



# Women in Business

a publication of

International Finance Corporation: Gender - Entrepreneurship - Markets

African Edition

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## Introduction

Hello! Welcome to the first quarterly IFC GEM newsletter designed to keep businesswomen in touch with key events, relevant research and each other.

## What is IFC GEM?

Gender-Entrepreneurship-Markets (GEM) came into being on 1 December 2004 with a mandate to both mainstream gender throughout International Finance Corporation (IFC) operations and to design women-oriented projects and provide technical assistance. GEM aims to better leverage the untapped potential of women as well as men in private sector development, for the benefit of individuals, families and society as a whole. The initial primary regional focus is Africa. [read more >>](#)

Initial activities include a gender audit of IFC's small to medium enterprise (SME) support operations in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, a Gender and Growth Assessment for the Minister of Finance in Uganda, and a series of trade workshops to help businesswomen access international markets in South Africa, Madagascar and Uganda. [see News and Events below](#)

IFC is part of the World Bank Group (WBG) and is the biggest multilateral provider to private sector projects in developing countries. It both lends to and takes equity stakes in private companies, and provides significant technical assistance to help strengthen private sector development and the SME sector. [read more >>](#)

## Why a Newsletter?

One of the first tools put together by GEM has been a [Global Directory of Women's Business Associations](#) (WBAs). This was inspired by members of the Uganda Investment Authority - Women Entrepreneurs Network (UIA-WEN) in Uganda and the Ugandan Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL), who suggested that an online directory accompanied by a regular newsletter would connect WBAs globally. A nominated contact at each of the more than 180 WBAs on our list will receive this newsletter and forward it on to their respective members. [Individual subscriptions](#) are also welcome.

## How Can You Be Involved?

The newsletter aims to share news and information that we think will be helpful to women entrepreneurs around the world. If you or your business association have an event you would like made known, have a success story to share, or would like to tell us what you would like to learn about, please [email us](#). This newsletter is for YOU and we want to get you involved.

## This Quarter's Inspirational Quote

*"Women's entrepreneurship, the obstacles women face and the potential they offer to create both wealth and well-being are a worldwide phenomenon".*

Margaret Snyder

founder of [UNIFEM](#)

## News

### World Bank Supplier Diversity Program

Every year, WBG spends approximately \$600 million on goods and services for internal requirements, both in Washington DC and its country offices. Procurement is effected through a competitive bid process that enables all suppliers to compete for WBG business. WBG is committed to increasing the business participation of Minority, Women, Disabled Owned Business Enterprises (MWDBEs) both by direct contracting and by subcontracting from prime contractors. While WBG guidelines refer only to US-based minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses from around the world are encouraged to bid for supply contracts.



[read more >>](#)

In future issues we will provide information on upcoming open bids and certification as a women-owned business.

### Support for Asian Tsunami Victims



People all over the world have been generous in raising funds to help the victims of December's devastation in South Asia, but the need for support is still great, not least for women and children affected. The IFC has announced an [aid program](#) for the region, as has [WBG](#). However, rights and health organisations [MADRE](#) and [UNFPA](#) warn of dangers faced by women and girls in the hardest-hit countries of Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Maldives, including sexual abuse and financial exploitation. One agency addressing these issues is the [International Women's Development Agency](#)".

### Have Your Say - IFC Safeguard Policies Review

The IFC is currently reviewing its Safeguard Policies and designing new performance standards to inform how it carries out its work, Gender is being directly considered for the first time, and you're invited to have your say on how gender issues should be incorporated into policy development. We would like to hear from all of you, especially women-owned small and medium companies in developing countries. Please send your feedback to [Julia Grutzner](#), or [read more >>](#)



### Doing Business



This major resource offered by the WBG provides comparable data about business regulations and their enforcement in 145 countries. Many regulations have specific implications for women in business, especially regarding property rights and access to finance. To ensure a gender perspective was taken into account, Doing Business sponsored a series of consultative workshops with women in Africa, Asia and the Middle East undertaken by GEM staff. Generate an instant online report, order a print copy of

