



Boosting Women-led Enterprises through Public Procurement: the case of Tunisia

Elhem GHRIBI

HAICOP

Introduction

➤ Some key indicators:

- **10.9%** of female entrepreneurs are women (MIWE 2019)
- Women business leaders represent **7.1%** of the population of employed women (BM 2020)
- Women-led businesses registered on the TUNEPS platform (2021): 1142 out of a total of 12653 businesses or a rate of 9.26%.
- The sectors in which women entrepreneurs are most present: services.

Public Procurement Regulatory Framework

- Decree No. 2014-1039 of March 13, 2014, regulating public procurement does not include positive discriminatory provisions for the participation of women-led companies.
- There are no national programs that target the participation of women's businesses. However, the decree provides for certain provisions that favor small businesses, such as:
- the buyer is obliged to reserve 20% of purchases for small businesses, and establish a program of set-asides for SMEs.
- Distribution of the public order in lots where participation is exclusively reserved for small businesses
- To the extent possible, include social and environmental elements that take into account the objectives of sustainable development
- Order reserved for craftsmen
- Freedom of access to the Tuneps platform: more open opportunities

Training Programs for Women Leaders

HAICOP has provided for accompanying measures to facilitate the access of SMEs to public contracts, including

Technology Outreach in PP (TUNEPS)

-2017 Facilitation of SMEs' access to public procurement (TUNEPS e-shopping mall, free acquisition of certificates).

-2019 Reflection workshops with women entrepreneurs on the strategy for including vulnerable groups in public procurement (difficulties and challenges)

Organization of the public purchasing fair

-2020 Sessions on Electronic Procedures: 260 companies in 6 regions

-Promoting the use of technology in PP (TUNEPS)

Difficulties Encountered by Women Entrepreneurs in Accessing Public Procurement

- Access to financing
- Access to training
- Access to information
- Experiences

Recommendations

- Integration of the gender dimension in the procedure for awarding contracts (quotas): reserve a percentage for companies run by women.
- Capacity building: train women entrepreneurs on mechanisms to participate in public procurement, especially for small businesses, and provide training programs exclusively for women-owned businesses,
- Plan specific actions at the level of the Tuneps system, to inform companies of the opportunities offered within the framework of the public markets, in particular the markets reserved for SMEs,
- Relaxation of the conditions of participation (experiences, guarantees, division into lots,)
- Accelerate payment, provide advances for certain types of contracts
- Raise awareness among public purchasers of the gender dimension in public procurement, Partenariat public –privé
- Update and conduct detailed studies on gender in public procurement.