

FINAL EVALUATION

WE RISE TOGETHER
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



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Final Evaluation WE RISE Together

ADVANCING WOMEN'S MARKET
ACCESS USING A GENDER-
RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT
APPROACH IN THAILAND AND
VIET NAM



**WOMEN'S ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT**

UN WOMEN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WE RISE Together (WRT) was a three-year programme implemented from March 1st, 2022, to February 28th, 2025, in the Mekong sub-region, with a focus on Thailand and Viet Nam. It was funded by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) with AUD 2,850,000 over three years under Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP). The programme responds to the prioritization of women's economic empowerment by expanding market access for Women-owned Businesses (WOBs) and Gender Responsive Enterprises (GREs) through procurement opportunities.

A final evaluation of the programme was conducted from October 2024 to February 2025 by an independent consultant specialising in gender responsive evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, and to inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. The primary intended users of the evaluation's findings and recommendations were UN Women personnel, to support their further strategizing for gender-responsive market approaches. It is also intended to be useful to WOBs and gender responsive enterprises (GREs); public and private sector partner organizations and the programme donor, as input for decision-making purposes.

The evaluation took an overall mixed methods approach, using documentary sources for quantitative data and qualitative data collection methods for primary data. It also took a gender equality and human rights responsive approach, therefore taking a participatory and collaborative approach to evaluation design, data collection, and the validation of findings and recommendations. It was conducted giving high priority to ethical considerations and according to the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

The evaluation was focused on nine evaluation questions (EQs) covering the six criteria of Coherence, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Human Rights and Gender Equality; and Sustainability. Four methods were used for data collection: document review covered approximately 35 documents; key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with 31 programme stakeholders; and focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with 16 rights-holder beneficiaries. Participant observation was used as a fourth method at two programme events in Thailand.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation identified the following 18 findings:

Finding 1 - Internal Coherence: WRT is making an important contribution to the implementation of UN Women's global WEE strategy and the ROAP's Strategic Note (2023-25). At country level in Viet Nam the programme contributes substantial work to the priority on gender-responsive economic transformation. In Thailand, the programme was designed with close alignment with the ROAP SN and the UNSDCF 2022-2026. In this, the programme aligns with Outcome 3, focused on an inclusive environment and equal opportunities, particularly for those at risk of being left furthest behind.

Finding 2- External Coherence: The programme did not set out to systematically coordinate or collaborate with other UN Agencies in its model. Nevertheless, some key advocacy opportunities and events, technical support for policy, and the long-standing collaboration with the UN Global Compact on the WEPs involved successful collaborations.

There are a wide range of potential opportunities for further, more substantive, collaboration or joint action, and it is possible that the impact of WRT could have been amplified if some of these potential collaborations or synergies had already been explored and activated, and/or that closer engagement with potential synergies may offer approaches to addressing challenges the programme has encountered.

Finding 3 - Relevance to governments: In Viet Nam, prior institutionalisation of WOBs as a category has highlighted the pertinence of the approach for government actors. In Thailand, despite gender equality policy and plans, many stakeholders do not find this category relevant in a context of existing business and policy commitments to treat women and men equally in business, which are understood to be already effective in maintaining equality.

Finding 4 - Relevance to private sector stakeholders: Among private sector stakeholders, there has been some traction with the approach, especially among women-owned

medium enterprises in Viet Nam. Through implementation, it has become clear that some of these are in fact positioned both as suppliers to bigger companies and as (potential) buyers from smaller suppliers, therefore offering a new dimension to the programme model.

In both countries the approach has resonance with wider approaches to environmental sustainability in business. In Thailand it also resonates with a broader notion of diversity in business, including other marginalized groups but not women as a stand-alone category.

Finding 5 - Achievements against Outcomes: Important progress has been made in all Outcomes, and particularly among the WOB stakeholder group. Successes in business matching (procurement contracts for WOBs) under Outcome 4, particularly in Viet Nam, suggests that the programme does present a successful model for results in GRP. Weaker results under this Outcome in Thailand suggest both that the model works more easily under specific conditions which have been more available in Viet Nam, and/or that parts of the Theory of Change have not yet fully matured.

Finding 6 - Emerging directions: Some emerging directions evident particularly in Viet Nam - but relevant in both countries - concern positioning WOBs, especially medium enterprises, as both buyers and sellers, and warrant more attention as potential drivers of further scale.

Finding 7- Partnerships in Viet Nam: In Viet Nam, partnerships established for the project have struck an effective balance between drawing on established relationships and networks while also cultivating new partnerships for this new approach. Both key partnerships have clear alignment with the focus on strengthening market access for WOBs, and this common goal has driven promising results.

Finding 8 - Partnerships in Thailand: In Thailand, no organisation was identified with such clear alignment with WRT's objectives. While the partnership with the National Innovation Agency (NIA) has seen competent delivery of training and events, it has not yet flourished into a matured resource to deliver an analysis of the role of gender in producing structural disadvantage in business systems. The partnership with the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) has also not yet progressed beyond continuing to attempt to advance the establishment of a formal definition of WOBs.

Finding 9 - Programme management: The programme has been competently managed and coordinated following staff gaps at the end of the inception period. It has

benefited from good expertise both from its regional positioning, and by drawing on prior experience of related work by country level staff. Good, regular coordination between implementing countries and between the staff team and DFAT have enabled flexibility and adaptation at times, appropriate to a programme introducing new concepts.

Finding 10 - Budgets and timelines: While budgets have been appropriately allocated, stakeholders agree that the time available for implementation has been short for a conceptually new programme, for which a longer timeframe would have been appropriate. In particular, the time available for maturing business connections into concrete supply opportunities has not been enough to reach its full potential.

Finding 11 - Programme monitoring: Monitoring for outcomes has presented a technical challenge. Despite efforts to resolve these with two programme-led surveys and qualitative data collection to develop programme products, concrete evidence of outcome change remains patchy. Limitations of the surveys were not adequately acknowledged in Year 2 reporting. At the output level, post-training feedback surveys were well used.

Finding 12 - Gender awareness: The programme has a central concern with gender (in) equality and represents a precise process to address a specific aspect of this. WOB stakeholders testify how the programme has strengthened their awareness of the role of gender in the functions of their businesses, both among business leadership and its workforce: this awareness is an important step towards strengthening gender equality.

Finding 13 - A solidarity dimension to WOB networks: The programme has facilitated business connections among WOBs. It has also opened up new opportunities to build/strengthen the solidarity-basis of these networks among the many WOBs it has worked with. These were not further developed by the programme. While in Viet Nam, there are existing networks for WOBs, in Thailand this could be an important basis for making stronger progress in establishing SD-GRP.

Finding 14 - Approach to marginalized groups: The programme did not aim to engage marginalized groups as this was seen as a risk to proof of concept. Rather, criteria for WOB's participation aimed to ensure that relatively established / mature businesses took part. But governments are interested in support to SMEs from marginalized groups. In addition, many WOBs reached do themselves reach marginalized groups through employees or supply chains, but the

programme did not attempt to explore or document this.

Finding 15 - WOBs and inclusive business: Strengthening the programmes approach to WOBs not just as recipients of support but as catalysts for more inclusive business conduct, including for marginalized groups, in their value chains could be an important step as the programme develops.

Finding 16 - Sustainability outlook in Viet Nam: In Viet Nam, there are good prospects for sustainability of the gains made: there is strong government ownership of support of SMEs including WOBs; institutions dedicated to women's entrepreneurship to anchor the concept; and a cadre of small and medium enterprises which have been strengthened and oriented. There are nevertheless still gaps – including a need for stronger models / pathways to support SME business growth; and remaining areas for further work with the private sector.

Finding 17 - Sustainability outlook in Thailand: In Thailand, the sustainability outlook is quite different. With key changes in the ecosystem such as an established definition of WOBs still not achieved, it has been challenging to make a consistent and coherent case for GRP. While capacity strengthening of WOBs has been well implemented, this is unlikely to be sustained in the absence of specific ecosystem changes / policy change. While there has been progress in on-boarding private companies to the WEPs, there are competing interests for business systems' attention to environmental sustainability and supporting marginalized groups including LGBTQI, in which attention to gender-based disadvantage in business could easily get lost.

Finding 18 - Lessons Learned: The programme offers several points of learning which point to ways to address key challenges for a future phase. First, the gap in scale between WOBs, which are mainly small and micro enterprises, and the large procurement companies, must be addressed. Second, a pre-existing willingness in Viet Nam to recognise WOBs as a group warranting support has constituted a much more conducive environment there than in Thailand; in the absence of this type of context, without convincing and reliable data it is challenging to make the policy case. Third, while neither country has made significant progress on public procurement, some experience has emerged to inform a stronger push for this in future. These learnings can be used to adjust a Theory of Change for the onward work.

Conclusions and Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, the evaluation offers the

following conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusion 1 – Viet Nam: WRT has laid good foundations in Viet Nam for building on the GRP approach in the context of a favourable pre-existing eco-system and advances made at the policy support level. With a fairly broad ecosystem of sellers and buyers now in place, and concrete successes in terms of business matching, the context is good for scaling the work. Opportunities for scale include strengthening the focus on public sector procurement. This would include exploring the details of government procurement processes and their implications for different business sectors, with a focus on sectors in which WOBs are more commonly engaged, and on those in which the programme has already worked. Further private sector engagement can likely be amplified by exploring the linkages between GRP and broader Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) business priorities, and by establishing partnerships in which these linkages can establish GRP as an essential step towards inclusive growth. Exploring a differentiated GRP model in which WOBs are positioned both as buyers and sellers; and connected via networks which include both business and solidarity-building dimensions, also has good prospects in Viet Nam.

Conclusion 2 – Thailand: In Thailand, the programme has struggled to create an ecosystem foundation at policy and institutional level, apart from notable progress in establishing a sense of the relevance of gender among a cohort of WOBs/GREs – and enthusiasm to further this awareness as networked WOBs. Among larger private sector actors – potential buyers – it has made some progress among a modest sized group, but this progress has been weakened by their priority interests in a broader framework of diversity alongside concerns about business environmental sustainability. These are in effect positioned as competing interests. Further work in Thailand will depend on a twin-track strategy. This would involve:

- 1) Establishing strong evidence, including via sex-disaggregated business registers, of both the contribution of WOBs to the Thai economy, and the disadvantage they face in relation to procurement. Registers need to be accessible to buyers seeking to diversify their supplier base. This disaggregation was an important aim of the current programme which has not yet borne fruit. Alternative strategies to establish this evidence, such as undertaking independent gender comparative research, could be considered.
- 2) Seeking closer alignment with Thai prioritization of other marginalised groups in the programme's

functioning. This would involve a stronger articulation of how the programme addresses the LNOB principle. This would therefore mean tightening an intersectional gender analysis within analysis of the disadvantages faced by SMEs. It may also involve connecting more explicitly to existing government programmes in Thailand (and Viet Nam) such as One Tambon One Product (OTOP) (and One Commune One Product in Viet Nam).

Conclusion 3 - Coherence: For both these future challenges, working in partnership with other agencies, including other UN agencies, is likely to be an essential part of scaling up. There is substantial common ground across UN Agencies in their engagement with supporting governments to strengthen SMEs, and in some cases in working with the eco system to create gender responsive business regulation. Going forward, and especially when moving to scale, it will be essential to leverage the common ground with other agencies' work in order to establish GRP as a legitimate and impactful approach in the context of a broad conception of responsible business and decent work.

Conclusion 4 - Establishing GRP with strong programme evidence: As the programme, it is important to establish methods to reliably capture programme results. This will be a key part of building the evidence for why a GRP is an important and effective addition to other WEE tools, as well as identifying potential new directions or dimensions. Qualitative evidence can play a strong role in this, as testified by FGD evidence for this evaluation and the programme's production of Photobooks showcasing the journeys of WOBs. These methods could be introduced more systematically / consistently in monitoring plans. But the challenge of generating reliable quantitative data to support strong RBM-based decision making will also need to be met. Strengthening this could take a combination of directions, including identifying indicators with pre-existing reliable data sources; strengthening how surveys are distributed to maximise response rates; and strengthening analysis of limitations for a more reliable picture.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen external coherence

In the journey towards scale, connect more deeply with the work of UN agencies working on different dimensions of responsible business with SMEs and the wider private sector, to communicate and integrate GRP as a specific and essential dimension of inclusive growth.

- Consider amplifying the GRP agenda through UN agencies' past or current work with women's entrepreneurship, and other 'sister' agendas such as responsible business. In this dialogue, it will be essential to establish linkages between 'green' business approaches and gender responsive business and, for example, to mine and integrate ESCAP's experience in catalysing women's entrepreneurship at a governance level.
- Where a future project is designed to consolidate and sustain the WEPs work, with its broader agenda than GRP specifically, consider amplifying broader WEPs messaging by integrating key compatible concepts from key UN partners – such as family friendly workplaces; and consider drawing on ILO's experience with the role of worker organisations in advancing WEP's principles such as Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence, and Enterprise Development more generally.
- It will likely also be essential to seek to connect with very practical and implementation focused, organizations, including wider development organisations, with larger formalized networks and members to drive scale and tangible impact.

Recommendation 2. Strengthen the approach to governance and consider concentrating efforts towards progress in government procurement on Viet Nam as a potential learning space.

Draw lessons from the experience in Thailand to strengthen the programme approach at governance / policy level, especially where the initial conditions for addressing WOBs as a category are not favourable.

- In future work in countries where the GRP concept is (relatively) new, establish project time frames which accommodate policy level advances.
- In Viet Nam, consider strengthening the approach at this level in order to advance work on government procurement, drawing on the opportunity here to create examples of progress and generate data for a more widespread business case on public procurement.

Recommendation 3. Establish a strengthened approach to Leaving No-One Behind (LNOB) in GRP

Leverage the broad interest in supplier diversity with regard to LGBTQI, indigenous groups, and environmental sustainability as sites in which to integrate GRP with a strong gender analysis. Articulate and promote an intersectional approach to these dimensions of supplier diversity, establishing an awareness of the differential situation of women entrepreneurs (and employees) within the category of indigenous groups etc.

- Target and document progress of a sample of WOBs businesses led by marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities, or businesses in remote areas.
- Integrate more strongly a WEPs approach into the work with WOBs, ensuring to include and target WOBs who work with marginalized groups as employees or in their supply chains; Include progress on these as part of the programme objectives and results.
- Develop a strong articulation of the intersections of gender responsive approaches with environmental sustainable business principles.

Recommendation 4. Differentiate the GRP model regarding size and roles of WOBs

Integrate an understanding of the different capacities and opportunities of different types of WOBs into the model. Specifically, strengthen and design for the positioning of relatively well established, medium sized SMEs in the approach by addressing them as buyers and sellers. Adapt training / capacity building / awareness exercises so that these address:

- The constraints faced by medium WOBs (such as in accessing finance, buyer networks, international markets)
- The opportunities they present for establishing gender responsive mechanisms in their own business approaches by, including in their suppliers, by strengthening and further supporting their engagement in the WEPs.
- Strengthening networks between medium WOBs and with smaller WOBs with explicit intention of creating WOB2WOB supply linkages.

Recommendation 5. Clearly include a solidarity dimension in the process of building business networks with WOBs.

Create or strengthening networks beyond business contacts to include opportunities for building solidarity and empowerment as WOBs focused on gender equality. This might include opportunities for exploration of their common or contrasting situations as WOBs, as well as the approaches with which they have overcome gender-based disadvantages faced. Include measurements/indicators to track the progress and results of building in this solidarity dimensions in communities of WOBs.

Recommendation 6. Strengthen the advocacy base for GRP

Identify and document success stories from larger corporations and medium enterprises which have been engaged in the programme as sellers and have made supplier changes as a result of business matching exercises.

- Focus on exploring the consequences of diversifying their suppliers – has this benefitted the business in terms of product quality and price; overall profitability; branding and marketing; and/or in ethical dimensions?
- Develop this learning into products as a basis for advocacy among future cohorts of potential private sector buyers.
- Continue to facilitate the development, disaggregation of and analysis of official data on SMEs and WOBs to support the case for GRP. Ensure this information is publicly accessible to facilitate connections with suppliers for buyers seeking to diversify their supply chains.
- Strengthen programme outcome monitoring and reporting to build a reliable picture of progress. Include both quantitative and qualitative approaches in future M&E design, and innovate in the distribution of surveys.

Recommendation 7. Establish and document end of programme learning opportunities for current programme participants to inform future work.

Establish cross-country learning opportunities for programme stakeholders at each level, including WOBs as sellers, WOBs and GRES as buyers, implementing partners and government stakeholders.

- Learning opportunities planned for the final weeks of the programme could be augmented by consolidated learning sessions at regional level leveraging the regional platforms for stronger cross-fertilization of learnings from evaluations.
- In these exercises, it will be important to bear in mind the specificities of different types of business sectors as well as their common experiences.

I. Introduction and Background

WE RISE Together (WRT) is a three-year programme implemented from March 1st 2022 to February 28th 2025 in the Mekong sub-region, with a focus on Thailand and Viet Nam. It is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) with AUD 2,850,000 over the three years. This fund has been awarded through the DFAT Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP), and the programme sits under MAP's Economic Resilience Fund. The programme is managed by the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) with a project coordinator in Thailand and a project manager in Viet Nam.

The programme responds to the prioritization of women's economic empowerment by expanding market access for Women-owned Businesses (WOBs) and Gender Responsive Enterprises (GREs) through procurement opportunities. The initiative builds on prior work in the framework of Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), and particularly on the We Empower Asia (WEA) programme which was implemented from 2019 to 2022.¹

This document reports the findings and recommendations of an independent final evaluation of the programme, conducted during its last few months of implementation from October 2024 to February 2025 by Kirsty Milward, an independent consultant specialising in gender responsive evaluation. In-country primary data collection was carried out in Thailand and Viet Nam between 10th and 24th October 2024.

Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as to inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It therefore included both summative and formative elements, setting out to identify key learnings within the broader context of a gender-responsive market approach in the Mekong region.

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess progress made over the programme period against the intended outcomes.

- Assess the relevance of the programme to stakeholders; its coherence with UN Women's broader work in ROAP, Thailand and Viet Nam; and efficiency of the approaches implemented in attaining results and any unintended consequences.
- Assess the integration of human rights and gender equality in design and implementation.
- Identify successes and challenges of the programme's specific approach of gender-responsive procurement as a mean to enabling market access for women-owned businesses.
- Discuss opportunities, requirements and determining factors to develop actionable recommendations for a potential second programme phase post February 2025 or similar programming.

The evaluation covered the entire programme life from February 2022 up to the final evaluation report period of January 2025, while also considering the planned activities until the close of the programme in February 2025.

It covered the programme implementation in both focus countries - Viet Nam and Thailand – including the three provinces in Thailand (Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Phuket) and the four provinces in Viet Nam (Ha Noi, Ho Chi Min, Hue, Da Nang) in which it worked. It also covered the dimension of regional oversight, management and technical advice provided by the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP).

The primary intended users of the evaluation's findings and recommendations were UN Women personnel, to support their further strategizing for gender-responsive market approaches. It is also intended to be useful to WOBs and gender responsive enterprises (GREs); public and private sector organizations identified as key collaborators/partners of WRT programme, including government agencies such as the Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion (OSMEP) in Thailand; the Ministry of Planning and Investment in Viet Nam; and the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). It is also intended to support the programme donor, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as input for decision-

¹ WEA ran from 2019 to 2022 and worked in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. It aimed to support women-led and gender-inclusive entrepreneurship by enhancing gender-sensitive investment and entrepreneurship opportunities and by

capacitating women entrepreneurs through training. It also aimed to create an enabling business environment; and to promote gender inclusive business cultures by mobilizing the private sector to adopt and implement the WEPs.

making purposes. Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP).