*Doing Business in 2005* or download a free copy of *Doing Business in 2004*. [read more >>](#)

### IFC GEM's Work in Africa



GEM's initial focus will be on Africa – one of the ways we will be doing this is to work with the IFC's new SME Solutions Centres (SSCs). The first SSC opened in **Madagascar** in June 2004. In a short six months, the Centre has 50 regular clients and has been visited by over 200 business

people seeking help with obtaining finance, training and business information. So far the Centre provides training in book-keeping, business planning, human resource management and quality control. Anyone who runs a business or is thinking of starting a business is encouraged to drop by! See also our Events section. [read more >>](#)

A second SSC will soon open in **Kenya**. It will start screening potential clients from February 1, with the official launch set for March 16 - an event that we hope many of you can attend. We will be showing a short excerpt from a television series on African women entrepreneurs that reknowned Kenyan filmmaker Jane Murago-Munene is producing with the support of IFC-GEM.

#### OWIT South Africa

IFC-GEM Africa is delighted to be the principal sponsor of the Organisation for Women in International Trade (OWIT) South Africa. OWIT is a non-profit professional organization designed to promote women working in the field of international trade, through networking and educational opportunities. OWIT has 36 chapters in countries around the globe. OWIT South Africa will hold its official launch in March 2005. [email for more information >>](#)



#### Uganda Growth and Gender Assessment



IFC-GEM Africa is currently working with the Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) of the World Bank and IFC, on a research report on the gender dimensions of economic growth in Uganda. This piece of research came about as a direct response to a request from Uganda's Minister of Finance, to help the government understand how women are contributing to the country's economic development. [read more >>](#)

#### Seeing ICT Through a Gender Lens

"The gender movement in Africa needs to do a lot more to sensitize policy-makers on mainstreaming ICTs in national policy". This was the main message from a workshop in Addis Ababa in mid-January on "Strengthening the capacity of national machineries through the effective use of ICTs". The Economic Commission for Africa called on gender activists and institutions working on empowerment issues to have a more concerted strategy for prioritizing Information & Communication Technology. [read more >>](#)



#### Burden No Lighter for Africa's Women



In mid-January, Business in Africa carried a story that is a call to arms for anyone with a belief in gender mainstreaming. "The 1995 Beijing Conference stressed the empowerment of women as one of the central development goals of the 21st century – but the reality is that today, women in Africa live in worse poverty and adversity than 10 years ago". [read more >>](#)

#### African Women In Business

The African Development Bank (ADB) has released an online document detailing how it intends to dovetail its vision for private sector development with its goal of promoting gender mainstreaming. [read more >>](#)



### Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL)

In December UWEAL began the Girl Entrepreneurship Program (GEP) to train girls and young women in entrepreneurship skills while still at school, exposing the students to business concepts and entrepreneurial role models and encouraging them to consider entrepreneurship as a way to earn their own incomes.

According to Sarah Kitakule, chairperson of UWEAL, "Girls shouldn't wait to leave schools and start being enterprising. They could be economically active without putting their studies at risk." She added, "GEP is an opportunity for them to explore their potential as businesswomen by starting up income-generating activities."



The introduction of GEP with assistance from the UN Volunteer Program is just one of UWEAL's achievements since its 1987 establishment as a forum for Ugandan women to work together as entrepreneurs. UWEAL now facilitates members' participation in international events and trade missions, is consulted by government on women in business issues, provides business skills training and has started a savings and credit through its branches. [Email](#)

UWEAL.

Each newsletter we will put the spotlight on either a women's business association that has developed an innovative idea or process that promotes women's entrepreneurship; or an enterprising woman who has achieved success. If you have a success story to share, please [email us](#) with the details. We look forward to sharing your stories.

### Call for Consultant CVs

#### IFC-GEM Africa

We are looking for experienced women and men working in the field of private sector development and gender. We will add qualified persons to our database, which we will use to identify consultants for future short term assignments in Africa. If you have relevant experience and would like to include your CV, please [email us](#).

