market failures identified, with the aim of improving the efficiency of public procurement and increasing value for money. To this end, it is recommended to: i) quantify the potential savings from increased competition, particularly through the incorporation of new suppliers; and ii) define the methodology for assessing the correspondence between the most important market failures and the horizontal measures adopted by governments.

2. A **diagnosis** makes it possible to establish a baseline for interventions and, subsequently, to design evidence-based policies and evaluate their evolution and impact. Although most of the countries analyzed recognize the importance of including a gender perspective in public procurement, only a few have systematic quantitative data on women's participation in public procurement: Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Peru. Best practices include building a data culture—collecting, measuring, and publishing open data on gender in public procurement. These experiences can serve as a reference for other LAC countries to strengthen their programs or measures in this area. In addition, it is recommended to compare the percentage of women-owned companies that are awarded government contracts with those that participate in the private sector. If data are available, the relevance of informality should also be considered, since women-led businesses tend to operate more frequently in the informal sector than those of men. Other key points include: (i) know the supplier market well enough to establish its capacity to assimilate the new policies, (ii) know the sectors or items in which it operates well enough to connect with government requirements, and (iii) identify the incentives needed to push for compliance and, if necessary, the accompanying measures required.
3. The third dimension is linked to the **role of institutional commitment and the actors involved**. One of the preliminary conclusions of the study is that the countries that have made the greatest progress in this area are those that have demonstrated the most active participation of the institutions. These countries have promoted alliances and working groups with other entities, as in the case of the Dominican Republic and Honduras, have developed wide-ranging training and dissemination actions and, above all, have turned the governing bodies of procurement into active agents of change to achieve greater gender equity. In this process, the individual leadership of key authorities—particularly the heads of the governing bodies—has been fundamental in incorporating and maintaining gender equity in the public procurement agenda.
4. **Capacity building** is critical, both in purchasing entities and in the public sector in general, as well as among women suppliers. In this regard, the experiences of the City of Buenos Aires and Chile demonstrate the importance of developing training and capacity building actions to achieve an adequate implementation of the *Sello Empresa Mujer* programs. Incorporating the gender perspective in procurement policies implies a paradigm shift that requires providing the actors involved with the technical and administrative tools to participate in this process and become protagonists in it. Following Chile's experience, pair policy design

with capacity building: hard skills (e.g., preparing and evaluating bids with a gender lens) and soft skills (e.g., negotiation, visibility strategies, and engagement with public entities). Another key aspect is the deconstruction of gender stereotypes and capacity building in sectors where women are traditionally underrepresented, such as infrastructure. In this regard, the experiences of Bolivia (from civil society) and Chile (from the government) offer valuable examples of technical training programs in construction-related trades and strategies to facilitate women's access to the public works market.

5. The fifth dimension—closely linked to the previous ones—underscores the importance of turning the gender perspective into **a sustained, long-term commitment** that transcends political junctures and consolidates itself as a State policy. Reducing gender gaps in public procurement requires realistic, gradual actions with a medium- and long-term vision. This is recognized in documents such as Ecuador's National Public Procurement Plan and the operational guidelines of the City of Buenos Aires, which propose integrating this perspective through specific subgoals and monitoring indicators. The legislative amendments recently adopted by the Dominican Republic and El Salvador, which reduced the burden of women's quotas in public procurement, reaffirm this hypothesis, which suggests that the legislative institutionalization of these measures should be the result of previous experience and not the first step on the road to greater gender equity in government procurement.
6. Finally, the countries should move toward a balance between the need to adopt concrete and effective actions and the **real response capacity** of the contracting entities, the legal-institutional framework, and the private sector. National and international cooperation are critical for moving in this direction. The IDB supports the progressive inclusion of the gender perspective in the procurement policies of its member countries.