The primary intended users of the evaluation's findings and recommendations were UN Women personnel, to support their further strategizing for gender-responsive market approaches. It is also intended to be useful to WOBs and gender responsive enterprises (GREs); public and private sector organizations identified as key collaborators/partners of WRT programme, including government agencies such as the Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion (OSMEP) in Thailand; the Ministry of Planning and Investment in Viet Nam; and the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). It is also intended to support the programme donor, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as input for decision-making purposes.

II. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation took an overall mixed methods approach, using documentary sources for quantitative data and qualitative data collection methods for primary data. It also took a gender equality and human rights responsive approach to accommodate the complexity of gender relations at play in gender-responsive market interventions, therefore taking a participatory and collaborative approach to evaluation design, data collection, and the validation of findings and recommendations. The approach included both summative and formative elements – prioritising accountability to stated programme objectives as the summative dimension, and a theory based approach to frame the formative dimension, using a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) (see Annex 4) to probe strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the programme design / envisaged causal pathway. The purpose of the formative dimension was to generate insights into where future iterations of the programme may require elaborations or adaptations, as reflected in the recommendations offered here (Section 6).

The evaluation was focused on nine evaluation questions (EQs) covering the six overall criteria of Coherence, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB); and Sustainability, as shown in Table 1. An evaluation matrix was developed clarifying sub-questions and assessment criteria, given in Annex 3.

The evaluation was conducted giving high priority to ethical considerations and according to the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. It was carried out according to five principles of ethics in evaluation: respect, beneficence; justice,

integrity and accountability. These guided day to day decision making of the evaluator. Care was taken to conduct data collection, analysis and the development of findings with integrity, and with respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle. Interviews were led with a tone of respect, openness and rapport.

Informed consent was elicited orally for all key informant interviews (KIIs), both on-line and face to face, using the protocols given in the data collection tools (Annex 6).

Care was taken with the storage and backup of data, using a secure Google Drive to back up and collate interview notes, and a security enabled private computer for temporary storage during data collection. Data files will be deleted 6 months after the evaluation closes.

Data Collection and Analysis

Three main methods were used for data collection: document review; key informant interviews (KIIs) with programme stakeholders; and focus group discussions (FGDs) with rights-holder beneficiaries. Participant observation was used as a fourth method at a major programme event in Thailand.

A stakeholder mapping was conducted at the inception phase to inform the selection of respondents to data collection exercises. Stakeholders for interview and focus groups were purposively in collaboration with programme staff, to include the key groups of: programme and support staff; support organisations (government agencies and implementing partners); buyer organisations; and seller organisations. Among seller organisations, selection for focus groups included some which were based outside the country capitals, in order to accommodate perspectives from rural/semi-urban areas across the project sites. One hybrid online/in-person FGD, and one remote interview with a WOB took place to enable this. Sampling criteria covered in the selection included: micro, small and medium SMES; new and well-established SMEs; rural/semi-urban and urban; SMEs which had become both buyers and sellers.

UN organisations with related work and objectives were identified over the course of data collection; interviews were conducted remotely following the in-person data collection phase.

Document review: approximately 35 documents were reviewed in 3 processes. An initial document scan was

undertaken to assess information availability and gaps; an in-depth analysis of key project documents sourced at the outset was conducted prior to and alongside further data collection. Further in-depth review of key documents collected from programme staff and stakeholders iteratively during the data collection process, added detail to the original information, and helped to assess the extent of triangulation across data sources for the emerging findings. See Annex 3.

Documents included programme design and agreement documents which contributed information on project intent; annual reports, interim reports and committee meeting minutes which contributed information on reported results as well as challenges encountered and adjustments made; key strategy documents from UN Women, including two evaluations, which gave information on internal coherence; from the wider UN for external coherence; training schedules, project proposals and reports from implementing partners which gave insight into the partnerships and details of training intent and reported results. Monitoring data was also available in the form of a project Outcome Survey implemented during Y2; results from a sister survey implemented during Q3 of Y3 were available during the reporting stages of the evaluation. Some relevant quantitative data was available from documents sourced by the programme design team during and prior to 2022; rapid assessments were also conducted in Thailand and Viet Nam early in the programme, serving as a baseline for the institutional environment dimensions of the project.

Primary data collection took place using both remote and in-person methods over a one month period from mid-October to end of November 2024. In-person data collection was carried out in Bangkok, Thailand and Hanoi, Viet Nam over two weeks; in Thailand, data was collected at both the level of the regional office and related to the in-country implementation. Both site-visits included some online participation of respondents to accommodate participants from outside the country capitals. Online interviews were also carried out following the in-person data collection period to fill remaining data gaps, especially around the question of the wider coherence of the programme across the UN.

In total, 47 stakeholders were consulted (43 women, four men), in 25 meetings (See Annex 2), with details given in Table 1. These included seven stakeholders from UN Women; three government stakeholders; five implementing partner stakeholders; seven private sector buyers / potential buyers; and four stakeholders from other UN Agencies.

Table 1: Stakeholders consulted

	Thailand		Viet Nam		Regional		Other UN		Donor		Total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
KIIs	9	2	10		4		4	1	1		31
FGDs	8	1	7								16

Participant Observation

The evaluator attended two programme events in Bangkok as an observer. These were held consecutively on the same day. These were the final of the SME's Pitching Competition hosted by the National Innovation Agency; and the Thailand WEPs awards ceremony. The Pitching Competition included a side opportunity for the finalists and other SMEs to display (and sell) their products in a networking room. This gave opportunity for the evaluator to engage with SME owners and staff, and see their products and presentations and gain information on their business journeys, objectives and challenges. The WEPs awards ceremony offered opportunity to observe the presentation of the awards in each WEPs category, to hear the responses of awards winners, and for some interaction with other participants. It therefore provided information on the achievements and concerns of engaged private sector companies, and on the processes through which they had become involved with the WEPs principles.

Analysis

Primary data analysis was conducted using social science data coding methods against the evaluation questions. This used the QDA Miner (Lite) platform, and a coding tree built iteratively starting with the EQs and sub-questions, and adding sub-branches on the basis of inspection of interview transcriptions and FGD notes.

Key documents were analysed against EQs using an Excel spreadsheet. Triangulation was then carried out across these two analysis tools so that a sense of levels of data coherence both across and within them was achieved. To develop findings, only well triangulated data was used. Where less coherent or strongly triangulated data was used, this is flagged in the findings and reasons given.

Limitations

While the data collection process went quite smoothly and covered most stakeholder types, the following limitations should be noted:

- FGDs were arranged to include a range of types of WOBs and GREs but with some limitations affecting insights into the LNOB situation. First, in-person data collection was limited to Bangkok and Hanoi. While participants from the other project areas were included in discussions remotely, it is possible that this more restricted form of interaction biases the data collected towards those who were present in-person. Second, there were no participants identified as having disabilities or other forms of marginalized status – this has affected the findings related to Human Rights and Gender Equality.
- The programme is managed from the Bangkok regional office, where UN presence is both concentrated and active. It works in a sector (SME development) with high relevance to many countries, and therefore several UN agencies are working with SMEs, or on SME policy, in different dimensions. This means that the question of coherence of the programme with other UN agencies is potentially very broad. The evaluation question concerning external coherence was not in the ToRs for the evaluation, but was added on request from evaluation management commentators at the inception report review stage, when key dates for the data collection had already been scheduled. Information on potential relevant informants for this dimension not easily available among programme staff; specific individuals were eventually identified with the assistance of the Resident Coordinators office. These issues combined mean that related findings on external coherence are likely based on an incomplete picture of all potential areas of programme synergy across the UN.
- Monitoring outcome level results has presented a technical challenge for the programme. The Outcome

Survey implemented by the programme at the end of Y2 received low response rates among some stakeholder groups, rendering it unreliable for measuring progress against key indicators. The analysis here has therefore focused on qualitative data generated by both the programme and the data collection for the evaluation. There is some risk of a positive bias in this data, as it was collected amongst stakeholders who were generally more strongly engaged with the programme.

III. Overview of the WE RISE Together Programme

The WRT programme aims to establish GRP as one route to supporting women's economic empowerment in the region, by addressing barriers to the access of women-owned and gender-responsive businesses to procurement opportunities.

Prior to the start of the programme, an ADB-UN Women report on GRP in Asia and the Pacific highlighted inequalities in Asia-Pacific procurement markets² and estimated that, in line with global estimates, WOBs access only 1% of public procurement spending and 1% of corporate purchasing.³ It also highlighted the opportunity and persistent inequalities in the Asia-Pacific procurement markets. Reasons offered for this inequitable situation include that in Southeast Asia, women entrepreneurs report around 7 % less access to business-oriented networks, and tend to own or operate micro-SMEs. More than 96 % of all enterprises in Asia and the Pacific, including in Thailand and Viet Nam, are micro-SMEs. Based on global experience, structural gender inequalities impede women from a variety of backgrounds, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, and education, from gaining equitable access to networks, finance, and markets, including procurement markets. This restricts them from starting, expanding, or maximising the profits of their businesses.⁴ As elsewhere, social norms in the region allocate domestic responsibilities, child care and other care work to women disproportionately, restricting the time available to

² ADB-UN Women Asia-Pacific Gender-Responsive Procurement In Asia And The Pacific An Opportunity For An Equitable Economic Future' (2022). <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/gender-responsive-procurement-in-asia-and-the-pacific>

³The World Bank. n.d. The Global Public Procurement Database (GPPD), quoted in Ibid. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/global-public-procurement-database>. According to analysis by the Open Contracting Partnership; over 77 % of the total is spent by 16 countries. China is by far the largest procurer at

\$4.2; ITC. 2020. Making Public Procurement Work for Women. https://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/ITCGuide%20WOB%20PP20201106_web.pdf. E. Vazquez and A. Sherman, Buying for Impact: How to Buy from Women and Change Our World (Advantage Media Group 2013

⁴ ADB-UN Women Asia-Pacific Gender-Responsive Procurement In Asia And The Pacific An Opportunity For An Equitable Economic Future' (2022). <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/gender-responsive-procurement-in-asia-and-the-pacific>

them to invest in managing and develop their businesses and business networks, and limiting their mobility away from domestic settings in which to pursue business interests.

In Thailand women constitute 47% of business people⁵, and while no sex-disaggregated data on SMEs is available, the ADB-UN Women (2022) report estimated that women entrepreneurs are found more in micro and small businesses, and that biases work against women working in some sectors, excluding women from key networks, and limiting market access for important for business opportunities.

In Viet Nam, like in Thailand, the contribution of SMEs to economic growth is vital: in 2015 they accounted for 98% of all business, 40% of GDP, and 50% of total employment.⁶ While WOBs made up 24% of all formal enterprises, they are strongly underrepresented in the leadership of large and medium enterprises and over represented among micro enterprises.⁷ Viet Nam's 2013 law on Bidding provides for preferential treatment for procurement from domestic contractors providing building and consultation services and which employ at least 25% women or 25% people with disabilities – but since few enterprises in this sector meet these criteria, very few enterprises are eligible.⁸

In these contexts, the WRT programme set out to accelerate gender-responsive entrepreneurship for (Micro) SMEs by focusing on the opportunity presented by developing a more gender responsive procurement market. The overall objective of the programme is to create equal market opportunities for women, by focusing on advancing supplier diversity through enhanced gender-responsive procurement. In both countries, the concept of supplier diversity through GRP has been in nascent stages of development at the outset of the programme. It set out to focus on the retail and tourism sectors initially.

The programme works through four interlinked outcomes:

Outcome 1: More public and private organisations are promoting and developing policies and practices that advance GRP (Normative Change in the Ecosystem)

Outcome 2: WOBs/GREs have increased capacity to build more resilient and inclusive business models and utilise networking opportunities to better access markets. (Strengthening the Supply Side)

Outcome 3: Public and private buying organisations have increased capacity to advocate, promote and implement GRP within their organisations and industries to enable market access for WOBs/GREs. (Strengthening the Demand Side)

Outcome 4: More equitable market opportunities are created through connecting WOBs/GREs to larger public and private buyers. (Connecting Demand Side and Connect to Supply Side)

Under Outcome 1, two outputs focused respectively on technical guidance and evidence building to national public and private organisations to increase awareness and develop GRP policy; and on knowledge transfer and network building to advance GRP policy and practice.

Under Outcome 2, technical support and training was provided to WOBs and GREs to increase their capacity to access markets, build entrepreneurial skills and resilient, inclusive businesses. This included setting out to provide a platform for women entrepreneurs to connect, share knowledge and expand networks.

Under Outcome3, the focus was on developing the capacity of the public and private sectors to implement GRP policies and practice through workshops, supporting procurement policies assessment in particular through the vehicle of the regional Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and associated support and awards. Activities to engage with WOBs were also an important focus.

Under Outcome 4, the focus was on creating opportunities for collaboration between WOBs/GREs and connect with larger organizations to facilitate market connections; and on establishing sex disaggregated databases on SMEs accessible for public and private procurement.

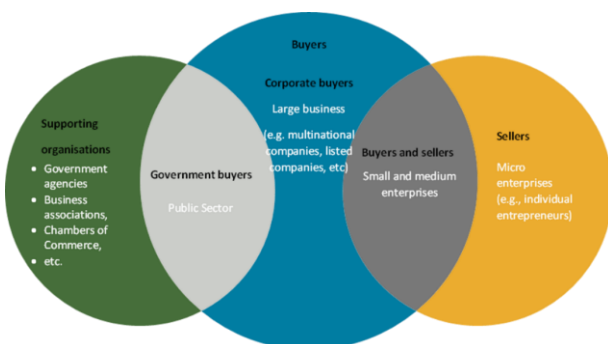
The programme conducted workshops during the inception phase to precisely identify relevant stakeholders, including implementing partners / service providers, government stakeholders and the private sector. These were broadly conceptualised as supporting organisations, buyer organisations and seller organisations, with some dual/overlapping organisations, as shown in Figure 1:

⁵ Mastercard, Women-owned SMEs in Asia/Pacific, Middle East and Africa: An Assessment of the Business Environment . 2010.. <http://www.masterintelligence.com/upload/251/178/MC84QWomenSMEQS.pdf>

⁶ UN ESCAP, Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship Creating a Gender-Responsive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (2020).

⁷ UN Women Programme Document Mar 2022 – Feb 2025, WRT: Advancing Gender Responsive Procurement in the Mekong Subregion,

⁸ Ibid.



Main beneficiaries of the programme were conceived as WOBs and GREs who received training and support to develop their businesses. Secondary beneficiaries were public sector support organisations who received technical advice and GRP assessment tools; and private sector organisations through technical support to enhance their GRP implementation capacity.

At the outset the programme aimed to capacitate 130 institutions (80 in Viet Nam and 30 in Thailand) under Output 3.1. During the inception period, targets were set for Output 2.2 which anticipated 160 new WEPs signatories; and for Output 3.1 the target was reduced to 100 organisations (50 Viet Nam; 50 Thailand). ⁹Under Output 2.2 the first Annual Report reported that 100 WOBs had been reached in Thailand. While numerical targets were not set for the numbers of WOBs and buyer organisations to be reached, the Y2 Annual report reported that almost 400 buyer organisations and over 200 WOBs had been reached. ¹⁰

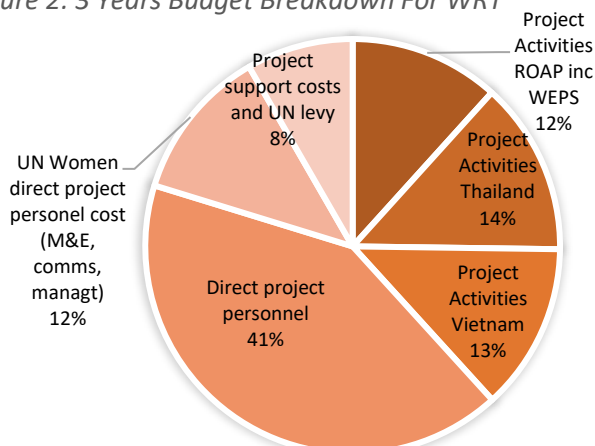
Of the total Budget AUD 2,850,000 / USD 2,071,221, 6% was allocated to activities under Outcome 1; 9% under Outcome 2; 7% under Outcome 3; 7% under Outcome 4; and 9% was allocated to the carrying out of the WEPs awards and treated as an 'extra activity'. ¹¹While at the end of year 2, there was variable spend across the Outcomes (O1: 88%; O2: 62%; O3: 71%; O4: 85% and extra activity: 97%) budget forecasts at that point clarify that expenditure was expected to match budget by the project end.

Figure 2 gives the budget across activities in the two countries; at regional level; and for direct personnel, project management, M&E and Communications costs.

At the time of data collection for this evaluation, the project had completed 7.5 months of Y3. As the evaluation process closes, one further month of implementation will remain. Some key events took place after the data collection,

including the WEPs awards event and further business matching opportunities in Viet Nam.

Figure 2: 3 Years Budget Breakdown For WRT



Source: ANNEX E Budget and Financial Update Y2 DFAT Approved

IV. Findings

This section presents the findings of the evaluation according to the six criteria, and in response to the evaluation questions.

Coherence

EQ 1: To what extent is the programme coherent with the efforts of UN Women and the broader UN System? Especially regarding: Women's Economic Empowerment unit strategy in Asia and the Pacific; Viet Nam Country Office Strategy and the Regional Office Strategic Note; Other UN WEE programming.

Finding 1 Internal Coherence

WRT is making an important contribution to the implementation of UN Women's global WEE strategy and the ROAP's Strategic Note (2023-25). At country level in Viet Nam the programme contributes substantial work to the priority on gender-responsive economic transformation. In Thailand, the programme was designed with close alignment with the ROAP SN and the UNSDCF 2022-2026. In

⁹ UN Women Programme Document Mar 2022 – Feb 2025, WRT: Advancing Gender Responsive Procurement in the Mekong Subregion; UN Women Donor Report Feb 2022-Feb 2023 WE RISE Together Y1 Annual Report to Government of Australia.

¹⁰ UN Women Donor Report 2023-24, 'WRT: Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion', Second Annual Report to the Government of Australia

¹¹ ANNEX E- Budget and Financial Update Y2 DFAT.

this, the programme aligns with Outcome 3 focused on an inclusive environment and equal opportunities, particularly for those at risk of being left furthest behind.

WRT was designed to extend UN Women's engagement with the private sector which had gained momentum through the We Empower Asia (WEA) programme. A key component of the WEA programme was the focus on engaging companies and building an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment in the private sector to make public commitments towards gender equality through the adoption of WEPs. WEPs components included WEPs awareness raising, WEPs related research and knowledge products, WEPs Awards and WEPs Activator capacity-building.¹² There was also a focus on strengthening WOBs but without a particular focus on GRP. A thematic evaluation of UN Women ROAP's work in women's economic empowerment through private sector engagement in 2022,¹³ which included a case study of WEA, recommended a longer timeframe and more coherent vision for this work, which WRT was positioned to take up, particularly with regard to GRP as a dimension of private sector engagement, and to advancing the WEPs.

