



## **Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**

### **Women Exporters Fund - Call for Applications**

**Deadline April 3, 2023**

Trade Facilitation Office (TFO) Canada is a not-for-profit organization whose mandate is to improve lives through the creation of sustainable trade partnerships for exporters from developing countries with Canadian and foreign buyers. TFO Canada assists small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and trade support/promotion Institutions (TSIs) from developing countries to access international markets through its information (general and sector specific), advice (including capacity building) and contact services (including trade missions and business to business matchmaking). Since 1980, TFO Canada through its internationally experienced project management staff and roster of sectoral experts has been providing trade promotion and capacity building services to tens of thousands of SMEs and hundreds of TSIs from all corners of the globe (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Asia). TFO Canada is recognized as Canada's import promotion agency by the International Trade Center, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the World Trade Organization.

TFO Canada is currently implementing the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (WIT) project - a 5-year, \$14.6 million project with a contribution of \$11.7 million from Global Affairs Canada. WIT contributes to inclusive growth by increasing the number of women from developing countries involved in international trade as exporters and by increasing the share of exports generated by women-led (WL) SMEs. Increasing the exports of these companies will contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction, through job creation and other value-chain related impacts. Working in partnership with TSIs in 24 developing and least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, the project addresses the main constraints faced by women exporters such as their lack of market knowledge, skills, resources, and networks to access global trade as well as their low involvement as members and leaders of TSIs.

Within the framework of WIT, TFO Canada is launching the **Women Exporters Fund (WEF)**, a fund designed to benefit WL SMEs in 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa where WIT is being implemented (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia). The Fund reinforces and builds on the WIT project activities - training, technical assistance, market access activities by reducing financial constraints on WL SMEs so they can increase their level of export readiness and overcome costs associated with market access. The WEF Fund is also designed to encourage linkages and create synergies with existing local initiatives and financial institutions.

The WEF offers sub-grants to organizations and private-sector business support organizations/TSIs with operations in a country or group of sub-Saharan countries which falls under the WIT project, and that support WL SMEs. The sub-grants, each between CAD \$50,000 and \$100,000 in size, will allow beneficiary organizations to implement 6 to 12 month-long projects that will contribute to the overall goals of the WEF and the WIT project. The funds will be accessed on a cost-share basis, with the WEF providing up to a maximum of 50% of the full costs for any initiative. TFO Canada's partner TSIs (excluding government institutions) and other eligible organizations are thus invited to apply for a sub-grant by submitting a proposal for the initiative they would implement. All project activities must be completed by August 30, 2024.

## Application Process

- Submission of a 2–4-page concept paper **by end of business day Monday, April 3rd, 2023**, to [WEF@tfocanada.ca](mailto:WEF@tfocanada.ca) to explain: the background, rationale and objective of the sub-project, a description of the proposed activities and resource requirements, anticipated outcomes, and a description of the sub-project's proponent(s). **The template for the sub-project concept is provided in Annex A.**
- Shortlisted applications will have 3 additional weeks to submit a complete sub-project proposal which will describe in greater detail: the activities planned and the workplan/timelines; a detailed budget; outcomes and how these will be measured; the strategy for sustainability; and a risk assessment. TFO Canada will provide a template for this proposal for those that are shortlisted.

## Screening Criteria

The sub-project should contribute to one or more of the screening criteria below in the WIT sectors of focus in each country (**more details are contained in Annex B – Process and Criteria for Sub-Project Selection**):

- Increasing knowledge, information, and skills in market trends and consumer demand; standards and regulations; product development; certification; environment and climate change; socially responsible business practices; e-commerce and digital marketing; and pricing in Canada and other international markets by WL SMEs.
- Improving the ability to identify and respond to export market demands by WL SMEs.
- Increasing WL SMEs access to Canadian and other international markets.

## Funding Process

Selected sub-projects' eligible expenses will be advanced by TFO Canada (in CAD) upon Payment Requests from the implementing organization on a monthly basis, conditional to the submission of full supporting documentation for all costs incurred.

