

Women Entrepreneurs Readiness and Empowerment in Ukraine

Participation Value Proposition
for Women-led Small and
Medium-Sized Enterprises



Implemented by:



VALUE PROPOSITION

WOMEN-LED SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

A About the project

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. 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.

This project is designed for **women-led small and medium enterprises in Ukraine** registered in one of the nine target regions¹ of the project operating in five strategic sectors critical to post-war recovery and EU integration:

- Wood and furniture
- Food processing
- Textile and apparel
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Electrical equipment

It supports women entrepreneurs who aim to **enter, expand, or consolidate their presence in EU markets**, while managing the realities of doing business in crisis conditions.

B Objective of the project

The objective of the project is to strengthen the EU-market readiness, resilience, and market positioning of women-led SMEs in Ukraine by equipping them with the skills, tools, networks, and confidence needed to access EU markets.

Through a combination of practical market-related training, targeted network-building, leadership development, and direct exposure to EU business ecosystems, the project aims to foster sustainable domestic and cross-border partnerships and place women entrepreneurs at the center of Ukraine's inclusive economic recovery and EU integration.

C Participants of the project

A total of 30 women-led small and medium-sized enterprises will be accepted into the project according to the above criteria (see [Eligibility and Selection Criteria](#)) and invited to participate in the project's capacity-building component (see Chapter D below). Admission will be based on individual applications through a public call for applications (15 participants) as well as nominations by the [Women Business Support Organizations \(WBSOs\)](#) participating in the project (15 participants).

Of the 30 participants in the capacity-building component, 15 will have the opportunity to take part in an advanced market immersion component (see Chapter E below). Participants for this component will be invited in summer 2026 on the basis of objective criteria, which will be announced during the course of the project.

¹ Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Khmelnytskyi, Rivne, Vinnytsia, Odesa, Dnipro, Poltava and Kharkiv

D Our capacity-building offer for all participating SMEs

#1 Practical EU Market Readiness and Internationalization Capacity

You will receive hands-on support to assess your company's readiness for the EU Single Market and to define realistic market entry or expansion requirements. The project's capacity-building activities will help you understand basic sector-specific EU requirements – such as quality, safety, and certifications – and guides you in identifying and approaching potential distributors and business partners in the EU.

#2 Smart Adaptation in Times of Crisis

You will get acquainted with techniques on how to strengthen your business through smart adaptation and innovation, using digital tools and e-commerce to support international activities. The project supports the integration of sustainable practices aligned with the EU regulatory framework, such as online retail and consumer protection, and helps you innovate in product design and distribution workflows to meet EU consumer trends while highlighting women-driven creativity.

Planned Activities/Workload:

- Assessment of EU-market-readiness requirements of your SME (online)
 - Duration: Two to four weeks (April 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Up to five hours in total
- Capacity-building workshops on EU single market readiness (online)
 - Duration: Four weeks (May 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Approximately 3 hours per week, up to 12 hours in total
- Capacity-building workshops on Smart Adaptation (online)
 - Duration: Four weeks (June 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Approximately 3 hours per week, up to 12 hours in total

Expected Results:

- Clear, actionable knowledge for entering or scaling in selected EU markets
- Reduced regulatory and compliance risks
- Increased credibility with EU buyers, partners, and institutions

#3 Leadership, Self-Management and Well-Being Support

You will strengthen your leadership capacity through training focused on decision-making under uncertainty and managing teams in high-pressure environments. The project addresses work-life balance during wartime and supports the creation of healthy boundaries between personal and professional responsibilities for both you and your team members.

Planned Activities/Workload:

- Capacity-building workshops on Leadership, Self-Management and Well-Being Support (online)
 - Duration: Six weeks (May-June 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Approximately 3 hours per week, up to 18 hours in total

Expected Results:

- Stronger, more resilient leadership during crisis

- Improved focus on strategic priorities
- More stable teams and healthier workplace dynamics

#4 Stronger Networks for Women-Led Businesses

You will be connected with the [Women Business Support Organizations \(WBSOs\)](#) participating in the project to engage in economic and sectoral policy dialogue and to scope out collaboration options to advance the interests of your and other women-led enterprises in the context of Ukraine's EU accession. The project supports WBSOs with the improvement of their EU-market-related support services for SMEs; SMEs participating in the project will be invited to test and provide feedback on selected service offerings relevant to them.

Planned Activities/Workload:

- WBSO support service testing and feedback sessions (online)
 - Duration: Four weeks (July 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Approximately 2 hours per week, up to 8 hours in total

Expected Result:

- Better connections with relevant business support organizations
- Improved alignment between support measures and business needs
- Stronger collective positioning of women-led SMEs

E Our advanced market-immersion offer for selected SMEs

#5 Access to Peer-Networks, EU Business Ecosystems and Long-Term Partnerships

You will take part in a two-day in-person bootcamp focused on exchanging best-practice and learnings with other participants of the project as well as to prepare your business for the upcoming market immersion trip.

You will have an opportunity for direct exposure to EU business environments through tailored market immersion and a delegation visit to selected EU business hubs. The project facilitates networking with EU-based SMEs, potential buyers, and business support organisations, helping you build trust-based cross-border relationships and explore concrete cooperation opportunities.

Planned Activities/Workload:

- Preparatory and peer networking bootcamp (on-site within Ukraine)
 - Duration: Two days (between September and October 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Two full working days plus travel time
 - Travel expenses will be covered by the project
 - Destinations will be announced during the project
- Market immersion visit to selected EU business hubs (on-site within the EU)
 - Duration: Five days (November 2026)
 - Direct active workload: Five full working days plus travel time
 - Travel expenses will be covered by the project
 - Destinations will be announced during the project

Expected Result:

- Exploration of concrete business opportunities and partnerships
- Better understanding of EU business culture and market expectations
- Solid foundations for long-term international cooperation

F Timeline overview

All participants

April
2026

Onboarding and assessment of EU-market-readiness requirements (online)

May
2026

Capacity-building workshops on EU single market readiness (online)
Capacity-building workshops on Leadership, Self-Management and Well-Being Support (online)

June
2026

Capacity-building workshops on Smart Adaptation (online)
Capacity-building workshops on Leadership, Self-Management and Well-Being Support (online)

July
2026

WBSO support service testing and feedback sessions (online)

August
2026

Selection process for the market-immersion component

Participants selected for the market-immersion component

Sep./Oct.
2026

Preparatory and peer networking bootcamp (on-site within Ukraine)

November
2026

Market immersion visit to selected EU business hubs (on-site within the EU)