Subsequent to the design of WRT, a global strategy for WEE was developed and finalized in 2024, with much engagement from the ROAP team. The global strategy articulates three Gender Equality Accelerators (GEAs) as priority areas: Women and the World of Work; Transforming Care Systems; and Gender Responsive Climate Action.¹⁴ The WRT programme responds clearly to the first of these GEAs, with its focus on supporting women's entrepreneurship as well as a focus on decent work through the WEPs. It also contributes directly to the second impact area of UN Women's four impact areas in UN Women's Global Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Impact area two: "Women's Economic Empowerment" aims to ensure that women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy.¹⁵

As part of UN Women ROAP's overall work, the programme contributes to the office's Strategic Note (2023-2025) Impact Area on Women's Economic Empowerment (one of four impact areas). It is one of two central programmatic initiatives, the other being focused on care

entrepreneurship. It also carries forward the WEPs work, following on from WEA, which represents a central pillar under this Impact Area. The impact area contributes to Outcome 1.3 which seeks for women and girls in all their diversity to benefit equally from opportunities, goods, services and resources; particularly with regard to Output 1.3.3 which aims to advance women's access to decent work opportunities economic autonomy and resilience.¹⁶

As a regional programme, WRT was able to promote awareness of a GRP approach more widely than in its two implementing countries. In Y1, for example, it implemented a GRP panel and the UN Business and Human Rights Forum; participated in the ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit in Cambodia; conducted a panel discussion at the global UN Women IDRC GRP Symposium. The programme also benefited from expertise available at the regional level: RO staff provided technical support to the Thailand and Viet Nam COs towards work plans in general; and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was designed and coordinated from a regional position. The regional team contributed to specific activities such as assisting companies to sign up to the GRP Assessment Tool, and managing the regional Asia Pacific WEPs Forum. It also contributed to developing an Action Brief for GRP and the Action Planning Tool.¹⁷ This positioning added to programme stability during a period when the Thailand Project Manager position was vacant (See Finding 9).

At country level in Viet Nam, the programme contributes to Priority 2 of three priorities of the 2022-26 Strategic Note on 'Sustainable, gender –responsive economic transformation'. This in turn contributes to the Priority Outcome of UN-Viet Nam's SDCF on Shared Prosperity through Economic Transformation' which is being operationalised in the same timeframe (2022-26). According to stakeholders, the programme represents a substantial part of the ongoing work on women's economic empowerment in the office; although a recent focus on the care economy is a more recent addition to the portfolio, and a programme focused on gender and climate change including climate resilient businesses and supporting WBOs to adopt environmentally sustainable practices also contributes to the WEE portfolio.

¹² UN Women, 'Independent Evaluation Service: Evaluation of the Regional Office Contributions to Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific', (March 2022). <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11575>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ UN Women, Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy (UN Women January 2024). www.unwomen.org

¹⁵ UN Women Programme Document Mar 2022 – Feb 2025, WRT: Advancing Gender Responsive Procurement in the Mekong Subregion.

¹⁶ UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Strategic Note 2023-2025 Narrative report.; UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Strategic Note 2023-2025 Theory of Change.

¹⁷ UN Women Donor Report Feb 2022-Feb 2023 WE RISE Together Y1 Annual Report to Government of Australia; UN Women Donor Report 2023-24, 'WRT: Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion', Second Annual Report to the Government of Australia.

UN Women has a Country Office in Thailand – yet it is considered a programme presence under the oversight of the Regional Office and its Strategic Note. Thus, the office contributes to the ROAP SN and to the overall Thailand UNSDCF. The UNSDCF's Outcome 3 states that 'People living in Thailand, especially those at risk of being left furthest behind, are able to participate and benefit from development, free from all forms of discrimination', and the UN, within this, specifically focuses on 'Providing an enabling, rights-based, inclusive environment to address inequalities, support equal opportunities and reduce poverty'. While WRT clearly aligns with regard to supporting equal opportunities and addressing inequalities, there may be room for strengthening the programme's approach to 'those at risk of being left furthest behind' which in turn could strengthen the perception of its relevance in Thailand.

Finding 2: External Coherence

The programme did not set out to systematically coordinate or collaborate with other UN Agencies in its model. Nevertheless, some key advocacy opportunities and events, technical support for policy, and the long-standing collaboration with the UN Global Compact on the WEPs did involve successful collaborations.

There are a wide range of potential opportunities for further, more substantive, collaboration or joint action, and it is possible that the impact of WRT could have been amplified if some of these potential collaborations or synergies had already been explored and activated, and/or that closer engagement with potential synergies may offer approaches to addressing challenges the programme has encountered.

The programme did not set out to systematically coordinate or collaborate with other UN Agencies in its design. Rather it was seen as a focused effort to develop an initial small ecosystem with a clear narrative on gender responsive procurement specifically.

Nevertheless, WRT worked with other UN Agencies in select strategic activities, including centrally with the UN Global Compact to carry forward the UN Women Asia-Pacific WEPs awards as a flagship strategy for private sector engagement in the WRT objectives. Other agencies have also been

invited to and engaged in key advocacy events such as the Ring the Bell¹⁸ event and the WEPs awards ceremony (e.g. as judges).¹⁹ An important policy step in Vietnam, the review and revision of the Public Procurement Law, was undertaken by a Joint Development Organization Group including World Bank, IFC, UNDP, and GIZ, and included UN Women's contribution of recommendations on integrating gender considerations (See also Finding 5).

However, given the priority among several countries in the region on inclusive economic development and on support to SMEs as one driver of this, this is a lively area of work across the UN. There are therefore several promising areas for collaboration which could be explored for further, more substantive, collaboration or joint action. It is possible that the impact of WRT could have been amplified if some of these potential collaborations had already been integrated.

For instance, UNICEF's work on family friendly workplace policies has clear resonance with the WEPs principles (especially Principle 2 "Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination" and Principle 5 "Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices" as it relates to working conditions in supply chains), with stakeholders recognising there could be fruitful collaboration on this. ILO's central mission to enhance decent work and labour conditions also has resonance with the WEPs principles 2 and 5, as well as the Outcome 2 objective to strengthen WOBs, which might include compliance to labour/employment standards, including for certification as part of strengthening business opportunities. In Viet Nam, UNIDO focuses on strengthening business models and networks especially with a view to Vietnamese enterprises getting stronger access to international markets. UNOPS' experience in operationalising GRP in its own systems is potentially a resource for guidance.²⁰ There is also scope for stronger 'following on' from prior work by other agencies, building on an 'internal value chain'. For example, ESCAP has had a priority focus on women's entrepreneurship and until 2024, was engaged in a programme supporting the ecosystem for women entrepreneur's access to finance and ICT, including in Viet Nam. The programme focused on the policy environment, and included support to Viet Nam's SME law with the Ministry of Planning and Investment. UNDP in Thailand has also worked on promotion of private sector DEI, including the strengthening of LGBTQI+ friendly

¹⁸ "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality" is an annual event series for International Women's Day to raise awareness of the role of women in business and finance. UN Women leads on the event, in collaboration: The International Finance Corporation (IFC), The United Nations

Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative (UN SSE), The UN Global Compact, and and The World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

¹⁹ Key informant interviews.

²⁰ United Nations Office for Project Services [UNOPS]. [Gender-responsive Public Procurement \(2023\)](https://content.unops.org/Gender-responsive-Public-Procurement-2023). content.unops.org

working environment, and has at times shared partners with UN Women (such as the Securities and Exchange Commission).

With the exception of the UNOPS' example, these potential collaboration points have somewhat different interest groups or constituencies in mind according to the mandates and focus areas of the agencies and governments they work with, – including e.g., families; environmental issues; and different LNOB groups. Working with them therefore perhaps carries the potential to dilute the focus in GRP on gender equality specifically. Nevertheless, where gender equality specifically as a driver for supplier diversity has not yet had much traction (i.e. in Thailand), strongly integrating gender equality into other initiatives for supplier diversity and environmental sustainability could offer an alternative route and contribute to overall UN coherence.

Relevance

EQ2: To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders (National government; Private sector; Buyer organizations; Women entrepreneurs)?

Finding 3: Relevance to governments

Gender responsive procurement was a new idea to most stakeholders at the onset of the programme. For WOBs in both countries, the approach has been quickly understood and – alongside other priorities – endorsed. But for government and private sector stakeholders, the perceived relevance of the approach is more mixed.

In Viet Nam, prior institutionalisation of WOBs as a category has highlighted the pertinence of the approach for government actors. In Thailand, despite gender equality policy and plans, many stakeholders do not find this category relevant in a context of existing business and policy commitments to treat women and men equally in business, which are understood to be already effective in maintaining equality.

As a relatively new idea in these country contexts, the aim when introducing the GRP approach was to raise awareness and demonstrate its relevance in the contexts, rather than to play into existing demand for the approach. This process

has seen different responses in the two countries. In Viet Nam, the National Strategy on Gender Equality (2021-2030) seeks to increase the ratio of women-owned SMEs to 30% by 2030, an ambition which is supported by legal provision²¹ with several supporting policies for women-owned SMEs.²² Together these mean there has been little challenge to the relevance of the approach. But in Thailand, a strong commitment to equal treatment of WOBs and other businesses in a gender neutral or unaware way means that the programme objectives have not been fully taken on board.

There are several policy frameworks in Thailand in which gender issues are clearly embedded: the National Strategy 2018-2037; the Women's Development Action Plan (2023-2027) which promotes gender equality and women's human rights; and the Gender Equality Promotion Action Plan (2023-2027) which developed guidelines to shift mind-sets, attitudes, and raise awareness on gender equality issues. It also envisions that women and girls will have the opportunity to develop their full potential and be treated equally and fairly.²³ At the same time, the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023-2027) includes a strategy for creating a society of opportunities and equity, but women have been removed from the categories of disadvantaged groups recognised by this plan.²⁴ In this context, several public and private sector stakeholders in Thailand struggle to see the relevance of the approach, beyond establishing a definition of WOBs in order to be able to comply with some international companies' policies on procurement. A few stakeholders nevertheless agreed that once the definition of WOBs is established and analysis of SMEs carried out on its basis, it will also be possible to clearly identify where the gender gaps lie among SMEs, if any. Once gaps are identified, it would then be possible to begin to advocate for domestic policy adjustments to accommodate these.

Finding 4: Relevance to private sector stakeholders

Among private sector stakeholders, there has been some traction with the approach, especially among women-owned medium enterprises in Viet Nam. Through implementation, it has become clear that some of these are in fact positioned both as suppliers to bigger companies and

²¹ The Law 04/2017/QH14 on Support for SMEs (January 2018)

²² UN Women Programme Document Mar 2022 – Feb 2025, WRT: Advancing Gender Responsive Procurement in the Mekong Subregion

²³ [Review of Thailand's Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), (2024). www.asiapacificgender.org.

²⁴ Ibid.

as (potential) buyers from smaller suppliers, therefore offering a new dimension to the programme model.

In both countries the approach has resonance with wider approaches to environmental sustainability in business. In Thailand it also resonates with a broader notion of diversity in business, including other marginalized groups but not women as a stand-alone category.

For private sector companies in Thailand, interview and FGD evidence²⁵ from private sector respondents in this evaluation suggest there is a range of rationales with which the programme objectives resonate differently. Several large international companies have HQ-driven policies on aspects of gender equality. While this does not always yet include supplier diversity or GRP, there are clear potential linkages which the programme has aimed to emphasise, not yet fully successfully. Large company stakeholders are also driven by priorities for environmental sustainability in their supply chains, and to some extent for inclusive approaches which focus on marginalized groups beyond binary gender categories (i.e. LGBTQI and ethnic minority groups). For national companies involved in export, internationally driven procurement policy frameworks which include gender equality may also have relevance. For companies with operating only in the domestic market, national legislation might limit gender-responsive business conduct, especially when it comes to GRP.

On the other hand, there is some evidence from respondents that some WOBs (both large and small) prefer to do business, including their procurement, with other WOBs. This is an emerging dimension which has not yet been fully explored or developed through programme activities. In addition, respondents from WOBs engaged by the programme expressed awareness of the gender dimensions of their business engagements as suppliers, as employers, and in their product markets. This awareness included both the disadvantages of their positions as women business owners, as well as the potential for mutual support as women as the category of WOBs becomes increasingly recognised.

There is a contrasting landscape in Viet Nam. The National Strategy on Gender Equality (2021-2030) already (i.e. prior to the start of WRT) clearly recognised women-owned SMEs as a category, and government agencies specifically support this group – such as the long term UN Women partner organisation, the SME Development Division of the Agency for Enterprise Development. The Chamber of Commerce also

has a women's division, the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC), also a programme partner. The programme, despite being more narrowly focused than its predecessor the WEA, has clear resonance in these circles.

Among WOBs also the programme has had clear relevance; stakeholders agreed that the training and support offered to them has been helpful (although in some dimensions not sufficiently extensive).²⁶ However, programme and WOB stakeholders noted that the programme achieved internal learning in the course of implementation concerning the types of WOBs that would best fit the approach. First, like in Thailand, it became clear that there were considerable challenges in attempting to link up micro/ small enterprises as suppliers to very large ones. This was because small companies struggled to access sufficient finance quickly and to rapidly expand institutionally to meet potentially expanded demand. Therefore working with medium sized enterprises presented a more promising trajectory. Second, as a result of this pivoting, it became clear that women-owned medium enterprises could and should be engaged **both** as suppliers seeking larger contracts, **and** as buyers with an interest in integrating GRP approaches into their own supply chains.

Effectiveness

EQ3: What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme contribute to?

What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of results? What are the success factors/drivers of progress of the programme?

Finding 5: Achievements against Outcomes

Important progress has been made in all Outcomes, and particularly among the WOB stakeholder group. Successes in business matching (procurement contracts for WOBs) under Outcome 4, particularly in Viet Nam, suggests that the programme does present a successful model for results in GRP. Weaker results under this Outcome in Thailand suggest both that the model works more easily under specific conditions which have been more available in Viet Nam, and/or that parts of the Theory of Change have not yet fully matured.

²⁵ This information draws on diverse evidence from three KIIs and one FGD.

²⁶ Interviews and FGDs with nine WOBs.

Outcome 1: More public and private organisations are promoting and developing policies and practices that advance GRP (Normative Change in the Ecosystem)

Under Outcome 1 in Viet Nam, key steps have been taken progressing normative change in the ecosystem (O1) to support GRP. These steps included a review of the Public Procurement Law by Ministry of Planning and Investment; this revised law was passed by the National Assembly in May 2023, and a decree regulating the supporting policy particular to SMEs to implement the law. A circular on the budget mechanism to support this was issued by the Ministry of Finance, and the Ha Noi People's Committee Office adopted a decision on supporting human resource development training for WSMEs in Hanoi. This revised Public Procurement Law 2023 gives incentives for (i) micro- and small-sized enterprises; (ii) businesses who employ a minimum of 25% female workers, or a minimum of 25% disabled workers or a minimum of 25% ethnic minority workers.²⁷ These revisions were made with the support/policy advocacy of a number of organisations in the Joint Development Organization Group including World Bank, IFC, UNDP, and GIZ, alongside UN Women's contribution of recommendations on integrating gender considerations.²⁸ This progress represents some important points of SD-GRP, but it is notable that the key changes concerned the inclusion of people with disabilities and ethnic minorities in the incentive system, as women had already been included from the 2013 iteration of the policy. Government engagement with supplier diversity related to marginalized groups perhaps represents a key opportunity for the future of the approach, which WRT did not design for (See Finding 14).

Under WRT, steps were taken to advance the implementation of this policy, through the dissemination of a Policy Summary report which highlighted key findings from earlier commissioned GRP stakeholder mapping, legislative landscape, and capacity assessments. WRT also supported the drafting of handbooks on Women SMEs (WSMEs) access to the State's supporting policies and on WSMEs' participation in domestic and international market through e-commerce.

In Thailand under Outcome 1, an important focus was on institutionalising a definition of WOB as a starting point for

SME analysis which could then provide a foundation for advocacy on gender-based policy responses and procurement practices. This definition was still pending formal recognition at the time of data collection for this evaluation. Research was undertaken by WRT on good practice in ASEAN and the impact of WOB supportive policies, followed by a multi-stakeholder consultation in Q3 of Y3. The research is intended to support this process of institutionalisation and will be published before the programme close.

Outcome 2: WOBs/GREs have increased capacity to build more resilient and inclusive business models and utilise networking opportunities to better access markets. (Strengthening the Supply Side)

There is evidence from SMEs consulted and observed that good progress was made under Outcome 2, at least among those selected WOBs who were intensively trained and therefore more fully engaged by the programme.

By October 2024, the programme reports that 405 WOBs/GREs in Viet Nam and 271 in Thailand had been supported with capacity building initiatives.²⁹ Training was conducted in a process of narrowing selection in both countries. Selection for the first stage WEPs and SD-GRP awareness module covered the 255 (Viet Nam) and 170 (Thailand). In Thailand, criteria for selection at this stage included company registered capital of at least 1 million Baht; one of two participants must be a woman; company interest in gender equity; learning; and new challenges.³⁰ From these 40 were selected in each of 2 batches for the second stage Accelerator Training, using a UN Women and NIA panel of judges, using criteria including having WOB status; interest in gender equity of having a gender equity policy; and having passed the stage one training with 50% attendance³¹. From these batches, 10 were further selected for intensive coaching and entry into the WE RISE Together Awards/ Pitching competition. Selection criteria were completing the previous steps; having a feasible and innovative business proposal and a strong and realistic Business Model Canvas; and having business growth potential.³²

FGDs for this evaluation in both Viet Nam and Thailand – which consisted also of participants from stages 2 and 3 of Thailand's modular training - confirmed that the training did

²⁷ The previous iteration of this policy in 2013 gave incentives for small enterprises and those employing a minimum of 25% women.

²⁸ UN Women Donor Report Feb 2022-Feb 2023 WE RISE Together Y1 Annual Report to Government of Australia.

²⁹ Figures from programme staff in February 2025. The Viet Nam Photobook presenting qualitative results for select WOBs reports that 261 WOBs were reached in Viet Nam; and 558 companies through WEPs / SD-GE training.

³⁰ National Innovation Agency, 'Innovation Based Enterprise – Gender Responsive Procurement, Deliverable 1-Workplan'

³¹ The selection was also open to WOBs which had not done stage 1. These had to provide a letter of intention including how gender responsive perspectives would be incorporated into business operations.

³² National Innovation Agency, 'Innovation Based Enterprise – Gender Responsive Procurement, Deliverable 1-Workplan'

impact their businesses in a variety of ways: from better business planning, improving product quality, improved branding, integrating innovation, upscaling, strengthened internal gender policies, identifying new markets, and strengthened networks among WOBs. A Photobook produced by the programme in Q3 Y3 showcased the journeys of 12 WOBs engaged with the programme. The positive steps made by represented businesses which it highlights are consistent with information from FGDs.³³ FGDs also confirmed ongoing challenges faced by WOBs in accessing larger scale procurement systems, including access to finance for business expansion particularly with regard to cash flows accommodating the payment schedules and technical requirements of larger companies; and difficulties accessing personal connections in senior management to expand their business networks.

Outcome 3: Public and private buying organisations have increased capacity to advocate, promote and implement GRP within their organisations and industries to enable market access for WOBs/GREs. (Strengthening the Demand Side)

Under Outcome 3, while little progress has been made in public sector procurement in both countries, there is a mixed picture among support organisations and private sector buyers. In Viet Nam, key changes *were* made in the public procurement policy (See above under Outcome 1) expanding the types of prioritized businesses to those employing people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, and then, through WRT, supporting preparations for implementation of gender dimension of these. There has also been good progress among support organisations, creating a more enabling environment going forward.

In Thailand, public procurement cannot be substantially addressed without a supportive policy, which could follow once a definition of WOBs is formalised. This would then provide the basis of analysis of the situation of WOBs, and therefore provide grist to advocacy for supportive policy. Although public organisations remained part of the Outcome statement, the focus of the programme was on the private sector, with action to be taken in the public sector when opportunities occurred.

Among private sector organisations in both countries, there

is evidence of steady progress across a broader focus than the GRP specific WRT programme, and of progress among a modest number of organisations on GRP specifically.