References

- Asian Development Bank and UN Women. 2022. Gender Responsive Public Procurement in Asia and the Pacific: An Opportunity for an Equitable Future. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/840111/gender-responsive-procurement-asia-pacific.pdf>.
- Austin, T. 2018. Buenas prácticas (Códigos de). EUNOMY. Revista *En Cultura De La Legalidad*, (15): 239–48. <https://doi.org/10.20318/eunomia.2018.4354>.
- Ávalos, M. 2023. Compras públicas sustentables: la transversalidad de una práctica a media. Available at: <https://olegisar.org/compras-publicas-sustentables-la-transversalidad-de-una-practica-a-medias/>.
- Basco, A. I. Et al. 2021. Una olimpiada desigual: La equidad de género en las empresas latinoamericanas y del Caribe. Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean Gender and Diversity Division IDB-Invest. Technical Note No. IDB-TN-2255. Available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/viewer/Una-olimpiada-desigual-la-equidad-de-genero-en-las-empresas-latinoamericanas-y-del-Caribe.pdf>.
- CEDAR (Centro Empresarial de Alto Rendimiento). 2022. Documento final del diagnóstico con el análisis de las empresas mujeres en la contratación pública. Product No. 3.
- Chávez-Malgiaritta, R. 2007. Ferias a la inversa. Fondo capital de trabajo. Documento presentado para: Documento presentado para: Concurso RIDELC. Available at: https://osgeydel.cebem.org/docs/10bol_412_120228.pdf.
- ChileMujeres, Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Finance, Development and Tourism. 2022. Cuarto reporte de indicadores de género en las empresas en Chile. Empresas que informan a la Comisión para el mercado financiero. Retrieved from: <https://www.economia.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/original-cuarto-reporte-indicadores-genero-2022-digital.pdf>.
- Colombia Compra Eficiente. Guía de compras públicas socialmente responsables. Available at: <https://www.colombiacompra.gov.co/manuales-guias-y-pliegos-tipo/manuales-y-guias/guia-de-compras-publicas-socialmente-responsables>.
- DGCP (General Directorate of Public Procurement and Contracting of the Dominican Republic). 2016. Analysis of the impact of public procurement and contracting policy on MSMEs and women in the Dominican Republic. Available at: https://www.dgcp.gob.do/new_dgcp/documentos/Informes/AnalisisImpactoComprasPublicasMipymesyMujeresOct2016.pdf.
- Directorate of Public Contracting. 2022. National Strategy for Sustainable Public Procurement in Ecuador. Available at:

<https://portal.compraspublicas.gob.ec/sercop/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Estrategia-Nacional-de-CPS.pdf>.

Directorate of Public Procurement Studies. 2022. Análisis de la contratación pública con enfoque de género, período de 2017 a octubre de 2021, Ecuador. Available at: [Análisis de la contratación pública con enfoque de género-signed.pdfLB-signed.pdf \(compraspublicas.gob.ec\)](#).

Harper, L. and T. Inostroza. 2023. *Sello Empresa Mujer*: an effective tool to promote women's participation in public procurement. Available at: <https://blogs.iadb.org/gestion-fiscal/es/participacion-de-las-mujeres-contratacion-publica/>.

Harper, L. and J. Orjuela. 2018. Toolkit: Promoting women in public procurement. IDB. Development Institutions Sector Fiscal Management Division Discussion Paper No. IDB-DP-619. Available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/es/toolkit-promocion-de-la-mujer-en-las-compras-publicas>.

Harris Rimmer, S. 2017. Gender-smart Procurement: Policies for Driving Change. Chatham House: United Kingdom. Available at: <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1423258/gender-smart-procurement/2037523/>.

INAM (**Instituto Nacional de la Mujer**). 2010. National Women's Policy. II Plan de Igualdad y Equidad de Género de Honduras 2010-2022. Available at: [tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/II Plan de Igualdad y Equidad de Género de Honduras 2010 - 2022.pdf](https://tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/II%20Plan%20de%20Igualdad%20y%20Equidad%20de%20G%C3%A9nero%20de%20Honduras%202010%20-%202022.pdf).

McCrudden, C. 2004. Using public procurement to achieve social outcomes. Natural Resources Forum, Vol.28(4): 257-267.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, DNCP and IDB. 2022. Manual on sustainable public procurement in public works in Paraguay. With special reference to housing and urbanism. Available at: <https://www.muvh.gov.py/sitio/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MANUAL-CPS.pdf>.

Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. 2016. Guide to public procurement processes at the municipal level. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/bolivia/Guia_Contratacion_Publica_a_nivel_Municipal.pdf.

Ministry of Popular Power for Women and Gender Equality of Venezuela 2014. Plan for Gender Equality and Equity. Mama Rosa 2013-2019. Available at: [https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC164359/#:~:text=El percent20Plan percent20para percent20la percent20Igualdad,niveles percent20y percent20sectores percent20del percent20Estado percent20C](https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC164359/#:~:text=El%20Plan%20para%20la%20Igualdad,niveles%20y%20sectores%20del%20Estado%20C).