***TFO Canada looks forward to supporting innovative projects towards inclusive and sustainable growth.***



## **Annex A: Template - WEF Concept Paper**

### **Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**

*The Women Exporters Fund (WEF) is a component of the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Project (WIT) funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and implemented by TFO Canada. Project proponents should complete a concept paper based on the headings and guide text (in italics) provided in this template. Guide text should be removed from the submitted version, which should be no more than four pages in length. Supplementary information may be provided in separate annexes, however it will not necessarily be used in the review and grading of the project concept. See the WEF Guidelines document for a description of the criteria used to assess project concept submissions. Proponents of project submissions that are reviewed favourably will be asked to submit a full project proposal, for which a template will be provided.*

**Primary Project Proponent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact (name and e-mail):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Partners (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Country(ies):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Timeframe:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **1. Summary Description of Proposed Initiative:**

*A short 1-2 paragraph description of the project and its main objective*

#### **2. Background/Rationale:**

*An explanation of why the initiative is needed (e.g., what development challenge does it address) and how it meets the criteria of the WEF (see Annex B – WEF - Process and Criteria for Sub-Project Selection)*

### 3. Project Beneficiaries and Proposed Activities:

*A brief description of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project (specify the number and gender composition), their location and situation within the project country(ies), a description of the proposed project activities and a timeframe for implementation (between 6 months and 1 year)*

### 4. Expected Results and Sustainability:

*Anticipated sub-project outcomes, how these align with WIT program outcomes, and a description of how these will be sustained after the sub-project ends.*

### 5. Resource Requirements and Funding Sources:

*An outline of the resource requirements (human and financial) for the proposed activities (approximate amount and what these will be spent on) and a description of confirmed/expected funding sources besides the WEF. Indicate clearly the amount requested from the WEF. Option to use the Budget Table template (Annex C) provided by TFO Canada.*

### 6. Project Proponent and any other Implementation Partner(s):

*A description of the project's proponent and any other partners that will be involved in implementation of the activities. The description should explain the history, mandate and organizational capacity of each organization and any prior experience implementing similar activities and the results achieved.*

### **ANNEXES:**

*Indicate what other annexes are enclosed that support the proposal or are provided to respond to questions or additional requests for information made by TFO Canada.*



## **Annex B: WEF Process and Criteria for Sub-Project Selection**

### **Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**

The Women Exporters Fund (WEF) is a component of the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Project (WIT) funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and implemented by TFO Canada. The WEF is designed to benefit women-led (WL) small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa where WIT is being implemented (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia). The Fund reinforces and builds on the WIT project activities - training, technical assistance, market access activities by reducing financial constraints on WL SMEs so they can increase their level of export readiness and overcome costs associated with market access. The WEF Fund is also designed to encourage linkages and create synergies with existing local initiatives and financial institutions.

#### **PROCESS**

Project ideas that appear to meet the **Admissibility Criteria** (see below) will be graded based on a 2-4-page concept paper prepared by the project proponent. The concept paper template (**provided in Annex B**) requires the following information: the background, rationale and overall objective of the sub-project, including how the sub-project will contribute to the objectives of the WEF; a description of the proposed activities and resource requirements (and sources of funding in addition to those requested from the WEF), anticipated outcomes that will result from the sub-project and an indication of how these results will be sustained; and a description of the sub-project's proponent(s) describing their capacity to undertake the sub-project. TFO Canada's partner TSIs and other eligible organizations (i.e. non-profit organisations from countries in sub-Saharan Africa where WIT is being implemented<sup>1</sup> with a mandate to promote trade or economic development (e.g. chambers of commerce, exporter associations, etc.) can apply for a sub-grant by submitting a proposal for the initiative they would implement. TFO Canada's WEF Advisory Committee will review and grade concept papers based on the **Initial Screening Criteria** (see below). **The deadline for submission of concept papers is April 3, 2023.**

Proponents of WEF sub-projects that are "approved for consideration" will be asked to submit a full project proposal using a template to provided by TFO Canada which will describe in greater detail: the activities planned and the workplan/timelines; the resource requirements (detailed budget); outcomes and how these will be measured (including gender and environmental considerations); and the strategy for sustainability. The proponents will also be asked to assess the potential risks associated with the sub-project. Proponents will be given 3 weeks to submit their sub-project proposal.