In addition to GRP trainings, the programme's main driver under this Outcome has been the WEPs process, taking over this mantle from the WEA project (which had initiated the Asia-Pacific WEPs in 2020)³⁴ – and in particular, attention to Principle 5 – Gender responsive marketplace, which most closely captures the message of GRP.

Good progress has been made in attracting companies as WEPs signatories, which have increased in Viet Nam from about 80 in 2020 to 222 by November 2024; and in Thailand from 19 in 2020³⁵, to 172 in 2024. WEP awards ceremonies in each country in 2024 have highlighted the gender-responsive business practices, including gender responsive procurement, of 35 awardees.³⁶ Regarding WEPs Principle 5 in particular, the development and online hosting of the GRP Assessment Tool has seen 167 companies globally complete the tool, including 6 from Viet Nam and 14 from Thailand. The average score across 71 companies completing the tool from the Asia-Pacific region was 39%, indicating an average status of between 'Beginner' and 'Improver' of four levels. While interest in the tool is clearly an achievement, room for further progress is indicated especially in areas where companies scored lowest: on reporting how much they spend on diverse suppliers; and on maintaining a database of gender-responsive suppliers.

Although the Y2 Annual report indicates that 379 organisations reported strengthened capacities to develop GRP policies and practices, the evidence that this is translating into outcome level results to promote or implement GRP aiming to enable better market access for WOBs is not yet strong

While primary data for this evaluation includes strong information that some private sector companies have increased awareness of and interest in supplier diversity in a general sense, this data pool consisted only of seven organisations. From this small data pool, it is of note that the WOBs engaged as buyer companies were notably more engaged specifically with gender-based supplier diversity than the larger GREs, for whom the priority focus was more on diversity of marginalized groups more broadly and / or moving towards suppliers with broader ESG (Environmental, Social and

³³ UN Women (2025) [WE RISE Together Photobook: Creating equal market opportunities for women by advancing Supplier Diversity through Gender-Responsive Procurement \(SD-GRP\) in Viet Nam](#)

³⁴ UN Women, 'Independent Evaluation Service: Evaluation of the Regional Office Contributions to Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific', (March 2022). <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11575>

³⁵ We Empower Asia Midterm Review Report, 'Midterm Review of the EU-UN Women partnership programme: promoting economic empowerment of women at work in Asia' (February 2021).

³⁶ UN Women ROAP, Informal Narrative Report to Donors, WE RISE Together – Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion (October 2024).

Governance) credentials.

Outcome 4: More equitable market opportunities are created through connecting WOBs/GREs to larger public and private buyers. (Connecting Demand Side and Connect to Supply Side)

Stronger evidence of how far private sector companies are promoting and implementing GRP in their companies is available from results under Outcome 4, focused on creating opportunities for connecting suppliers to buyers in successful business matching. These being results of the causal processes embodied especially in Outcomes 2 and 3, results under Outcome 4 have emerged later in the programme timeline, and could still increase in the programme's closing months beyond the data collected here.

The UN Women informal narrative report in October 2024³⁷ reports significantly stronger progress under this outcome in Viet Nam than in Thailand – likely reflecting stronger progress in Viet Nam under all outcomes except O2, strengthening the supply side. Business matching activities were integrated into training sessions, workshops, and other major events, engaging a reported 80 buyer organisations in Viet Nam, but only 18 in Thailand. In Viet Nam, a reported 110 business connections including for sending samples, quotations and sale negotiations have been reported as a result of these connections, and 19 sales contracts – representing tangibly increased market access for WOBs through GRP – have been signed between WOBs and buyers. In Thailand, concrete evidence of this transition from interest in GRP to tangible sales is lacking. Primary data is consistent with reports that it can take several months to establish these concrete contracts, and therefore that these results might still accrue to the programme in its closing months. In any case, it can be noted that while these matches are concrete evidence of a successful pathway, the numbers involved are small.

Finding 6: Emerging directions

Some emerging directions are evident particularly in Viet Nam - but relevant in both countries - concern positioning WOBs, especially medium enterprises, as both buyers and sellers, and warrant more attention as potential drivers of further scale.

At this 'overall outcome' level of business matching, there is emerging evidence from programme staff observations

and from primary data for the evaluation that targeting (women-owned) medium enterprises as both buyers and sellers could be a catalytic strategy.

The programme had broadly conceptualised buyer and seller organisations as separate categories, and targeted these through separate activities and outcome areas. However, programme stakeholders report that it became increasingly clear that acknowledging the dual buyer/seller status of businesses – especially in the category of women-owned medium enterprises – appeared to be a potentially effective way of building the linkages needed to use GRP to increase market access for (smaller) WOBs. In particular in Viet Nam, but also to some extent among FGD participants in Thailand, it was clear that some medium or established WOBs which had been trained through the programme had developed an interest in working with and maintaining networks with other WOBs.

This model has begun working in supportive ways in the programme in two ways: first it bridges a large gap evident early in the programme between the mainly small businesses offered capacity strengthening and the very large (multinational) business targeted for engagement in WEPS or directly as potential buyers. This gap exposed the challenge for small businesses to have the production capacity to become suppliers for these large businesses. Second, the GRP awareness training awoke interest especially among WOBs in their own suppliers and supply chains, and in some cases an interest in acting in solidarity as women to implement GRP in their own systems. These offer important signposts to future directions for the programme, which have not yet been fully explored or built on in this iteration of the programme.

Second, the programme had a focus on strengthening business networks of WOBs, including events to strengthen business networks among WOBs. However, there is qualitative evidence from FGDs and interviews that these opportunities were appreciated for another dimension that was not designed for by the programme. They expressed that networking opportunities were helpful not only for the strengthened business networks but also for the opportunity they at times offered to explore the influence of their gender in their business lives, and to experience solidarity on this basis. Some WOBs expressed regret that they had not fully followed up this type of solidarity-based connection through the programme. Others expressed interest in more opportunities to connect with WOBs for further sharing and discussion of their gender-based positioning. One

³⁷ Ibid.

aspect of this was to deepen understanding of how this positioning can be integrated in a positive way into their business stories and branding (See also Finding 15).

Finding 7: Partnerships in Viet Nam

EQ4: How effective was the programme partnership approach?

To what extent did this approach contribute to achieving results?

In Viet Nam, partnerships established for the project have struck an effective balance between drawing on established relationships and networks while also cultivating new partnerships for this new approach. Both key partnerships have clear alignment with the focus on supporting strengthening and market access for WOBs, and this common goal has driven promising results.

In Viet Nam the project worked both with traditional partners with whom UN Women has well established relationships, and with new partners to support a new approach with private sector engagement. Both these main partners, the Women's Initiative for Start-ups and Entrepreneurship, and Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council have a central mandate to support women's entrepreneurship – therefore the alignment with WRT has been strong.

These partnerships have brought mutual benefits. The long standing partnership with VWECE enabled the programme to leverage its network of entrepreneurs and attract participation in the capacity strengthening exercises. VWECE were also able to engage bigger companies as potential buyers. Through WISE, the project accessed experience in the training, mentoring and acceleration of WOBs, as well as potentially creating connections with relevant financial resources including loans and investment. While this GRP approach was new to WISE, close working relationships with UN Women staff has meant that they have fully engaged with the approach, and the programme benefited from accessing its community of more than 23000 women entrepreneurs.

Finding 8: Partnerships in Thailand

In Thailand, no organisation was identified with such clear alignment with WRT's objectives. While the partnership

with NIA has seen competent delivery of training and events, it has not yet flourished into a matured resource to deliver an analysis of the role of gender in producing structural disadvantage in business systems. The partnership with OSMEP has also not yet progressed beyond continuing to attempt to advance the establishment of a formal definition of WOBs (ongoing since the WEA programme).

In Thailand, there were no pre-existing local organisations working specifically on women's entrepreneurship or gender issues in business. Nevertheless, it was considered important that the programme process should aim to establish local capacity for GRP. Partnership building for good alignment specifically with GRP has therefore been incremental. A fruitful partnership with National Innovation Agency – in a new partnership for UN Women – aimed to be a strategic combination, bringing together NIA's role as an amplifier of innovation to create a platform for inclusive growth through entrepreneurship and innovation. This partnership has borne competent training design and delivery, and UN Women and NIA have worked synergistically in the creation and management of events for the programme. NIA brought a focus on the central role of innovation in business strengthening, and a willingness to integrate modules on GRP into this regular focus. While there is no doubt that WOBs accessing the course benefited from it, NIA's newness to gender analysis of business systems created a lack of clarity in the project focus. For example, among the first 97 participants, only 66% were in fact WOBs; and of the 41 selected for the Accelerator stage, only 21 or 51% were WOBs. WOB status was not a requirement for course selection – rather, criteria specified an interest in gender equity and that one of two participants from each company should be a woman. It can be inferred that the remaining companies were therefore considered GREs. The network of companies they attracted to the training were also primarily interested in the 'Innovation Business Enterprise' aspect of the training (84% found this the most useful topic; 6% found GRP the most useful topic).³⁸

The partnership with Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) under Outcome 1 for strengthening the ecosystem also met some challenges, and the main objective of institutionalising a definition of WOBs had not been finalized by October 2024. While clear that this definition will pave the way for analysis of the situation of WOBs in their database, (which in principle may or may not

³⁸ National Innovation Agency, Developing trainings/events to promote equal market opportunities for women through gender-

response procurement in the consumer goods and tourism sectors in Thailand: Awareness Training Report.

reveal gendered disadvantage to WOBs) at this stage, confidence in the eventual utility of this definition remains undetermined by the overriding directive of gender neutrality in business operations.

Efficiency

EQ5: To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

How did programme management and monitoring operate between regional and country level implementation, and what were the efficiencies? Have monitoring arrangements enabled timely adjustments and decision making by the programme team?

Finding 9: Programme management

The programme has been competently managed and coordinated following staff gaps at the end of the inception period. It has benefited from good expertise both from its regional positioning, and by drawing on prior experience of related work by country level staff. Good, regular coordination between implementing countries and between the staff team and DFAT have enabled flexibility and adaptation at times, appropriate to a programme introducing new concepts.

Just over 40% of the AUD 2,850,000 budget was allocated to project personnel because as a programme introducing new concepts it required strong staff inputs. Programme staff have been closely involved in several project activities. For example, the project required in-house Technical Assistance to support the introduction of the concept of GRP; and were directly involved in designing the GRP assessment tool and developing training materials.

The project benefitted from efficiencies in retention of expertise from the WEA project and from prior experience within UN Women with the WEPS: the Viet Nam Country Programme Manager had worked on the WEPs since 2015 and the WEE advisor in ROAP had supported the WEA programme which lay much of the conceptual ground work for WRT. There were also benefits to the programme of being defined as a regional programme, as this enabled directly drawing on technical thematic and M&E expertise at ROAP. Training in GRP specifically was also carried out, first by an online training for ROAP staff, which was cascaded to country level staff and then partners.

Apart from a gap of about four months in the Thailand Country Programme Manager role, - a gap filled by drawing on ROAP staff time – the programme has run smoothly. Combining the role of Coordinator and Thailand Programme Manager at this change point enabled the ROAP WEE advisor to move into a more strategic role, and also responded to the fact of WRT as a regional programme with only two participating countries. This has created a demanding dual role, which has been competently managed since it was filled in July 2023. Coordination of the work in both countries has worked well, and both country teams have appreciated the learning and exchange across the two sites, as well as the guidance from ROAP, while noting good scope for enabling more learning exchange across the two programme sites planned for the closing months of the programme.

Despite the somewhat complex management structure, the compact staff team, regular coordination meetings across the two countries, and the regular communication with DFAT has enabled the project to maintain the flexibility appropriate for new work, and to change tack at key moments. For instance, when challenges tracking outcome level results became apparent, an additional approach to collecting qualitative case-study ‘stories’ on programme participants was put into action; when it became clear that more matchmaking events would be beneficial, staff were able to encourage trained WOBs to bring products to display at all programme events and workshops, to create more opportunities for learning, exchange, and sales.

Finding 10: Budgets and Timelines

While budgets have been appropriately allocated, stakeholders agree that the time available for implementation has been short for a conceptually new programme, for which a longer timeframe would have been appropriate. In particular, the time available for maturing business connections into concrete supply opportunities has not been enough for this dimension to reach its full potential.

Stakeholders consulted agreed that budgets have been appropriate for the activities planned. On the other hand, most stakeholders – both programme staff and implementing partners - agreed that the time available for implementation has been short, particularly for a project introducing substantially new concepts.

In effect, the inception phase took most of the first year, with implementing partners engaged first in Q1 and Q2 2023 (i.e. late in Y1 and early in Y2). This left just over 18

months for implementing partners to carry out selections and three layers of training in two batches for 2023 and 2024. While planned activities have been efficiently carried out / completed, the relatively short timeframe has added risk to the capturing of outcome level results, as stakeholders – both WOBs and private sector – noted that maturing business connections into tangible contracts and arrangements takes time. There is also some expectation among some WOBs consulted of a more sustained and tailored business support, which is unlikely to be met now that the project is drawing to a close.

Finding 11: Programme monitoring

Monitoring for outcomes has presented a technical challenge. Despite efforts to resolve these with two programme-led surveys and qualitative data collection to develop programme products, concrete evidence of outcome change remains patchy. Limitations of the surveys were not adequately acknowledged in Y2 reporting. At the output level, post-training feedback surveys were well used.

The programme developed Outcome Surveys, which were circulated widely among stakeholders towards the end of Y2 and again in November-December Y3. These give an overall positive picture from respondents. However, varied, and amongst some stakeholder groups, very low response rates mean they do not constitute comprehensive data for the outcome indicators. For example, in Thailand, in Y2 only 1 buyer organisation substantively responded and in Y3 five buyers, for a response rate of about 9%. In Viet Nam, there were no government stakeholder respondents to the Y2 survey, and 2 to the Y3 survey (response rate approximately 4%); approximately 8% (33) of the WOBs surveyed provided responses. For the Y2 survey, only 11 private sector organisations in Viet Nam and 5 (9%) in Y2 responded.³⁹ At the other end of the scale, in Thailand the Y3 survey attracted a response rate of approximately 53% among WOBs and GREs; and in Viet Nam the 15 respondents in the ‘buyer’ category constituted approximately 48% of those surveyed.

Those stakeholders who did respond to the survey in both years gave largely positive responses about their learning on GRP, and actions taken in response to the project inputs. For example, in Y3, in Thailand 88.4% and in Viet Nam

85.05% of respondents acknowledged having increased knowledge and skills; and 86.8% in Thailand and 84.5% in Viet Nam said they had taken action or planned to take action on GRP practices and policies. However, these figures only give insight into the situations of (relatively small numbers of) ‘engaged’ stakeholders, and cannot reasonably be interpreted as giving a complete picture of results at the outcome level.

While survey fatigue likely plays a role in this variance, it is not possible to distinguish between this and low participant engagement. Reporting in Y2 did not acknowledge this limitation, nor that results could not be taken as representative of all stakeholders.

In response to these difficulties, the programme initiated qualitative data collection to produce ‘Stories’ of the journeys of WOBs, to be developed into Photobooks showcasing the programme.⁴⁰ The Viet Nam presents nuanced and valuable information, but do not resolve the difficulty of populating the indicators under the RBM Framework.

Human Rights and Gender Equality

EQ6: How is gender equality integrated into the programme’s goals, strategies, and activities?

Finding 12: Gender awareness

The programme has a central concern with gender (in)equality and represents a precise process to address a specific aspect of this. WOB stakeholders testify how the programme has strengthened their awareness of the role of gender in the functions of their businesses, both among business leadership and its workforce: this awareness is an important step towards strengthening gender equality.

The programme has a central concern with gender inequalities as manifested in business practices, and is focused on one specific tool – GRP – to address gender-based inequalities in market access for WOBs. Contributing to addressing gender inequality is therefore at the programme’s core. It’s central strategies in this are 1) to offer business strengthening opportunities to select WOBs and GREs to offset some of the disadvantage they may face and to enable them to take opportunities for expanding their market access on a

³⁹ At the time of analysis, the Y3 survey was still open in Viet Nam. Response rate figures are approximate as detailed cross-tabulation of respondent types was not available to the evaluator.

⁴⁰ UN Women (2025) [WE RISE Together Photobook: Creating equal market opportunities for women by advancing Supplier Diversity](#)

[through Gender-Responsive Procurement \(SD-GRP\) in Viet Nam](#). At the time of analysis, the Thailand Photobook was still under development.

more equal bases, and 2) to raise awareness of the role and relevance of gender in the supply systems and chains of larger companies (as well as, through the WEPS, in their labour forces, corporate leadership, and career advancement systems) and stimulate action to rectify systemic gender-based disadvantage.

Finding 13: A solidarity dimension to WOB networks

The programme has facilitated business connections among WOBs. It has also opened up new opportunities to build/strengthen the solidarity-basis of these networks among the many WOBs it has worked with. These were not further developed by the programme. While in Viet Nam, there are existing networks for WOBs, in Thailand this could be an important basis for making stronger progress in establishing SD-GRP.

Participants from WOBs (buyers and sellers) in the FGDs for this evaluation described how participation in the training processes has enabled them to identify and discuss the role of gender for themselves as business leaders and well as for their employees. This includes awareness of the sometime sector-specific gender inequalities they face, and of the omnipresence of the dual roles in economic participation and in unpaid care work of women employees; in their supply chains; and often for themselves.

This awareness among WOB participants runs counter to the widespread perception in Thailand in particular that enterprise is generally a gender neutral activity in which WOBs are not subject to (much) disadvantage, and in which gender neutral approaches to business policy are appropriate.⁴¹ In this way, the programme has begun to create an eco-system of stakeholders amongst whom a more critical analysis of the influence of gender on business practices is more widely available. This eco-system will be important, going forward, as an informed vanguard, once the work at policy level on WOB definition and subsequent gender disaggregated analysis has made more progress.

However, the programme has not yet fully maximised the opportunity of strengthening or formally supporting the development of solidarity-based networks, or a dimension of this in business networks. FGDs suggest there would be

potential momentum generated by enabling solidarity among these WOBs by concretely supporting the establishment of networks of WOBs because this can enable deepening of their analysis of their gendered positions in business environment, and hence support empowerment.

Although the idea of creating networks of WOBs/GRES was present at design stage / in the ToC reconstructed from the design narrative, there were few concrete ways in which this was supported in project activities. FGD participants in Thailand, for example, noted that they had on the whole not maintained contact with the other WOBs they encountered on the programme beyond some business-related contacts. Implementing partners reports also note that the online / hybrid nature of the training worked against establishing enduring connections.⁴² In some cases, B2B networks had been maintained, but FGD participants suggested there was a case for networks for support and empowerment, not simply for business opportunity.

EQ7: How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups including people living with disability?

What specific measures are taken to ensure that these groups equally benefit from programme outcomes? What mechanisms are in place to ensure non-discrimination and transparency in decision-making and accountability to beneficiaries? What are the feedback mechanisms that allow for the continuous improvement of the programme to better serve those left behind?

Finding 14: Approach to marginalized groups

The programme did not aim to engage marginalized groups as this was seen as a risk to proof of concept. Rather, criteria for WOB's participation aimed to ensure that relatively established / mature businesses took part. But governments are interested in support to SMEs from marginalized groups. In addition, many WOBs reached do themselves reach marginalized groups through employees or supply chains, but the programme did not attempt to explore or document this.

The programme did not set out with an explicit approach to the identification and engagement of marginalized groups, because it was perceived as too challenging to work with

⁴¹ Among some stakeholders this outlook was qualified by recognition that while WOBs may be subject to some disadvantage, this is less significant than other types of discrimination in business practices, for example discrimination against LGBTQI – led businesses, and/or ethnic minorities.

