

# WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS READINESS AND EMPOWERMENT IN UKRAINE

## Eligibility Criteria for Women-focused Business Support Organizations



Implemented by:



## TARGET GROUP, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

### For Women-focused Business Support Organizations.

#### A Program Benefits

The project aims to strengthen Ukraine's women-led business ecosystem by supporting women-focused Business Support Organizations (WBSOs) and women-led SMEs in **five export priority sectors in Ukraine**: food processing, textiles and apparel, wood and furniture, ICT, and electrical equipment. The overall objective is to **advance the resilient economic recovery and EU accession in Ukraine** through fostering durable EU-Ukraine linkages, enhancing the inclusion of women in business, and facilitating the adoption of EU standards and procedures.

Please refer to the Value Proposition overview document for more details.

#### B Target group

At least 15 Women-focused business support organizations (WBSOs). These are women-focused organizations that provide support services to women entrepreneurs or women-led SMEs, such as:

- Business associations, chambers, and sectoral unions with a focus on supporting women-led businesses
- NGOs and non-profits focused on women's economic empowerment
- National and regional development agencies with women-focused programming

#### C Selection process

1. 22 WBSOs were identified as relevant through existing GIZ and enpact networks in Ukraine and through additional research. (December 2025)
2. These organisations are contacted and invited for an interview with a representative from the project's partner organizations. (Outreach: 05.-09.01.2026, Interviews: 13.-22.01.2026)
3. After the interview, enpact shares an application questionnaire with the WBSO. If the WBSO is interested in joining the program, they will be asked to fill out this questionnaire within 48-hours after the interview, or to contact enpact if this is not feasible. The WBSO is invited to nominate one participant to represent their organization in the program and serve as a central contact person for enpact. This person should ideally fill out the questionnaire.
4. The trainings are also open to one additional person from the WBSO if they have more people who want to join and for whom the content is relevant, but there is no need for them to fill out the questionnaire. (48 hours after the interview, between 15.-24.01.2026)
5. The interview and the application questionnaire are then evaluated by enpact against the eligibility and selection criteria listed below according to the four-eye principle. The highest-ranking eligible applications will be shortlisted and asked to submit some documents at this final stage of the process.
6. Finally, cooperation agreements are signed with the 15 selected WBSOs, and additional participant agreements are signed with their 15 representatives.

## **D** Eligibility criteria

To be considered for participation in the project, all applying organizations must meet the following criteria on an **organizational level**:

- Legally registered in Ukraine and operating in Ukraine for at least 5 years
- Minimum of 20 members
- Evidence on providing business-related services to SMEs
- Evidence of designated projects to support women-led SMEs
- Evidence of implementing at least 2 international projects<sup>1</sup> related to the economic sector

Each WBSO is invited to nominate one representative of the organization to participate in the entire project. (As mentioned above, an additional participant from the organization may join the trainings, but there is no need for them to fill out the application questionnaire, so the below information is mostly relevant to the main representative from each organization.)

It is recommended that this person has the knowledge and capacity to further develop the services provided to women-led SMEs, with 10 or more employees, especially in relation to their internationalization efforts, and the time resources to commit to participating in all project activities.<sup>2</sup> Further, they must meet the following criteria on a **personal level**:

- Ukrainian national or permanent residency
- Residing in Ukraine
- Over the age of 18
- Employed by or a legal representative of the organization, with a key position for the internationalization of women-led SMEs
- Sufficient English proficiency to participate in the program
- Has to confirm the commitment for the duration of the project and capacity to participate in the delegation trips

Both on a personal and on an organizational level, certain **restrictions** to the eligibility to participate in this program apply. If any of the following conditions apply, you may not be eligible for the program:

- Persons who are listed on the relevant sanctions lists maintained by the European Union and other pertinent regulatory bodies.
- Individuals residing in areas of Ukraine that are temporarily occupied and not under the effective administrative control of the Government of Ukraine.
- Organizations with active operations in Russia, Belarus or the currently occupied territories of Ukraine, or with shareholders from one of these regions
- Organizations that are receiving funds from Russia, Belarus or the currently occupied territories of Ukraine
- Organizations that are currently under investigation for corruption
- Organizations that are no longer active and are currently undergoing liquidation or have declared bankruptcy

Eligible organizations and applicants will then be evaluated against the selection criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> International projects can refer, amongst other possibilities, to partnerships with WBSOs in other countries and the joint implementation of projects, the implementation of delegation and market discovery trips, or participation in international trade fairs.

<sup>2</sup> As mentioned above, WBSOs may invite an additional participant, for whom the training part of the project is also relevant, to join the capacity building sessions. There is however no need for this person to complete the application questionnaire and they do not need to commit to participating in all project activities.

## **E** Selection criteria

To ensure an objective evaluation process, all eligible applications will be assessed against four predefined criteria. Each of the four criteria carries equal weight and is assessed on a scale from 1 (least applicable) to 3 (most applicable).

### **#1 Track record of support to women-led SMEs**

This criterion assesses the applicant's track record of providing impactful support to its SME members, with particular attention to gender-responsive and internationalization-relevant support services.

### **#2 Capacity to improve the offer of women-focused services**

This criterion assesses the potential of the WBSOs to innovate and improve their support services for women-led SMEs in the target regions.

### **#3 Potential to deliver internationalization services**

This criterion assesses the potential impact of the training content and the EU market immersion trip to strengthen the capacity of WBSOs to deliver EU market access support services to women-led SMEs.

### **#4 Motivation and commitment**

This criterion assesses the motivation and the commitment of the applying WBSOs to join the project and actively contribute to all its activities. It may also reflect negatively on the rating for this criterion if it is highly apparent that the application has been written with the help of LLMs (e.g. ChatGPT).

## **F** Due diligence

Following the evaluation of all eligible applications against the selection criteria, the 15 highest-scoring applications will undergo a due diligence screening. To ensure the validity of all statements made during the application process, participants will be asked to provide documents supporting this.

Supporting documents may include:

- Registration certificate of the organisation
- Proof of residency in Ukraine
- Proof of employment by the organization (e.g. employment contract)

The validity of these documents will be assessed using the relevant verification tools and online portals, while making sure to clarify potential discrepancies. The selected participants will also be cross-referenced against the relevant sanctions lists maintained by the European Union and other pertinent regulatory bodies.