#### **CRITERIA**

**Admissibility Criteria** (only sub-project proposals that meet these minimum criteria will be reviewed):

---

<sup>1</sup> Countries in sub-Saharan Africa where WIT is being implemented and that thereby qualify to apply to the WEF: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia.

- 1) **Geographic:** the sub-project must benefit a country or group of countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are part of the WIT project.
- 2) **Size:** the contribution requested from the WEF to implement the sub-project should be at least CAD \$50,000 and no more than \$100,000.
- 3) **Sector:** Benin – Agrofood (fresh and processed); Burkina Faso – Agrofood (fresh and processed) and Cosmetics; Cote d’Ivoire – Agrofood (fresh and processed) and IT/Communications services; Ethiopia – Agrofood (fresh and processed); Ghana – Agrofood (fresh and processed), Artisan (home décor) and IT/Communications services; Kenya – Agrofood (fresh and processed) and Artisan (home décor); Madagascar – Agrofood (fresh and processed) and IT/Communications services; Mozambique – Agrofood (fresh and processed) and Artisan (home décor); Nigeria – Agrofood (fresh and processed); Senegal – Agrofood (fresh and processed), Apparel/Textile/Home décor, and IT/Communications services; Uganda – Agrofood (fresh and processed); Zambia– Agrofood (fresh and processed) and IT/Communications services.
- 4) **Timing:** sub-projects must be completed (including results monitoring and reporting) by August 30, 2024. Sub-projects are expected to be between 6 months and one year in duration.

**Initial Screening Criteria (for concept paper):**

1. **Does the proposed initiative contribute to one or a combination of WIT program outcomes:**
  - a. Increase knowledge and information on consumer demand, buyers and buyer behaviour, regulations, environment and climate change, responsible business practices, and pricing in Canada and other international markets by WL SMEs (WIT immediate outcome).
  - b. Improve the ability to identify and respond to export market demands by WL SMEs (WIT immediate outcome).
  - c. Increase WL SMEs access to Canadian and other international markets (WIT intermediate outcome).
2. **Capacity:** do the sub-project proponents appear to have the necessary experience, capacity, human resources, and financial resources (i.e. for cost-shared elements) to implement the sub-project and ensure the results are sustained?
3. **Resource allocation:** is an appropriate balance in geographical reach and retention of resources for other potential sub-projects within the WEF (e.g. known or expected) maintained should this sub-project be approved?

**Final Selection Criteria (for information purposes only as this relates to full sub-project proposals not the concept paper)**

1. Direct contribution to **stimulating inclusive and sustainable economic growth** in the partner country (region/group of countries) through either: building institutional trade capacity (“building economic foundations”), or improving trade-related skills (“investing in people”), or expanding trade activities of private firms (“growing businesses”)
2. Benefits and likely contribution to poverty reduction by the sub-project for **disadvantaged groups or regions** within the partner country (region)
3. How/whether the sub-project will advance **gender equality** in the partner country (region)
4. How/whether the sub-project will support **environmental sustainability** in the partner country (region)
5. **Feasibility** of the proposed activities, work plan and resource plan (are the activities appropriate; are the inputs required sufficient)
6. Does the detailed budget adhere to GAC guidelines (e.g. for travel costs) and does the detailed budget provide **value-for-money**

7. Is the level of **cost-sharing** provided by sub-project proponents and others appropriate for the type of activity; are the other sources of funding confirmed/feasible
8. Are **linkages between outputs and outcomes clear** such that activities are likely to generate anticipated outcomes
9. How appropriate is the strategy to ensure **sustainability of outcomes** and how likely is this to be achieved
10. The overall **risk assessment** of the sub-project



**Annex C: Budget Template – WEF Concept Paper  
Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**

*\*Adjust the number of lines according to the number of activities in the sub-project.*

ACTIVITY Name & description	WEF-TFO (\$CDN) Amount & description of spending	PARTNER CONTRIBUTION Amount & description of spending (cash or in-kind)	Total
Activity 1 -			
Activity 2 -			
Activity 3 -			
Activity 4 -			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$		
Overhead	\$		
<b>Total (Cdn \$)</b>	\$		