⁴² National Innovation Agency, Developing trainings/events to promote equal market opportunities for women through gender-response procurement in the consumer goods and tourism sectors in Thailand: Awareness Training Report; National Innovation Agency, Accelerator Training Report: Consumer goods sector

businesses in very remote areas or ethnic minority led businesses in the three year time frame of the project. It was felt that there was a risk of programme failure if it engaged with groups where business capacity strengthening needs were substantial, and it would be more strategic to establish GRP practices among a stronger group of stakeholders.⁴³ Business criteria for participation on the WOB's capacity building courses (in Thailand) included a minimum capital reserve, as well as legal business registration, in order to try to avoid the risk that trained businesses would still be too small or disadvantaged to meet any potentially enhanced supplier opportunities (e.g. by scaling production).

Some less explicit provisions to reach more marginalized groups have been in place: the programme set out to specifically target some businesses located in urban centres beyond the capitals of Bangkok and Hanoi, some of which were semi-rural or peri-urban (based around Hue, Da Nang in Viet Nam, and Phuket and Chiang Mai in Thailand). Programme registration for the training courses also included questions about disability and LGBTQI status. Although through this it was evident that a small number of businesses include mention of disability, this information has not been systematically gathered as a basis for analysis.

At a policy level, revisions to the procurement law in Viet Nam, in which UN Women collaborated with other organisations (See Finding 5) saw the inclusion of ethnic minority status and disability in the criteria for prioritised treatment.

Finding 15: WOBs and inclusive business

Strengthening the programmes approach to WOBs not just as recipients of support but as catalysts for more inclusive business conduct, including for marginalized groups, in their value chains could be an important step as the programme develops.

This relative lack of integration by the programme of marginalized groups may also represent a missed opportunity to maximise the relevance of the programme. This is because government and other stakeholders in both countries expressed interest to reach the businesses of marginalized groups. For example, in Thailand it was noted by government stakeholders that some private companies have policies for procurement from indigenous groups, and

therefore that this definition is also being addressed beyond the framework of WRT; and that outreach to ethnic groups at scale is sometimes seen as a priority.

Other stakeholders in Thailand noted the relevance of attention to LGBTQI-inclusive businesses as an approach to inclusion. In Viet Nam, partners noted that the supporting law for SMEs does refer to disability, and also that some of the WOBs reached by the programme anecdotally included disadvantaged groups like single mothers and ethnic minority or migrant women. This impression is not backed by disaggregated data in the database on SMES.

Although longer timeframes required to support businesses led by marginalized groups may indeed be necessary, exploring ways in which more systematic awareness of marginalized groups might – by increasing relevance – also benefit the gender specific focus of the project and could therefore be part of the way forward.

Second, there is a recognition among stakeholders consulted that although marginalized groups are not (explicitly) being reached as business owners, many of the WOBs supported do reach marginalized groups as employees or in the supply chains of the WOBs supported. A number of businesses participating in FGDs for this evaluation had farms in remote / mountainous / ethnic minority regions as part of their production; others have specifically designed income earning opportunities for low income families in their business models. The programme introduces the supported WOBs to the WEPs, and therefore to several concepts of gender responsive and responsible business practice. In this, the programme is de facto responding to the recommendation of the Regional WEE evaluation (2022)⁴⁴ to “see women entrepreneurs not only as recipients of support but as catalysts for more inclusive business conduct and providers of opportunities for women, particularly marginalized groups, in their value chains”.

Beyond potential relevant impacts brought about through engagement in the WEPs of supported WOBs, several WOB interview respondents reported that they are already operating on social enterprise principles, or paying attention to social impact in order to fully tell their business stories, or exploring ways to transition to social enterprise status.⁴⁵ More careful elaboration of this dimension of the programme reach, and/or of how to monitor or include these ‘unintended impacts’ as part of programme objectives may

⁴³ Interviews.

⁴⁴ UN Women, ‘Independent Evaluation Service: Evaluation of the Regional Office Contributions to Women’s Economic Empowerment in

Asia and the Pacific’, (March 2022). <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11575>

⁴⁵ Reported in three key informant interviews at observed at the Pitching Day in Bangkok.

contribute to contextualising and maturing the programme

Sustainability

EQ 8: Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

To what extent did the programme build the capacities of government and private sector on gender equality in market access? To what extent have the programme activities strengthened women entrepreneurs' capacity and market opportunities? To what extent have the programme partners taken ownership of the approaches (in support of women market access and gender responsive procurement)?

Finding 16: Sustainability outlook in Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, there are good prospects for sustainability of the gains made: there is strong government ownership of support of SMEs including WOBs; institutions dedicated to women's entrepreneurship to anchor the concept; and a cadre of small and medium enterprises which have been strengthened and oriented. There are nevertheless still gaps – including a need for stronger models / pathways to support SME business growth; and remaining areas for further work with the private sector.

In Viet Nam the programme outcomes have good prospects for sustainability. Ownership by the government is established through revisions to the Public Procurement Law, and by the decree and budget circular regulating supporting policy for SMEs including WOBs. These are key steps through which the government is moving towards implementation of the law. Strong relationships between UN Women and the key institutions for sustainability - the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Agency for Enterprise Development and the Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council - mean that attention to support of SMEs – and WOBs as a group - through procurement is likely to continue. Two manuals developed by the project on WSMEs access to the State's supporting policies and on WSMEs' participation in domestic and international market through e-commerce will continue to be resources for embedding the approach and implementing the SME policy after the close of the project.

Implementing partners in Viet Nam are also committed to the concept on a time frame which goes beyond project dependence. VWEC has a partner agreement with UN Women since 2009, which works symbiotically with VWEC's own

strategy. VWEC has 3000 WOB members in their database, and a mandate to support women's enterprise. The original strategy of connecting these small businesses with big companies was modified somewhat in Y2 to focus on linking WOBs with medium size enterprises, some of which were also WOBs.

Women's Initiative for Start-ups and Entrepreneurship (WISE) has also been a committed partner with a long term mandate to support women's entrepreneurship. Through WRT they have built a database of buyers and potential buyers, and have established connections with a range of new partners in the hospitality sector. Although WISE has a more project-driven positioning than VWEC, there is good likelihood that these assets built through WRT will continue to be relevant to their ongoing work.

Several of the WOBs participating in capacity strengthening – as buyers as well as sellers – are well established businesses which have strong business outlooks and now a perspective on how networks of WOBs can provide mutual support. Survey and qualitative data both suggest that WOBs have benefited from capacity strengthening, in terms of diversifying, strengthening brands, building new networks in the hospitality sector. There remain gaps, with WOBs especially identifying needs for long term mentors; and in training or guidance in investment strategies for business growth.

The project launched a [Women's Entrepreneurship Hub](#) in November 2023. It will serve as a centralized repository for these stories, offering resources and toolkits for entrepreneurs and investors. The hub aims to facilitate connections between UN Women and broader entrepreneurial and buyers and investors communities, continuing after the programme has ended.

For the private sector in Viet Nam, a number of connections have been established with WOBs as suppliers, and several more are under discussion. Stakeholders consulted were confident that these connections would be sustained, but note that more is needed to really embed the concept and approach in private sector working systems. For instance, while supply connections have been made, these are not long established and companies will need ongoing evidence that the WOB suppliers remain competitive in terms of product quality and price. Supporting organisation and WOB respondents reported that in some business sectors, there are other actors who need addressing to fully embed the concept of GRP – for example, in the hotel industry in Viet Nam, managing partners (who have oversight of policy) and investors (who make direct decisions on procurement)

are different – but both are needed to fully on board a GRP based procurement process.

The GRP assessment tool will need to be followed up / further embedded, with a continuing WEPS process as a potential framework for this.

Finding 17: Sustainability outlook in Thailand

In Thailand, the sustainability outlook is quite different than in Viet Nam. With key changes in the ecosystem such as an established definition of WOBs still not achieved, it has been challenging to make a consistent and coherent case for GRP. While capacity strengthening of WOBs has been well implemented, this is unlikely to be sustained in the absence of specific ecosystem changes / policy change. While there has been progress in on-boarding private companies to the WEPs, there are competing interests for business systems attention to environmental sustainability and supporting marginalized groups including LGBTQI, in which attention to gender-based disadvantage in business could easily get lost.

In Thailand, there is as yet a contrastingly weaker outlook for sustainability so far. First, while a detailed course has been developed with NIA, combining concepts supporting GRP with NIA's central business innovation approach, the teaching of the parts of this course related to the WEPs and other parts related to GRP has not yet been transferred to NIA. Meanwhile, there is not yet any supportive policy which would enable NIA to secure funds for the continuance of the course through the government budget. The establishment of such a policy appears to still be some distance away, with the WOB definition, and then full analysis of the situation of SMEs based on that disaggregation, still needed in order to develop the advocacy to motivate a policy recognising the distinct situations of WOBs.

While good progress has been made strengthening selected WOBs and GREs with support particularly in strengthening innovation, this progress has yet to find a context in which GRP is a significant tool for business development. Progress has also been made in embedding the WEPs process – but there has been least uptake of the WEPs Principle 5 which looks at the market place as a site for the strengthening of gender awareness and is therefore the most relevant for GRP. Interviews conducted for this evaluation suggested a stronger interest among private sector stakeholders in supplier diversity on the basis of 1) environmental sustainability specifically or broader ESG models; 2) local business status (as part of 1); and 3) support to marginalised groups

such as LGBTQI and ethnic minorities.

Progress on establishing gender as a legitimate axis of analysis in business systems (beyond a gender balance of employees) has therefore by and large been limited to the WOBs selected for capacity building.

EQ 9: What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

What are the lessons learned from the programme? How can successful features of the programme be replicated and/or scaled up for greater impact? How can challenges be addressed differently in a future phase of the programme or for other programmes of a similar nature?

Finding 18: Lessons Learned

The programme offers several points of learning which point to ways to address key challenges for a future phase. First, the gap in scale between WOBs, which are mainly small and micro enterprises, and the large procurement companies, must be addressed. Second, a pre-existing willingness in Viet Nam to recognise WOBs as a group warranting support has constituted a much more conducive environment there than in Thailand; in the absence of this type of context, without convincing and reliable data it is challenging to make the policy case. Third, while neither country has made significant progress on public procurement, some experience has emerged to inform a stronger push for this in future. These learnings can be used to adjust a Theory of Change for the onward work.

The programme has generated some valuable learning which can inform a future phase of the programme. This includes:

1. Addressing the gap between the majority of WOBs as micro-SMEs and connections to big corporations

Behind the idea of GRP (on the part of large companies and the public sector) sits a latent recognition that gaining larger procurement contracts is one of the routes through which businesses grow – thereby becoming potentially more resilient, and more profitable. For WRT, the business matching process has had to take account of the challenges in bringing small enterprises as suppliers to big companies, because achieving business development and scale to meet the demand of large procurement contracts is complex and takes time and especially finance.

There are different possible approaches to addressing this challenge:

- a) In Viet Nam in particular, the programme has emerging successful experience of focusing on medium sized WOBs, and addressing them both as buyers and as sellers. This has meant building networks of smaller WOBs as suppliers to these medium WOBs, and linking the medium WOBs as suppliers to larger companies. A key driver behind this approach suggested in FGDs – not yet fully explored by the programme – is a sense of solidarity *as* WOBs working with other WOBs – i.e. not simply B2B but WOB2WOB, and suggestions from WOB stakeholders here suggest that strengthening the building of formal and informal solidarity networks among WOBs would be helpful.
- b) Other approaches to bridging this gap could include more intensive work to accelerate the scaling of promising (small) WOBs, for example by broaden the outlook to explicitly link SMEs with the resources and support required for growth, including finance; guidance through mentor arrangements; certification; and more explicit focus on accreditations and skills needed to access international markets.
- c) A third possibility, not fully elaborated by this evaluation research, could be to work more explicitly through business associations / networks / groupings / chambers of commerce / trade associations etc. To act jointly as suppliers to big companies; or to work with middle men to bridge the scale gap.

2. Where the enabling environment is challenging, strong data is an important foundation for advocacy; and strong policy advocacy / working at governance level is a necessary focus.

The enabling environment for this programme has been significantly different in Viet Nam than in Thailand. In Viet Nam there was already a well-established focus on women's enterprise both in government agencies and among CSOS, and work to include provisions for WOBs in policy had already progressed when the programme began.

In Thailand where women's participation in enterprise is treated both legally and culturally with a gender unaware or gender-neutral approach, it has been challenging to get substantive traction on GRP beyond among a few WOBs, and the programme has struggled to build a sustainable approach. In this situation, it is apparent that without strong and country-specific data which clearly demonstrates the dimensions of women's disadvantage in business, there is little appetite to shift the proudly held gender neutral

perception of economic activity. A stronger response to this situation at the level of governance may have enabled more progress.

3. Nascent learning on public procurement; further steps will take a new level of engagement

The programme made little progress in integrating GRP into public procurement process in either country, although some key steps in Viet Nam are in place. Nevertheless, this itself offers learning for a future process focused here. First, extending GRP into public procurement constitutes another, quite different type of process. It would involve engaging a number of government departments including Public Procurement Agencies, which have not yet been engaged on the project, and would need to select feasible sectors relevant to specific ministries.

As in the private sector work, there would be a need to address the scale gap between SMEs and government as buyer. If this were done by focusing on medium and larger WOBs, then pilot sectors would need to be identified which are relevant to public procurement needs and in which there a reasonable sample of medium to large WOBs operating.

4. Additions to the Theory of Change

As suggested by the pink circles added to the reconstructed ToC in Annex 4, the WRT experience reveals some gaps or unaddressed assumptions in the original causal logic.

First, some details of support required to strengthen the eco system are clear. For instance, there is a need for an agreed definition of WOBs, and then data about this group to support policy advocacy. The potentially long process for procurement policy change may require technical support at key moments, and – in line with Finding 2, potentially more synergistic work across the UN with agencies focused on responsible business more broadly.

On the supply side among WOBs and GREs, there may be an initial need for gender awareness training, especially where the business ecosystem is historically gender unaware. An important possible outcome of gender training and inclusive business models training is that they are motivated to use GRP in their own supply network and that they are able to do so through business matching for their own procurement. This motivation could be enhanced by the facilitation not simply of WOB networks, as in the original ToC, but of combined business and solidarity based exchange and networks, which could be more formally created through future programmes.

V. Conclusions

Viet Nam

Based on Findings 3, 5, 16, 18

WRT has laid good foundations in Viet Nam for building on the GRP approach in the context of a more favourable pre-existing eco-system and advances made at the policy and policy support level. With a fairly broad ecosystem of sellers and buyers now in place, and concrete successes in terms of business matching, the country context is in a good position for scaling the work. Opportunities for scale include strengthening the focus on public sector procurement, including exploring the details of government procurement processes and the implications of these for different business sectors, with a focus on sectors in which WOBs are more commonly engaged, and on those in which the programme has already worked. At the same time, further private sector engagement can likely be amplified by exploring the linkages between GRP and broader ESG business priorities, and by establishing partnerships in which these linkages can establish GRP as an essential step towards inclusive growth. Exploring a differentiated GRP model in which WOBs are positioned both as buyers and sellers; and connected via networks which include both business and solidarity-building dimensions, also has good prospects in Viet Nam.

Thailand

Based on Findings 3, 4, 5, 8, 14, 17, 18

In Thailand, the programme has struggled to create that ecosystem foundation at policy and institutional level, notwithstanding some notable progress in establishing a sense of the relevance of gender among a cohort of WOBs/GREs – and enthusiasm to further this awareness as networked WOBs. Among larger private sector actors – potential buyers – it has made some progress among a modest sized group, but this progress has been weakened by their priority interests in a broader framework of diversity alongside concerns about business environmental sustainability. These are in effect positioned as competing interests. Further work in Thailand will depend on a twin-track strategy. This would involve:

- 1) Establishing strong evidence, including via sex-disaggregated business registers, of both the contribution of WOBs to the Thai economy, and the disadvantage they face in relation to procurement as well as other dimensions of entrepreneurship. Registers also need to be accessible to buyers seeking to diversify their supplier base. This disaggregation has been an important aim of the current programme which has not yet borne fruit. The strategy taken was to establish this analysis in the OSMEP, but no gender disaggregation has yet been undertaken there. Alternative strategies to establish this evidence, such as undertaking independent gender comparative research, could be considered.
 - 2) Seeking closer alignment with Thai prioritization of other marginalised groups in the programme's functioning. This would involve a stronger articulation of how the programme addresses the LNOB principle. This would therefore mean tightening an intersectional gender analysis within analysis of the disadvantages faced SMEs with high representation of or leadership by other marginalized groups. It may also involve connecting more explicitly to existing government programmes in Thailand (and Viet Nam) such as One Tambon One Product (OTOP) (and One Commune One Product in Viet Nam).
-

Coherence

Based on Findings 2, (14 and 15)

For both of these future challenges, working in partnership with other agencies, including other UN agencies, is highly likely to be an essential part of scaling up. There is undoubtedly substantial common ground across UN Agencies in their engagement with supporting governments to strengthen SMES, and in some cases in working with the ecosystem to create gender

responsive business regulation. There may indeed during this introductory phase for GRP have been a case for operating separately from this complex network of common and sometimes competing agendas in order to carve a niche for the approach. But going forward, and especially when moving to scale, it will be essential to leverage the common ground with other agencies' work in order to establish GRP as a legitimate and impactful approach in the context of a broad conception of responsible business and decent work.

Establishing GRP with strong programme evidence

Based on Findings 5, 6, 11, 18

As the programme evolves into a second iteration, it is important to establish methods to reliably capture programme results. This will be a key part of building the evidence for why a GRP is an important and effective addition to other WEE tools, as well as identifying and responding to potential new directions or dimensions. Qualitative evidence can play a strong role in this, as testified by FGD evidence for this evaluation and the programme's production of Photobooks showcasing the journeys of WOBs. These methods could be introduced more systematically / consistently in monitoring plans.

At the same time, the challenge of generating reliable quantitative data to support strong RBM-based decision making will also need to be met. Strengthening this dimension could take a variety or a combination of directions, including identifying indicators with pre-existing reliable data sources; strengthening how surveys are distributed to maximise response rates (e.g. by phone/ SMS/ face-to-face and follow up protocols); and strengthening analysis of limitations for a more reliable picture.

VI. Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to inform the future of the approach as it develops and finalizes design for a second phase. These have been discussed with the Evaluation Reference Group and programme staff at the preliminary findings presentation for this evaluation, and further developed here on the basis of this discussion.

Strengthen external coherence

Based on Finding 2 and Finding 15; Conclusion 3

- *Relevant to: ROAP programme staff*
 - *Recommended timeline: during the next SN.*
 - *Medium urgency, medium difficulty, high impact*
1. In the journey towards scale, connect more deeply with the work of UN agencies ⁴⁶working on different dimensions of responsible business with SMEs and the wider private sector, to communicate and integrate GRP as a specific and essential dimension of inclusive growth.
 2. Consider amplifying the GRP agenda through UN agencies' past or current work with women's entrepreneurship, and other 'sister' agendas such as responsible business.
 3. In this dialogue, it will be essential to establish linkages between 'green' business approaches and gender responsive business and, for example, to mine and integrate ESCAP's experience in catalysing women's entrepreneurship at a governance level.
 4. Where a future project is designed to consolidate and sustain the WEPs work, with its broader agenda than GRP specifically, consider amplifying broader WEPs messaging by integrating key compatible concepts from key UN

⁴⁶ The evaluation did not investigate coherence with the work of other development agencies. It is likely that these would also need to be considered.

partners – such as family friendly workplaces; and consider drawing on ILO’s experience with the role of worker organisations in advancing WEP’s principles such as Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence, and Enterprise Development more generally.