- OAS (Organization of American States), IDB, IRDC, IISD. 2021. Implementando compras públicas sostenibles en América Latina y el Caribe. Manual para agentes de compras de la Red Interamericana de Compras Gubernamentales (RICG). Available at: <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/iisd-handbook-ingp-es.pdf>.
- OCP (Open Contracting Partnership) and Spend Network. 2020. How governments spend: Opening up the value of global public procurement. Available at: <https://www.open-contracting.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/OCP2020-Global-Public-Procurement-Spend.pdf>
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). 2021. Promoting gender equality through public procurement: challenges and good practices. Disponible en: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5d8f6f76-en.pdf?expires=1692707504&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=92CC4737A39EB78DBC376192E32D7C0>.
- , 2022. OECD Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age. OECD Public Governance Policy Papers, No. 23, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/2ade500b-en>.
- ONC (Oficina Nacional de Contrataciones). 2011. Guía de compras públicas sustentables. Available at: https://www.argentinacompra.gov.ar/prod/onc/sitio/Paginas/Contenido/FrontEnd/Manual_ONC_Sustentable%20GB.pdf
- , 2017. Manual de compras públicas sustentables. Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/manual_compras_publicas_sostenibles_O.pdf
- , 2023. *Recommendation Sheets for Sustainable Procurement and Contracting*. Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/la-onc-publico-fichas-de-recomendacion-para-compras-y-contrataciones-sostenibles>
- Orser, B. et al. 2021. Gender-responsive public procurement: strategies to support women-owned enterprises. *Journal of Public Procurement*, Vol. 21(3): 260-284. Available at: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JOPP-11-2019-0078/full/html>.
- OSCE (Organismo Supervisor de las Contrataciones del Estado). 2020. . Participación de las mujeres en las compras publicas: una mirada hacia la equidad. Available at: <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/oece/campa percentC3 percentB1as/1824-reporte-participacion-de-la-mujer-en-las-compras-publicas-una-mirada-hacia-la-equidad>.
- Public Procurement Directorate. 2020. Dominican Model of Inclusive Public Procurement. Available at: <https://mepyd.gob.do/wp->

- content/uploads/drive/VIMICI/Sistematizaci percentC3 percentB3n percent20de percent20Experiencias/COMPRAS percent20PUBLICAS percent2023-4-2021.pdf.
- Rozenwurcel, G. and L. Drewes, L. 2012. SMEs and public procurement. ICT4GP Program. Document No. 16. Universidad Nacional de San Martín. Argentina. Available at: [Doc16 Las pymes y las compras públicas \(2\).pdf \(adimra.org.ar\)](#).
- Ruiz, A. J. 2020. Inclusion of women in public procurement: the Latin American experience. An ILDA research report. Commissioned by the Hivos Open Up Contracting program. Available at: <https://hivos.org/assets/2021/02/Inclusion-de-mujeres-en-las-contrataciones-publicas-1-1.pdf>.
- SERCOP (Servicio Nacional de Contratación Pública). 2021. Analysis of public procurement with a gender approach. Period 2017 to October 2021. Available at: <https://portal.compraspublicas.gob.ec/sercop/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/An percentC3 percentA1lisis-de-la-contrataci percentC3 percentB3n-p percentC3 percentBAblica-con-enfoque-de-g percentC3 percentA9nero-signed.pdfLB-signed.pdf>.
- Steering Committee for Sustainable Public Procurement of Costa Rica. 2022. Sustainable Public Procurement Guide 2022. Available at: http://www.digeca.go.cr/sites/default/files/documentos/guia_compras_publicas_sostenibles_2022.pdf.
- Superior Court of Accounts of Honduras. 2021. Cooperative Performance Audit of Sustainable Public Procurement, with data analysis. Management of Verification and Analysis, Department of Revenue Verification. Report No. 001-2021-VI. Available at: [Revenue Verification Reports - TSC](#).
- UN Women. 2022. Compras públicas con perspectiva de género: avances y desafíos en América Latina para dinamizar a las empresas lideradas por mujeres como motor de la recuperación post COVID-19. Documento de políticas. Available at: https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ES_BriefComprasPublicasPerspectivaGenero_30MAR2022.pdf
- , 2023. Legal frameworks for gender responsive public procurement. A comparative review of regulatory and policy measures and international and national legal norms. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/Legal-frameworks-for-gender-responsive-procurement-en.pdf>.
- UNDP and UNDESA. 2021. What is a good practice? Framework for analyzing the quality of stakeholder engagement in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/UNDP-UNDESA-Stakeholder-Engagement-es_0.pdf.

- Urquidi, M., L. Serrate and M. Chalup. 2019. Labor income gap by gender in the Dominican Republic: an analysis of the evolution in the period 2000 to 2019. IDB. Labor Markets Division. Available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/es/brecha-de-ingresos-laborales-por-genero-en-republica-dominicana-un-analisis-de-la-evolucion-en-el>.
- VfW (Value for Women) and OCP. 2020. Towards Gender Balance in Public Procurement: Understanding the Barriers and Solutions to Include Women-Led Businesses. Available at: <https://www.open-contracting.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/OCP2020-Gender-Responsive-Procurement-1.pdf>.
- Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. and A. Kinoti. 2015. Gender-based public procurement practices in Kenya and South Africa. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, Vol.8(3). Available at: <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/58161>.
- WEF (World Economic Forum). 2023. Global Gender Gap Report 2023. Insight Report. Available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GCGR_2023.pdf.
- Women's Community. 2019. Gender-sensitive public procurement: a success case for sustainable development. Newsletter No. 46. July 2019. Available at: https://comunidadmujer.cl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CM_Boletin_46_Compras-publicas-con-enfoque-de-genero.pdf.
- Zurbuchen, N. B. 1979. An innovation diffusion perspective on the adoption of Woman Business Enterprise (WBE) certification. Paper submitted to the Department of Communication Studies and the School of Undergraduate Studies, University of Kansas as part of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.