### This Quarter's Events

#### IFC GEM International Trade Workshops



3-15 Feb, Madagascar, South Africa, Uganda and Swaziland: International trade expert Barbara Mowat will be holding a series of workshops taking small business owners step-by-step through the process of marketing their products on the global marketplace. For more information contact:

Madagascar: Johannesburg-based SSC Manager [Ibrahima Diong](#) Tel: 2711 731 3088  
 South Africa: OWIT Chapter President [Gecille Kouassi](#)  
 Uganda: UWEAL Executive Director [Sarah Kitakule](#) Tel: 256-41-343952

#### 4th Afro Arab Congress of Business Professional Women

16-18 Feb, Cairo, Egypt: Incorporates the 1st Afro Asian Congress of Business & Professional Women and the 6th International Congress of the Egyptian Business Women Association. [read more >>](#)



### 49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women



28 Feb-11 Mar, New York, USA: A high level plenary meeting to review the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the UN General Assembly's "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". [read more >>](#)

### Beijing & Beyond: Call To Action

1-8 Mar, Around the world: Women across the globe will organize local, national, regional, and international actions to address a broad range of concerns, demand action on commitments to women's rights and gender equality, and celebrate our gains of recent decades. [read more >>](#)

### International Women's Day



8 Mar, Washington DC, USA: Among the many events worldwide to mark International Women's Day, the IFC, WBG and the US National Women's Business Council host a discussion panel on women's access to finance + women in business. Starts 3pm, followed by cocktail reception 5.30pm. If you would like to attend, please email [Aya Okajima](mailto:Aya.Okajima) for further details. Search for [IWD events](#) in your area

### 7th Woibex Women in Business Conference

8 Mar, Dubai, UAE: Annual conference for experienced women business leaders in upper-middle and senior levels of management, as well as emerging and established entrepreneurs. [read more >>](#)



### FURTHER AHEAD - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

#### African Women Invent & Innovate Exhibition, Conference & Awards

6-8 Sep, Accra, Ghana: Global Women Inventors & Innovators Network (GWIIN) and IFC GEM invite you to take part in the first ever awards to honour Sub-Saharan Africa's women inventors and innovative entrepreneurs. [email for more information >>](#)



## Links to Resources

### SME Toolkit

Free business management information and training for small to medium enterprises from writing a business plan to how to apply for a trademark, with a range of regionally customized versions. Developed by the IFC. [read more >>](#)



### French Set Standard



France sets a great example in promoting gender equality in the workplace. The Ministry of Parity and Equality in the Workplace has now established a "label egalite" to denote companies committed to promoting gender equality. Companies that meet the following criteria are eligible:

- Demonstrated commitment to gender equality in the workplace.
- Recognition by international certification body AFAQ.
- Full agreement of relevant labour unions.

Companies are entitled to feature "label egalite" and be recognised as best practice in equal opportunity employment for three years. [read more >>](#)

### Africa Virtual Business Association Network



Online resources to help African business associations promote good governance, hold governments accountable and advocate for increased efficiency and productivity. Searchable directory, training materials, case studies, links, online discussion. [read more >>](#)

### GlobeWomen News

Bimonthly email newsletter of GlobeWomen.com, which aims to link businesswomen worldwide. The newsletter collates international news on the status of women in business and entrepreneurship. [read more >>](#)



### allAfrica.com Women and Gender News Headlines



A constantly updated display of 25 headlines to news stories on the broad theme of women's issues in Africa, drawn from an impressive list of media resources spanning the continent. Headlines click through to news stories. [read more >>](#)

### Businesswomen's Association

As well as BWA-sponsored awards (including Businesswoman of the Year) and bursaries, the website provides in depth information about the Catalyst-run South African Women in Corporate Leadership Census 2004, which reveals the lack of women at the senior corporate level. [read more >>](#)



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