5. It will likely also be essential to seek to connect with very practical and implementation focused, organizations, including wider development organisations, with larger formalized networks and members to drive scale and tangible impact.

Strengthen the approach to governance and consider concentrating efforts towards progress in government procurement on Viet Nam as a potential learning space.

Based on Findings 3, 16, 18; Conclusions 1 and 2.

- *Relevant to: ROAP programme staff; Viet Nam CO*
 - *Recommended timeline: during new programme design/ inception phase*
 - *High urgency, medium difficulty, high impact*
1. Draw lessons from the experience in Thailand to strengthen the programme approach at governance / policy level, especially where the initial conditions for addressing WOBs as a category are not favourable.
 2. In future work in countries where the GRP concept is (relatively) new, establish project time frames which accommodate policy level advances.
 3. In Viet Nam, consider strengthening the approach at this level in order to advance work on government procurement, drawing on the opportunity here to create examples of progress and generate data for a more widespread business case on public procurement.

Establish a strengthened approach to LNOB in GRP

Based on Findings 14, 15; Conclusion 2

- *Relevant to: UN Women ROAP WEE staff; Viet Nam and Thailand COs*
- *Recommended timeline: during new programme design/ inception phase and during implementation*
- *High urgency, medium difficulty, high impact*

Establish an agreed and explicit approach to LNOB in the programme.

1. Target and document progress of a sample of WOBs businesses led by marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities, or businesses in remote areas.
2. Integrate more strongly a WEPs approach into the work with WOBs, ensuring to include and target WOBs who work with marginalized groups as employees or in their supply chains.
3. Include progress on these as part of the programme objectives and results.
4. Leverage the broad interest in supplier diversity with regard to LGBTQI, indigenous groups, and environmental sustainability as sites in which to integrate GRP with a strong gender analysis.
5. Articulate and promote an intersectional approach to these dimensions of supplier diversity, establishing an awareness of the differential situation of women entrepreneurs (and employees) within the category of indigenous groups etc.
6. Develop a strong articulation of the intersections of gender responsive approaches with environmental sustainable business principles.

Differentiate the GRP model regarding size and roles of WOBs

Based on Findings 6, 13, 18; Conclusion 4

- *Relevant to: UN Women ROAP WEE staff; Viet Nam and Thailand COs*
 - *Recommended timeline: during new programme design/ inception phase*
 - *High urgency, low difficulty, high impact*
1. Integrate an understanding of the different capacities and opportunities of different types of WOBs into the model.
 2. Specifically, strengthen and design for the positioning of relatively well established, medium sized SMEs in the approach by addressing them as buyers and sellers.
 3. Adapt training / capacity building / awareness exercises so that these address:
 - The constraints faced by medium WOBs (such as in accessing finance, buyer networks, international markets)
 - The opportunities they present for establishing gender responsive mechanisms in their own business approaches by, including in their suppliers, by strengthening and further supporting their engagement in the WEPs.
 - Strengthening networks between medium WOBs and with smaller WOBs with explicit intention of creating WOB2WOB supply linkages.

Clearly include a solidarity dimension in the process of building business networks with WOBs.

Based on Findings 6, 13, 18; Conclusion 1

- *Relevant to: UN Women programme staff; Viet Nam and Thailand COs; Implementing partners*
 - *Recommended timeline: during new programme design/ inception phase and during implementation*
 - *High urgency, low difficulty, high impact*
1. Create or strengthening networks beyond business contacts to include opportunities for building solidarity and empowerment as WOBs focused on gender equality. This might include opportunities for exploration of their common or contrasting situations as WOBs, as well as the approaches with which they have overcome gender-based disadvantages faced.
 2. Include measurements/indicators to track the progress and results of building in this solidarity dimensions in communities of WOBs.

Strengthen the advocacy base for GRP

Based on Findings 5, 6, 11, 18; Conclusion 4

- *Relevant to: UN Women ROAP staff; M&E staff*
 - *Recommended timeline: immediate and throughout a future programme*
 - *High urgency, medium difficulty, high impact*
1. Identify and document success stories from larger corporations and medium enterprises which have been engaged in the programme as sellers and have made supplier changes as a result of business matching exercises.

2. Focus on exploring the consequences of diversifying their suppliers – has this benefitted the business in terms of product quality and price; overall profitability; branding and marketing; and/or in ethical dimensions?
3. Develop this learning into products as a basis for advocacy among future cohorts of potential private sector buyers.
4. Continue to facilitate the development, disaggregation of and analysis of official data on SMEs and WOBs to support the case for GRP. Ensure this information is publicly accessible to facilitate connections with suppliers for buyers seeking to diversify their supply chains.
5. Strengthen programme outcome monitoring and reporting to build a reliable picture of progress. Include both quantitative and qualitative approaches in future M&E design, and innovate in the distribution of surveys.

Establish and document end of programme learning opportunities for current programme participants to inform future work.

Based on Finding 6. 18; Conclusion 4

- *Relevant to: ROAP programme staff; CO staff; M&E staff; implementing partners; beneficiaries*
 - *Recommended timeline: immediate (before current programme end)*
 - *High urgency, low difficulty, high impact*
1. Establish cross-country learning opportunities for programme stakeholders at each level, including WOBs as sellers, WOBs and GRES as buyers, implementing partners and government stakeholders.
 2. Learning opportunities planned for the final weeks of the programme could be augmented by consolidated learning sessions at regional level leveraging the regional platforms for stronger cross-fertilization of learnings from evaluations.
 3. In these exercises, it will be important to bear in mind the specificities of different types of business sectors as well as their common experiences.

Annex 1: Documents Reviewed

- ADB and UN Women, 2022, Gender-Responsive Procurement in Asia and The Pacific - An Opportunity for an Equitable Economic Future
- National Innovation Agency, UN Women Project Proposal 2023-24
- National Innovation Agency, 'Innovation Based Enterprise – Gender Responsive Procurement, Deliverable 1-Workplan'
- National Innovation Agency, Developing trainings/events to promote equal market opportunities for women through gender-response procurement in the consumer goods and tourism sectors in Thailand: Awareness Training Report
- National Innovation Agency, Accelerator Training Report: Consumer goods sector
- IES Evaluation of UN Women 'Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific through Private Sector Engagement', August 2022
- IES Evaluation of UN Women June 2022, 'Women's Economic Empowerment through Private Sector Engagement in Asia and the Pacific'
- IES Preliminary Findings, 'Evaluation of UN Women's Contributions to Women's Economic Empowerment through Private Sector Engagement in Asia and the Pacific', May 2022
- Sal Forest Final Report Feb 2023, 'A Rapid Assessment to Inform the Development of Gender-Repsonsive Procurement (GRP) Policies and Programming', submitted to UN Women,
- UN Women Action Brief: Promoting Gender Inclusive Global Supply Chains Through Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP) and Supplier Diversity, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- UN Women 2023, Summary Report on Rapid Assessment to Inform the Development of Gender Responsive Procurement Policies and Programming in Viet Nam.
- UN Women 2024, WE RISE Together - Creating equal market opportunities for women by advancing Supplier Diversity through Gender-Responsive Procurement (SD-GRP) in Viet Nam, Photobook.
- UN Women Donor Report 2023-24, 'WRT: Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion', Second Annual Report to the Government of Australia
- UN Women ROAP, 1st Informal Narrative Report to Donors, WE RISE Together – Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion (October 2022).
- UN Women ROAP, 2nd Informal Narrative Report to Donors, WE RISE Together – Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion (October 2023).
- UN Women ROAP, Informal Narrative Report to Donors, WE RISE Together – Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong subregion (October 2024).
- UN Women In Brief 'Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific through Private Sector Engagement'
- UN Women M&E Framework, WRT Annex A: Results Framework
- UN Women 2022, 'Independent Evaluation Service: Evaluation of the Regional Office Contributions to Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific', March
- UN Women ROAP – Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment through private sector engagement in Asia and the Pacific – Annexes, Volume 1
- UN Women ROAP – Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment through private sector engagement in Asia and the Pacific – Annexes, Volume 2
- UN Women Progress Report Mar 2022 – Aug 2022, 'WRT: Advancing gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong

sub region’,

UN Women Donor Report Feb 2022-Feb 2023 WE RISE Together Y1 Annual Report to Government of Australia.

UN Women Programme Document Mar 2022 – Feb 2025, WRT: Advancing Gender Responsive Procurement in the Mekong Subregion,

UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Strategic Note 2023-2025 Narrative report.

UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Strategic Note 2023-2025 OEE report 2023.

UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Strategic Note 2023-2025 Theory of Change.

UN Women Summary Report Mar 2023, ‘A Rapid Assessment to Inform the Development of Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP) Policies and Programming in Viet Nam’,

UN Women WE RISE Together March 2023-February 2024, ‘Compliance Checker for Progress Reporting’

UN Women WE RISE Together, ‘Year 2 Budget and Financial Update’, Annex E

UN Women WE RISE Together, ‘Year 2 Scorecard’, Annex A: Results Framework

UN Women, ‘Budget and Financial Update June 2023’, Annex F

UN Women, ‘Third-party cost-sharing arrangement between the Government of Australia and the UN entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women’, WRT: Advancing Gender-responsive procurement in the Mekong Subregion

United Nations, Thailand, 2022, ‘United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – Thailand 2022-2026 (Draft).

We Empower Asia Inception Report Dec 2019, ‘Gender Equality Means Good Business’

We Empower Asia Midterm Review Report Feb 2021, ‘Midterm Review of the EU-UN Women partnership programme: promoting economic empowerment of women at work in Asia’

WE RISE Together 1st Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, November 2022

WE RISE Together 2nd Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, June 2023

WE RISE Together 3rd Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, June 2024

Annex 2: Stakeholders Consulted

Summary: 47 stakeholders consulted (43 women, 4 men)

By tools

- 3 x FGDs with 16 women
- 22 x KIs with 31 stakeholders (27 women; 4 men)

By Stakeholder group

- UN Women ROAP, Viet Nam and Thailand: 11 (10 women, 1 man)
- Government stakeholders: 3 women
- Implementing Partners: 5 women
- WOBs/ GREs: 16 (15 women, 1 man)
- Private Sector (buyers / potential buyers): 7 (6 women, 1 man)
- Other UN: 5 (4 women, 1 man)

	Organisation	Designation	Method – INT / FGD	Gender	
1.	UN Women Viet Nam	Country Representative	INT	F	
2.	Ministry of Planning and Investment, Agency for Enterprise Development, Viet Nam	Deputy Director, SME Development Division	INT	F	
3.	Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs' Council	Vice Chairwoman in charge, Deputy Director Assistant	INT	FF	
4.	Women's Initiative for Start-ups and Entrepreneurship (WISE)	Programme Director Programme Officer	INT	FF	
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gia Trinh bakery • Mỹ Đức Embroidery and Garment company • Secoin Construction Material Co • Entaid international group co. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Chairperson and CEO • General Director • Director 	FGD	FFFF	
6.	DaNang WOB	Director	INT	F	
7.	Thi Thao LLC Co Cay Hoa La Nguyen Khoi	Director Director Founder	FGD	FFF	
8.	UN Women Viet Nam	Programme Manager WRT	INT	F	
9.	Ngoc Bich Handicraft	Co-founders Assistant	INT	FFF	
10.	UN Women ROAP	WRT Regional Coordinator	INT	F	
11.	UN Women ROAP	UN Women WEE Lead WRT Project team, M&E Officer	INT	FF	
12.	National Innovation Agency (NIA), Thailand	Innovation Counsellors - Innovative Entrepreneurship Development Department	INT	FF	
13.	Novartis	Country Communications & Engagement Head	INT	F	
14.	Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP)	Chief of Multilateral Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Department	INT (online)	F	

15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodganic • Souldbound • Future Bug Corporation • Inno Green Tech • Nara Global • YaiSiRi 	Directors	FGD (hybrid)	FFFFFF	
16.	Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)	Senior Researcher	INT (online)	F	
17.	The Salil Hotel Riverside Bangkok	CEO Director of Marketing Communication	INT	FF	
18.	Onyx-Hospitality (Amari Hotel - Oriental Residency)	Director, Environmental, Social and Governance	INT		M
19.	S&N Food and Beverage group	CEO Chief Marketing Officer Supply Chain and product development	INT	FF	M
20.	UN Women ROAP UN Women Thailand	Deputy Regional Director OIC of UN Women Asia in the Pacific Thailand Country Coordinator	INT	F	M
21.	UN Resident Coordinator's Office	Partnership and Development Finance Officer	INT	F	
22.	Department of Foreign Affairs	First Secretary - Development	INT (online)	F	
23.	UNICEF Thailand	Public Private Partnerships and Advocacy Specialist Corporate Alliances Specialist	INT (online)	F	M
24.	UNDP Thailand	GESI advisor	INT (online)	F	
25.	ESCAP	Chief of Gender Section	INT (online)	F	

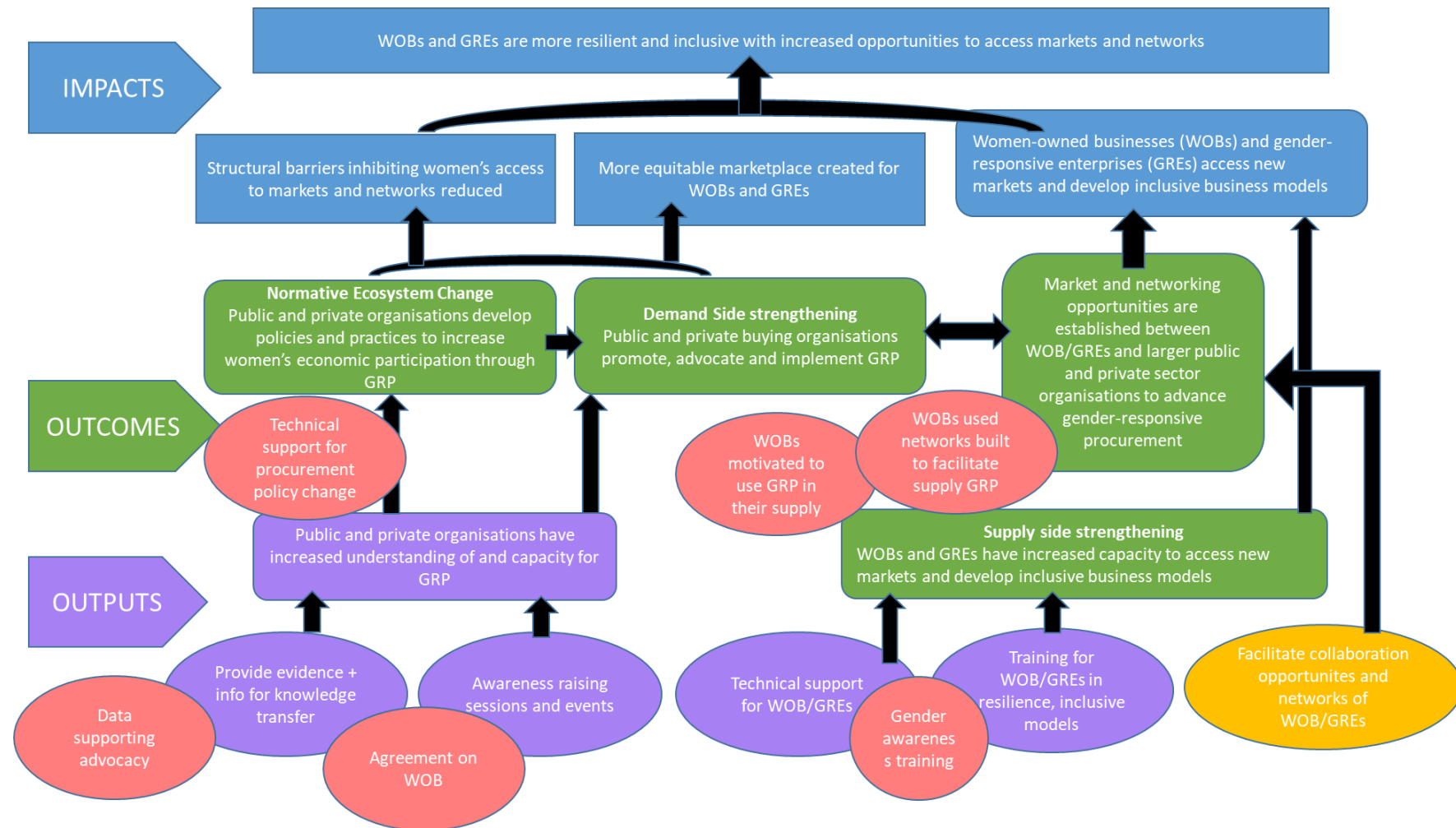
Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

						KIs					FGDs			Case Study
	Evaluation Question	Sub Question	Document Review	M&E data	Participant Observation	UN Women staff	Implementing partners	Government	Private sector buyers	WOBs/GREs	Buyer companies	WOBs	Government Agencies	
Coherence														
1	To what extent is the programme coherent with the efforts of UN Women and the broader UN System ? Especially regarding:		ü			ü								
		Women's Economic Empowerment unit strategy in Asia and the Pacific	ü			ü								
		Viet Nam Country Office Strategy and the Regional Office Strategic Note	ü			ü								
		Other UN WEE programming												
	Indicators	Programme is aligned integrated with RO WEE strategy and Viet Nam CO SN; Programme is complementary to other programmes under the WEE strategy and the Viet Nam CO SN; Programme is complementary to other UN programmes relevant to WEE; Initiatives in WEE identify areas for collaboration or synergies. Evidence of partners coordinating to avoid duplication of work on similar areas												
Relevance														
2	To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?													
		National government	ü	ü	ü		ü	ü					ü	
		Private sector	ü	ü	ü		ü		ü		ü			
		Buying organization	ü	ü	ü		ü	ü	ü		ü		ü	
		Women entrepreneurs	ü	ü	ü		ü			ü		ü		
	Indicators	Share of stakeholders (across stakeholder type) consulted who identify GRP and the WEPs as key for advancing WEE												
Effectiveness:														
3	What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme contribute to?		ü	ü		ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
		What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of results?					ü		ü	ü	ü	ü		ü

		What are the success factors of the programme?	ü				ü	ü		ü				ü
	Indicators	Progress against output and outcome indicators recorded in Annual reports Progress against outcomes indicated by M&E survey Extent to which causal pathways can be reasonably traced from outputs to outcomes, confirming proposed ToC pathways Stakeholders recognize UN Women contributions to key results/achievements Extent to which different groups of rights holder-beneficiaries verify intended changes have taken place Evidence of challenges and unexpected causal pathways Extent to which stakeholders confirm key activities have led to desired changes												
4	How effective was the programme partnership approach?					ü	ü	ü					ü	ü
		To what extent did this approach contribute to achieving results?				ü	ü	ü					ü	ü
	Indicators	Extent to which partners validate the partnership process Extent to which rights holder beneficiaries verify the effectiveness of partners' activities												
Efficiency:														
5	To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?					ü	ü							
		How did programme management and monitoring operate between regional and country level implementation, and what were the efficiencies?		ü		ü	ü							
	Indicators	Extent to which the programme was implemented according to a planned timeline Extent to which UN Women staff and implementing partners agree that budgets were appropriate Extent to which stakeholders and UN Women staff agree that expertise has been sufficient and programme staff feel supported by upstream advice Extent to which programme staff identify over work as a challenge to implementation												
Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB):														
6	How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?		ü											
	Indicators	Quality of situation analysis on GE in the programme contexts and in GRP specifically Other priorities for their progress identified by rights holder beneficiaries												
7	How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including people living with disability?			ü										
		What specific measures are taken to ensure that these groups equally benefit from programme outcomes	ü			ü	ü	ü		ü		ü	ü	
		What mechanisms are in place to ensure non-discrimination and transparency in decision-making and accountability to beneficiaries?	ü			ü	ü							

[illegible]

Annex 4: Reconstructed Theory of Change with learning points (red ovals)



Annex 5: Data Collection Tools

UN Staff (UN Women and UNRC)– KII Question Guides Select 12 priority questions for each interview

Date:

Location:

Name and Position:

Protocol to be used for all KIIs

Introduce yourself – your name, who you work for, explain that you are an independent evaluator contracted to UN Women ROAP for this evaluation.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the purpose of this meeting:

The WE RISE Together programme started in 2022 and is working in Thailand and Viet Nam. The purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as the inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It is intended to generate learning about the GRP approach that will also be relevant to other programmes.

The purpose of this meeting is to for us to hear your perspectives on the programme. This is one of about 30 interviews and focus group discussions that will form the data for the evaluation, along with an indepth review of programme documents.

We have requested an hour of your time for this meeting. Is now still a good time for you, and is an hour still ok with you? We can change or adjust if needed.

This meeting is part of our data collection phase. The final report will be completed by January 2025.

Describe privacy and confidentiality for participation:

We want to reassure you that anything you say will not be attributed to you personally. This interview and the evaluation will respect your privacy.

Our notes of this and other interviews are kept securely and will be confidential to the independent consultant.

I keep notes for six months after the evaluation, but we will then delete them.

Provide contact information:

You can contact me at any time at milward.bose@gmail.com if you want to share any documents with me, if you want to add any information, or if you change your mind and want to withdraw anything you said, or withdraw from the process entirely.

Are you happy to proceed with the interview on this basis? (Get verbal consent before proceeding).

1. What is your role and what has been your engagement in the WRT programme?

Coherence EQ1. To what extent is the programme coherent with the efforts of UN system?

1. How does the programme align with or fit with the ROAP WEE strategy? Are there any areas in which this programme is distinct from the Strategy?
2. How does the programme fit with the ROAP strategic note? What contribution is WRT making to the results of the Strategic Note? What proportion of the work under WEE does the programme represent?
3. How does the programme align with the Thailand and Viet Nam UNSDCF? How well are the timeframes aligned?
4. How does the programme align with the Viet Nam CO's strategic note? What proportion of the work under the WEE pillar does it represent?
5. What other significant work related to WEE is taking place across the UN Regional Office currently with implementation in Thailand / Viet Nam? What are the opportunities for [further] synergiseing or coordination of this work?
6. What are the challenges to [further] coordination of this work?

7. To what extent is joint programming or coordination a priority across ROAP?
8. Apart from WRT, what other implementation is taking place in Thailand? Is any other work under WEE being implemented?

Relevance EQ2. To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?

9. How have the needs of stakeholders been identified and prioritised for the programme? What are the challenges in establishing the relevance of GRP among the different stakeholders? What other stakeholder priorities does the programme compete with?

Effectiveness: EQ 3 What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce?

10. What results or achievements has the programme contributed to? What have been the most significant achievements / changes brought about by the programme so far? Have there been any results of the programme that were not intended or predicted? Have there been any negative effects of the programme's work, in your opinion?
11. In your opinion, for the achievements of the programme, what were the most important activities that enabled this change to happen?
12. What have been the enabling factors and challenges for achieving programme results? What have the most important blockages been to progress?

EQ 4 How effective was the programme partnership approach?

13. What have been the central partnerships for WRT? How have these partnerships worked to support progress / results in GRP? What are the important features/ factors of the partnerships that support results?
14. Are there any features or factors of the partnerships that have been challenging? Or that have hampered achievements? What would you change about the approach to partnerships for a future iteration of the programme?

Efficiency: EQ 5 To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

15. Please describe how well the programme management worked. What was the relationship between ROAP and the country level work in Thailand? And in Viet Nam? What roles did the RO play? What were the responsibilities of the country level staff?
16. What were the challenges of these management arrangements? What were the benefits? What would you change about these arrangements for any future programme?
17. Has the time available to the project been used efficiently? Has it been enough time to achieve results?
18. How has the monitoring of the project worked? Have you been able to collect the information you need to make ongoing decisions? What have been the challenges with monitoring?
19. Were the activities appropriately budgeted? Which were the areas in which spend was slow? What would you change about budget allocation in a future programme?
20. How is/was expertise spread across the team? Who played which technical / specialist roles? What technical support was available to the programme / from where? Were there gaps in expertise (how could these be filled in a future programme?)
21. What, if anything, has the programme contributed to recognition of gender [in]equality as a (priority) issue in the region?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB): EQ 6. How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

22. Does the programme respond in the best way possible to issues of gender [in]equality in procurement practices / the economic environment? What other strategies or activities might have addressed gender inequalities more effectively?

EQ 7 How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups?

23. What steps has the programme taken to identify how marginalized groups could benefit from GRP / the programme? How far has it been successful in including marginalized groups in access to the project's benefits?
24. What have been the challenges in including marginalized groups in the programme? What have been the blockages to prioritizing access to specific groups (e.g people with disabilities)?
25. What management arrangements are in place to establish accountability and transparency about the programme stakeholders and beneficiaries? What has been done to help the programme process be informed by LNOB?

Sustainability

EQ8 Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

26. In your perspective, how far has the programme succeeded in building the capacities of government and the private sector for GRP?
27. To what extent are relevant government agencies and private sector companies on board with GRP? / Likely to implement GRP practices once the programme is over?
28. What achievements of the programme are likely or unlikely to be continued by partners and stakeholders after the close of the programme?
29. How far has the programme strengthened WOB's capacity to secure sustained market opportunities?
30. What would it take for national / regional partners to scale the programme? How might this be supported for scaling up to take place?

EQ 9 What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

31. What would you do differently if you implemented the programme from the beginning again? What are the important things you have learned about how to achieve this programme's goals?
32. What would you change about the programme for a second phase / for more work towards similar objectives? Which features or parts of the programme should remain the same?
33. How could the programme be scaled up for greater impact?
34. What challenges need to be addressed in the design of another phase of the programme / any similar programme?

Support Organisations – Government or CSO/IP - Question Guides

Date:

Location:

Name and Position:

Protocol to be used for all KIIs

Introduce yourself – your name, who you work for, explain that you are an independent evaluator contracted to UN Women ROAP for this evaluation.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the purpose of this meeting:

The WE RISE Together programme started in 2022 and is working in Thailand and Viet Nam. The purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as the inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It is intended to generate learning about the GRP approach that will also be relevant to other programmes.

The purpose of this meeting is to for us to hear your perspectives on the programme. This is one of about 30 interviews and focus group discussions that will form the data for the evaluation, along with an indepth review of programme documents.

We have requested an hour of your time for this meeting. Is now still a good time for you, and is an hour still ok with you? We can change or adjust if needed.

This meeting is part of our data collection phase. The final report will be completed by January 2025.

Describe privacy and confidentiality for participation:

We want to reassure you that anything you say will not be attributed to you personally. This interview and the evaluation will respect your privacy.

Our notes of this and other interviews are kept securely and will be confidential to the independent consultant.

I keep notes for six months after the evaluation, but we will then delete them.

Provide contact information:

You can contact me at any time at milward.bose@gmail.com if you want to share any documents with me, if you want to add any information, or if you change your mind and want to withdraw anything you said, or withdraw from the process entirely.

Are you happy to proceed with the interview on this basis? (Get verbal consent before proceeding).

2. What is your role and what has been your engagement in the WRT programme?

Relevance : EQ2. To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?

1. From the perspective of your department/agency, how important are the objectives of the WRT programme. Is it a priority for you to establish GRP? What do you see as the benefits of GRP for your agency / department?
2. What other priorities (apart from gender responsiveness) do you think influence government and private companies' decisions about procurement?

Effectiveness: EQ 3 What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce?

3. How far have the capacities of WOBs been enhanced by the programme? How far has awareness of sellers about GRP been raised by the programme? What have been the most significant achievements / changes brought about by the programme so far? Have there been any results of the programme that were not intended

- or predicted? Have there been any negative effects of the programme's work, in your opinion?
4. In your opinion, for the achievements of the programme, what were the most important activities that enabled this change to happen?
 5. What have been the enabling factors and challenges for achieving programme results? What have the most important blockages been to progress?
 6. What, if anything, has the programme contributed to recognition of gender [in]equality as a (priority) issue in the region?

EQ 4 How effective was the programme partnership approach? To what extent did this approach contribute to achieving results?

7. Please describe your partnership with WRT? How has this partnership worked to support progress / results in GRP? What are the important features/ factors of the partnership that support results? Are there any features or factors of the partnership that have been challenging? Or that have hampered achievements?

Efficiency: EQ 5 To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

8. From your perspectives, how well have the management arrangements worked for the programme? Were you able to get the support you needed for the partnership? What technical support was available to the programme / from where? Were there gaps in expertise (how could these be filled in a future programme?)
9. What would you change about how the partnership was managed in any future programme?
10. Were the activities appropriately budgeted? What would you change about budget allocation in a future programme?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB): EQ 6. How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

11. Does the programme respond in the best way possible to issues of gender [in]equality in procurement practices / the economic environment? What other strategies or activities might have addressed gender inequalities more effectively?

EQ 7 How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups?

12. What steps has the programme / your organisation taken to identify how marginalized groups could benefit from GRP / the programme? How far has it been successful in including marginalized groups in access to the project's benefits? What more could have been done?

Sustainability EQ8 Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

13. In your perspective, how far has the programme succeeded in building the capacities of government and the private sector for GRP?
14. To what extent are relevant government agencies and private sector companies on board with GRP? / Likely to implement GRP practices once the programme is over?
15. What achievements of the programme are likely or unlikely to be continued by partners and stakeholders after the close of the programme?
16. How far has the programme strengthened WOB's capacity to secure sustained market opportunities?
17. What would it take for national / regional partners to scale the programme? How might this be supported for scaling up to take place?

EQ 9 What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

18. What are the important things you have learned about how to achieve this programme's goals?

19. What would you change about the programme for a second phase / for more work towards similar objectives?
Which features or parts of the programme should remain the same?
20. How could the programme be scaled up for greater impact?
21. What challenges need to be addressed in the design of another phase of the programme / any similar programme?

Seller Organisations – KII Question Guides

Date:

Location:

Name and Position:

Protocol to be used for all KIIs

Introduce yourself – your name, who you work for, explain that you are an independent evaluator contracted to UN Women ROAP for this evaluation.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the purpose of this meeting:

The WE RISE Together programme started in 2022 and is working in Thailand and Viet Nam. The purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as to inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It is intended to generate learning about the GRP approach that will also be relevant to other programmes.

The purpose of this meeting is for us to hear your perspectives on the programme. This is one of about 30 interviews and focus group discussions that will form the data for the evaluation, along with an indepth review of programme documents.

We have requested an hour of your time for this meeting. Is now still a good time for you, and is an hour still ok with you? We can change or adjust if needed.

This meeting is part of our data collection phase. The final report will be completed by January 2025.

Describe privacy and confidentiality for participation:

We want to reassure you that anything you say will not be attributed to you personally. This interview and the evaluation will respect your privacy.

Our notes of this and other interviews are kept securely and will be confidential to the independent consultant. I keep notes for six months after the evaluation, but we will then delete them.

Provide contact information:

You can contact me at any time at milward.bose@gmail.com if you want to share any documents with me, if you want to add any information, or if you change your mind and want to withdraw anything you said, or withdraw from the process entirely.

Are you happy to proceed with the interview on this basis? (Get verbal consent before proceeding).

1.What is your role and what has been your engagement in the WRT programme?

Relevance EQ2. To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?

1. How important to you are the objectives of the WRT programme? What would be the benefits to your company of better GRP? How important is it for your company that GRP is established?
2. What other priorities are you working on currently to build your business?

Effectiveness: EQ 3 What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce?

3. What changes in your enterprise, if any, has the programme contributed to / influenced? Has the programme caused any changes that were not predicted / intended? Has it had any negative consequences, in your opinion?
4. In your opinion, for any changes in your organisation that the programme contributed to, what were the most important activities that enabled this change to happen?
5. From your organisations' perspective, what are the enabling factors and challenges to achieving GRP? What have the most important blockages been to progress?

Efficiency: EQ 5 To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

6. What (technical support), if any, was available to you from the programme / from where? What more (in terms of budget, human resources, expertise) do you think might have benefitted the programme's progress?
7. What, if anything, has the programme contributed to recognition of gender [in]equality as a (priority) issue in the region?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB): EQ 6. How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

8. Does the programme address and improve your situation as a woman / WOB in the world of business /enterprise in Viet Nam/Thailand? What other strategies or activities might have better addressed any inequalities you face on the basis of your gender?

EQ 7 How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups?

9. Does your enterprise include any marginalised groups (e.g offices in rural areas, migrant staff, people with disabilities?) Has this been relevant when working with / engaging with the programme?

Sustainability EQ8 Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

10. In your perspective, how far has the programme succeeded in building the capacities of government and the private sector for GRP?
11. How far has the programme strengthened your business' capacity to secure sustained market opportunities? What are the challenges to your for maintaining any benefits achieved so far?

EQ 9 What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

12. What would you change about the programme for a second phase / for more work towards similar objectives? Which features or parts of the programme should remain the same?

Buyer Organisations – KII Question Guides

Date:

Location:

Name and Position:

Protocol to be used for all KIIs

Introduce yourself – your name, who you work for, explain that you are an independent evaluator contracted to UN Women ROAP for this evaluation.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the purpose of this meeting:

The WE RISE Together programme started in 2022 and is working in Thailand and Viet Nam. The purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as to inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It is intended to generate learning about the GRP approach that will also be relevant to other programmes.

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Are you happy to proceed with the interview on this basis? (Get verbal consent before proceeding).

3. What is your role and what has been your engagement in the WRT programme?

Relevance EQ2. To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?

5. From the perspective of your department/agency/ company, how important are the objectives of the WRT programme? Is it a priority for you to establish GRP? What do you see as the benefits of GRP for your agency / department/ company?
6. What other priorities (apart from gender responsiveness) do you see or issues do you consider for decisions about procurement?

Effectiveness: EQ 3 What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce?

3. What results or achievements in your enterprise has the programme contributed to? What have been the most significant achievements / changes brought about by the programme so far? What actions have you taken in your company influenced by your engagement with the programme?
4. Have there been any effects of the programme for your enterprise that were not intended or predicted? Have there been any negative effects of the programme's work, in your opinion?
5. In your opinion, for any changes in your organisation that the programme contributed to / actions you have been able to take, what were the most important features of WRT / areas of work / partnerships that enabled this to happen?
6. From your organisations' perspective, what are the enabling factors and challenges to achieving better GRP? What have the most important blockages been to progress?
7. What, if anything, has the programme contributed to recognition of gender [in]equality as a (priority) issue in the region?

Efficiency: EQ 5 To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

8. What (technical support), if any, was available to you from the programme / from where? What more (in terms of budget, human resources, expertise) do you think might have benefitted the programme's progress?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB): EQ 6. How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

9. Does the programme respond in the best way possible to issues faced by WOBs in the world of business /enterprise in Viet Nam/Thailand? What other strategies or activities might have addressed the issues they face as WOBs more effectively?

EQ 7 How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups?

10. What have been or might be the challenges in including marginalized groups [eg companies located in rural areas / with staff with disabilities] in procurement?

Sustainability EQ8 Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

11. How far has the programme strengthened your business' capacity to undertake GRP? What are the challenges to your organisations for maintaining this approach?
12. In your perspective, how far has the programme succeeded in building the capacities of WOBs and GREs to support your maintenance of the approach?

EQ 9 What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

13. What would you change about the programme for a second phase / for more work towards similar objectives? Which features or parts of the programme should remain the same?

Focus group discussion – WOB/GREs

Date:

Location:

Participants Names and Position:

Gender of participants

Protocol to be used for all FGDs

Introduce yourself – your name, who you work for, explain that you are an independent evaluator contracted to UN Women ROAP for this evaluation.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the purpose of this meeting:

The WE RISE Together programme started in 2022 and is working in Thailand and Viet Nam. The purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as the inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It is intended to generate learning about the GRP approach that will also be relevant to other programmes.

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This meeting is part of our data collection phase. The final report will be completed by January 2025.

Describe privacy and confidentiality for participation:

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Our notes of this and other interviews are kept securely and will be confidential to the independent consultant. I keep notes for six months after the evaluation, but we will then delete them.

We ask each of you to also agree to keep all information shared with you confidential, including information from other participants and ourselves. We ask you to agree not to share the information with anyone outside of the focus group, and to not reveal the identities of other participants.

Provide contact information:

You can contact me at any time at milward.bose@gmail.com if you want to share any documents with me, if you want to add any information, or if you change your mind and want to withdraw anything you said, or withdraw from the process entirely.

Are you happy to proceed with the interview on this basis? (Get verbal consent before proceeding).

The focus group discussion will use the same core questions as the Key Informant Interviews, but with a focus on EFFECTIVENESS and SUSTAINABILITY questions.

Where possible it will use participatory methods to elicit Achievements and Challenges.

Challenges will then be scored 1-10 by each participant 'How difficult is this challenge to solve?' (1 is easy; 10 is impossible).

Achievements would be scored 1-10 for 'most important' and 1-10 for 'likely to be sustained (without further intervention).

1.What is your role and what has been your engagement in the WRT programme?

Relevance EQ2. To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?

1. How important to you are the objectives of the WRT programme? What would be the benefits to your company of better GRP? How important is it for your company that GRP is established?
2. What other priorities are you working on currently to build your business?

Effectiveness: EQ 3 What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce?

3. What changes in your enterprise, if any, has the programme contributed to / influenced? Has the programme caused any changes that were not predicted / intended? Has it had any negative consequences, in your opinion?
4. In your opinion, for any changes in your organisation that the programme contributed to, what were the most important activities that enabled this change to happen?
5. From your organisations' perspective, what are the challenges to achieving GRP? What have the most important enabling factors and blockages been to progress?

Efficiency: EQ 5 To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

6. What (technical support), if any, was available to you from the programme / from where? What additional expertise do you think might have benefitted the programme's progress?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB): EQ 6. How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

7. Does the programme address and improve your situation as a woman / WOB in the world of business /enterprise in Viet Nam/Thailand? What other strategies or activities might have better addressed any inequalities you face on the basis of your gender?

EQ 7 How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups?

8. Does your enterprise include any marginalised groups (e.g offices in rural areas, migrant staff, people with disabilities?) Has this been relevant when working with / engaging with the programme?

Sustainability EQ8 Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

9. In your perspective, how far has the programme succeeded in building the capacities of government and the private sector for GRP?
10. How far has the programme strengthened your business' capacity to secure sustained market opportunities? What are the challenges to your for maintaining any benefits achieved so far?

EQ 9 What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

11. What would you change about the programme for a second phase / for more work towards similar objectives? Which features or parts of the programme should remain the same?

Focus group discussion – private sector / buyers

Date:

Location:

Participants Names and Position:

Gender of participants

Protocol to be used for all FGDs

Introduce yourself – your name, who you work for, explain that you are an independent evaluator contracted to UN Women ROAP for this evaluation.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and the purpose of this meeting:

The WE RISE Together programme started in 2022 and is working in Thailand and Viet Nam. The purpose of this independent final evaluation is to provide accountability on stated programme objectives, as well as the inform decision making regarding potential further iterations of the programme going forward. It is intended to generate learning about the GRP approach that will also be relevant to other programmes.

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Where possible it will use participatory methods to elicit Achievements and Challenges.

Challenges will then be scored 1-10 by each participant 'How difficult is this challenge to solve?' (1 is easy; 10 is impossible).

Achievements would be scored 1-10 for 'most important' and 1-10 for 'likely to be sustained (without further intervention).

1. What is your role and what has been your engagement in the WRT programme?

Relevance EQ2. To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders?

1. From the perspective of your department/agency/ company, how important are the objectives of the WRT programme? Is it a priority for you to establish GRP? What do you see as the benefits of GRP for your agency / department/ company?
2. What other priorities (apart from gender responsiveness) do you see or issues do you consider for decisions about procurement?

Effectiveness: EQ 3 What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce?

3. What results or achievements in your enterprise has the programme contributed to? What have been the most significant achievements / changes brought about by the programme so far? What actions have you taken in your company influenced by your engagement with the programme?
4. Have there been any effects of the programme for your enterprise that were not intended or predicted? Have there been any negative effects of the programme's work, in your opinion?
5. In your opinion, for any changes in your organisation that the programme contributed to / actions you have been able to take, what were the most important activities that enabled this to happen?
6. From your organisations' perspective, what are the challenges to achieving better GRP? What have the most important blockages been to progress?

Efficiency: EQ 5 To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

7. What (technical support), if any, was available to you from the programme / from where? What more (in terms of budget, human resources, expertise) do you think might have benefitted the programme's progress?
8. What, if anything, has the programme contributed to recognition of gender [in]equality as a (priority) issue in the region?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB): EQ 6. How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

9. Does the programme respond in the best way possible to issues faced by WOBs in the world of business /enterprise in Viet Nam/Thailand? What other strategies or activities might have addressed the issues they face as WOBs more effectively?

EQ 7 How does the programme identify, prioritize and respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups?

10. What have been or might be the challenges in including marginalized groups [eg companies located in rural areas / with staff with disabilities] in procurement?

Sustainability EQ8 Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

11. How far has the programme strengthened your business' capacity to undertake GRP? What are the challenges to you organisations for maintaining this approach?
12. In your perspective, how far has the programme succeeded in building the capacities of WOBs and GREs to support your maintenance of the approach?

EQ 9 What conditions, issues and tasks will need to be considered for a second phase of WRT implementation?

13. What would you change about the programme for a second phase / for more work towards similar objectives? Which features or parts of the programme should remain the same?

Annex 6: Terms of Reference



CONSULTANT TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Contract Overview	
Consultancy Title:	<i>International Consultant- Independent Evaluator for the Final Evaluation of WE RISE Together (advancing women market access to market using gender-responsive procurement approach in Thailand and Viet Nam)</i>
Location:	Home-based with possible travel to programme countries in Thailand and Viet Nam
Practice Area:	Women's Economic Empowerment
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Category (Eligible applicants):	External
Post Type and Level:	International Consultant
Languages Required:	English
Starting Date:	1 September 2024 – 30 December 2024
Duration of Contract:	Approximately 4 Months

II. Consultancy Assignment
<p>Background</p> <p>UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.</p> <p>Women's economic empowerment is one of the priority areas of UN Women, as expressed in UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 as well as in the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 for gender equality and women's empowerment and of several other SDGs relating to inclusive growth, decent work, ending poverty, and reducing inequality, and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.</p> <p>UN Women in the Asia Pacific is driven by work at the regional level through the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and country level through offices across the region. It focuses on the following approaches for women's economic empowerment, including but not limited to seeking policy reform, supporting economic security and rights, and enhancing economic opportunities. At the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), the Women's Economic Empowerment & Migration (WEE) unit focuses on the key strategic priorities aligned with the Strategic Note for Women's Economic Empowerment & Migration for 2023-2025:</p> <p>Advancing Gender-Responsive Business Conduct and Creating More Decent Work Opportunities (WEPs)</p> <p>Transforming the Care Economy</p>

Accelerating Gender-Responsive Entrepreneurship for (M)SMEs (i.e. Gender-Responsive Procurement, Women's entrepreneurship, etc.)

Progressing Safe Migration to Decent Employment

Zooming in to the topic of advancing gender-responsive business conduct, the global procurement market presents a great opportunity for further development with the market worth trillions of dollars that engages public and private organisations through exchange of goods and services. Globally, public procurement is estimated to generate between USD 11 to USD 13 trillion annually. Despite this, women-owned businesses receive only 1% of both public and private procurement spending. Structural gender inequalities impede women from a variety of backgrounds, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, and education,

from gaining equitable access to networks, finance, and markets, including procurement markets. This prevents them from starting, expanding, or maximising the profits of their businesses. UN Women, therefore, envisioned an initiative to specifically address this issue by creating market access through procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses to empower women, increase their profits and allow their business to thrive which further contribute to the overall economy.

WE RISE Together Background

Building on the framework of Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), UN Women, in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Government, launched WE RISE Together (WRT), a three-year Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP) programme developed by UN Women. The programme commenced in March 2022 with 100% funding of 2,850,000 Australian Dollars from DFAT Mekong-Australia Partnership. It sits under MAP's Economic Resilience Fund (MAP-ERF) and addresses its four drivers of resilience (including macroeconomic, household, business, and government resilience). The programme responds to the prioritization of women's economic empowerment by expanding market access for Women-owned Businesses (WOBs) and Gender Responsive Enterprises (GREs) through procurement opportunities.

WE RISE Together tackles the structural gender inequities that exist within the global procurement market in which WOBs secure only one per cent of spending worldwide. By introducing and advancing increased market access through gender-responsive procurement (GRP), WE RISE Together operates with the overall objective to empower more women to equally access, lead, and benefit from expanded market opportunities in the Mekong subregion.

GRP is an important vehicle for enriching supply chains by broadening the range of suppliers of goods and services available to businesses and governments and for advancing women's economic empowerment. GRP promotes the principles of buying from WOBs to enable their equitable access to markets and buying from GREs in order to create more gender-responsive value chains. WRT's GRP considers an expanded definition of GRP that includes buying from WOBs and leveraging the potential of buying from GREs, regardless of the ownership. Please see the definitions of some key terms below.

Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP) is defined as "The sustainable selection of services, goods, or civil works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment." It is found on international standards, agreements and principles relevant to improving gender-responsive working conditions and essential for upholding women's basic rights in the supply chain.

A women-owned business (WOBs) is defined by the International Finance Corporation for small and medium-sized enterprises as one that has [1] at least 51% ownership by women; or [2] is at least 20% female-owned and has [a] at least one women as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, president and/or vice president; and [b] 30% or more female on its board of directors, where a board exists.

A gender-responsive enterprise (GRE) is defined as one that meets criteria for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment principles in its policies and practices, and that is aligned with international norms and standards, including the Women's Empowerment Principles and International Labor Organization standards.

WRT programme works across the Mekong subregion, namely in Thailand and Viet Nam, where the concept of GRP is still in nascent stages of development. Despite regional and national initiatives prioritizing financial inclusion of micro, small, and medium-sized

enterprises (MSMEs), there is currently a limited amount of gender-sensitive data available to promote GRP practices and policies in the programme's geographical focus areas.

As such, WE RISE Together will introduce GRP as an opportunity to address and attempt to channel spend to WOBs/GREs and promote suppliers to become gender responsive. The programme will work on four interlinked outcomes:

Outcome 1: More public and private organisations are promoting and developing policies and practices that advance GRP (Normative Change in the Ecosystem)

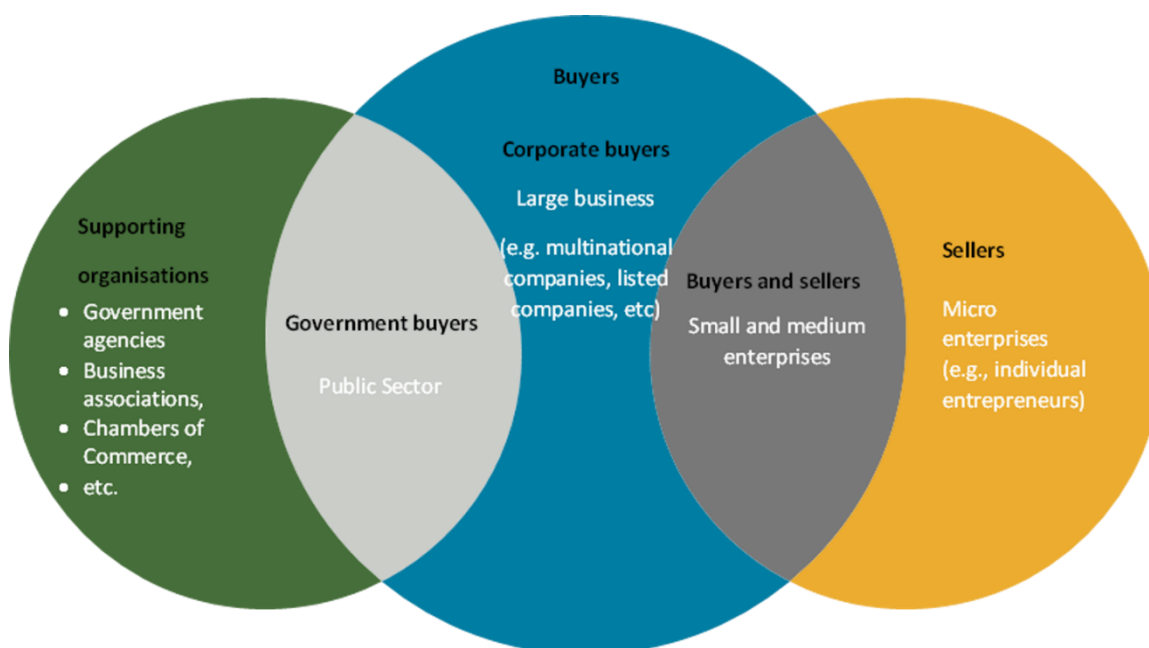
Outcome 2: WOBs/GREs have increased capacity to build more resilient and inclusive business models and utilise networking opportunities to better access markets. (Strengthening the Supply Side)

Outcome 3: Public and private buying organisations³ have increased capacity to advocate, promote and implement GRP within their organisations and industries to enable market access for WOBs/GREs. (Strengthening the Demand Side)

Outcome 4: More equitable market opportunities are created through connecting WOBs/GREs to larger public and private buyers. (Connecting Demand Side and Connect to Supply Side)

The programme's activities aimed to provide evidence, information, and learning sessions to raise awareness about GRP; offer technical support and training for WOBs and GREs to develop skills to build more gender-inclusive and resilient business models; and facilitate the creation of referral networks amongst WOBs. In addition, it designed to provide capacity building among public and private sector organisations to develop and implement GRP policies and practices and focus on establishing collaboration opportunities between larger public and private sector buyers and WOBs/GREs to facilitate future market connections.

To work with these stakeholders the programme leverages UN Women's strong technical capacity, long-standing relationships with national and regional implementing partners, WE RISE Together governs by a programme steering committee (established at the regional level composed of representatives from UN Women and regional and local representation from DFAT) to ensure adaptations with lessons learned along with an accurate results-oriented monitoring and reporting framework. Key stakeholders involved with the programmes are shown as in the figure below.



While the programme targets WOBs/GREs who are micro, small and medium enterprises under the Sellers group as main beneficiaries to achieve equally access, lead and benefit from expanded market opportunities in the Mekong Region, Buyers group, which refers to public and private organisations such as multinational companies operating in Thailand and Viet Nam, listed companies and government agencies as buyers in the business to government market, are the key driver to push forward GRP implementation as a result of the

programme's technical input provided. Government agencies also play another role of Supporting Organisations and as the regulator to make policy decision that will incentivize other stakeholders' GRP practices.

Table 1: Programme Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Group	Description	Interest in Pro-gramme	Power over Pro-gramme
WOBs and GREs	Beneficiary	The primary beneficiaries who receive training and support to develop their businesses and become more competitive. They are the target audience for capacity building and business model development activities.	High	Low
Public Sector Organizations (Office of SMEs Promotion - Thailand, Ministry of Planning and Investment – Viet Nam, ASEAN Coordinating Committee on MSMEs)	Partner and secondary beneficiary	These organisations collaborate with the programme to develop and implement GRP policies, potentially creating a more favorable environment for WOBs and GREs. They also receive supports from the programme in forms of technical advices and GRP assessment tools.	Moderate	High (Policy decisions can impact WOBs/GREs)
Private Sector Organizations	Partner and secondary beneficiary	Private companies collaborate on GRP policy development and implementation within their organisations, and potentially future market connections with WOBs/GREs. They also benefit from the programme technical supports in order to enhance their GRP implementation capacity.	Moderate	Moderately High (Buying decisions can impact WOBs/GREs)
Programme Implementers (UN Women)	Internal	Responsible for delivering programme activities	High	Moderate (Influence on programme execution)
Funding Agency (DFAT)	External	Provides financial resources for the programme	High	High (Can influence programme funding and continuation)

Description of Responsibilities/ Scope of Work

WE RISE Together programme is approaching the end of the programme timeframe in February 2025 therefore an independent final evaluation will be undertaken as per the Programme Document. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the overall results and assess the relevance, and efficiency of the programme as well as its sustainability and impact. It also aims to identify successes and challenges of the programme's specific approach of gender responsive procurement as a mean to enabling market access for women-owned businesses. In addition, the final evaluation will discuss opportunities, requirements and determining factors for a potential second programme phase post February 2025.

Under the leadership of the WRT Regional Programme Coordinator in close consultation with the WRT M&E Officer, an independent expert will be hired to undertake the Final Evaluation of WRT programme. The expert will be responsible for the following:

Perform desk review of the programme's key documents including Programme Document, Inception Report, First and Second Annual Progress Reports, Annual Workplans and Budget, all knowledge products including rapid assessment, studies, research and outcome documents from all events and workshops that have been conducted within the programme timeframe.

Examine the programme design, objectives, strategies, and implementation arrangements.

Present the evaluation methodology through the inception presentation and inception report.

Conduct meeting to interview the programme team members and key stakeholders involved in the programme, at regional level, and in all the programme countries (Thailand and Viet Nam). WRT will provide a list of stakeholders and will assist with liaising and coordinating the meeting schedules as needed.

Assess the evaluability of the programme to understand the extent the programme indicators will measure the outputs and outcomes of the programme. This would include the assessment of the programme's Theory of Change and Logical Framework.

Analyze and examine current programme achievement, challenges, and opportunities

Assess the programme's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency in the progress towards the achievement of women's economic empowerment by expanding market access for women, particularly Women-owned Businesses (WOBs) and Gender Responsive Enterprises (GREs). To assess coherence with other similar programmes under UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Strategic Note 2022-2025, WRT will provide documentations of other relevant programme, namely WeEmpowerAsia, a predecessor programme under Women's Economic Empowerment thematic with similar goal to achieve gender equality through enabling women's increased participation in the marketplace.

Prepare draft report, summarizing key findings and recommendations in soft copy, taking into account feedback by the evaluation reference group and evaluation management group.

Prepare a Power-Point presentation on the key findings and lessons learned as well as provide a set of clear and forward-looking actionable recommendations to inform management decisions, including the member of Programme steering committee and key stakeholders.

Purpose and objectives of the Evaluation

The WE RISE Together final evaluation aims to serve the programme accountability purposes and feed into decision-making regarding further iterations of the programme. The evaluation is also intended to identify key learnings and best practices within a broader context of gender-responsive market approach in the Mekong region. The performance of the programme will be assessed against the indicators presented in the programme results-based framework with recommendations that could go beyond by reviewing existing interventions which cover other forms of market access.

Assess the relevance and coherence of the programme to stakeholders, including rights holders with respect to programme design and implementation;

Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the approaches implemented in attaining the intended results and any potential unintended consequences;

Assess the integration of human rights and gender equality in design and implementation; and

Produce lessons learned and issue actionable recommendations for further iterations of the programme or similar programming.

The preliminary evaluation questions could include the following questions, which will further be finalized by the evaluator:

Coherence:

To what extent is the programme coherent with the efforts of UN system, especially UN Women regional strategy and the Women's Economic Empowerment unit strategy in Asia and the Pacific, more specifically in the Mekong Region?

Relevance:

To what extent is the programme relevant to the needs and priorities as defined by beneficiaries and stakeholders? This includes national government, private sector buying organization and women entrepreneurs.

Effectiveness:

What outcomes (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) did the programme produce, and what were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of results?

How effective was the programme partnership approach? And, to what extent did this approach contribute to achieving results?

What are the success factors of the programme? And, how can these be replicated and/or scale up in term of impact?

What are the lessons learned from the programme? And, how can these be addressed differently in the future phase of the programme or for other programmes of a similar nature.

Efficiency:

To what extent have resources (investments, human resources, time, expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve results?

How did programme management and monitoring operate between regional and country level implementation, and what were the efficiencies?

To what extent has the programme been efficiently created recognition and strengthened DFAT visibility in the Mekong Region around gender-equality?

Sustainability:

To what extent did the programme build the capacities of government and private sector on gender equality in market access? And to what extent have the programme activities strengthened women entrepreneurs' capacity and market opportunities?

To what extent the programme partners take ownership of the approaches (support women market access and gender responsive procurement)?

Are the programme outcomes and achievements likely to be durable, replicated or scaled up by national and regional partners, and if so how?

From the final evaluation finding, what are the necessary conditions and factors for WRT in formulation of its second phase? What are the possible tasks for WRT to take forward during the second phase of implementation?

Human Rights and Gender Equality (LNOB):

How does the programme identify and prioritize the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups? What specific measures are taken to ensure that these groups have equal access to programme benefits?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure non-discrimination and transparency in decision-making and accountability to beneficiaries?

How is gender equality integrated into the programme's goals, strategies, and activities?

What are the feedback mechanisms that allow for the continuous improvement of the programme to better serve those left behind?

The primary evaluation users, namely UN Women, will use the evaluation to further strategize for gender-responsive market approaches. Secondary users, namely WoBs/GREs, public and private sector organizations identified as key collaborators/partners of WRT programme, will use the information to learn about what works when advancing women's access to market and enhancing gender equality in the business world. The donor, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) may use the evaluation for accountability and as input for decision-making purposes.

(Office of SMEs Promotion - Thailand, Ministry of Planning and Investment – Viet Nam, ASEAN Coordinating Committee on MSMEs)

Table 2: Intended Users

Primary & Secondary Intended Users	Primary Intended Use			
	Learning & Knowledge Generation	Strategic Decision-Making	Accountability	Capacity Development & Mobilization
(Primary) UN Women	X	X	X	X
(Secondary) Key beneficiaries (WoBs/GREs) and Private Sector Organizations	X		X	X
National and local governments	X		X	X
Civil Society Representatives	X		X	X
Donors & Multilateral Partners	X	X	X	

Scope of the evaluation

Time Frame: The evaluation will cover the entire programme life from March 2022 up to the final evaluation report period of December 2024, considering the planned activities till February 2025.

Geographical coverage: With a particular focus on drawing lessons to inform a potential next phase of WE RISE Together, the evaluation would cover the programme countries, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Stakeholder coverage: The evaluation will reach out to stakeholders i.e. beneficiaries, participating governments, civil society partners, implementing partners at the national and regional levels, and partner agencies, as well as the programme steering committee members including but not limited to, the National Innovation Agency (NIA), Thailand, Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), Thailand, Women's Initiative for Startups and Entrepreneurship (WISE), Viet Nam and Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC), Viet Nam. The full list of stakeholders will be given to the evaluator at the Inception phase.

Design of the Evaluation

The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights principles, as defined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy. The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with UN Women Evaluation Handbook⁴⁷ and UNEG Norms, Standards⁴⁸, Ethical Guidelines,⁴⁹ Code of Conduct for Evaluations⁵⁰ and Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations in the UN System.⁵¹

The evaluation will be, in its nature, summative of the entire programme period (March 2022 to February 2025) and include recommendations for the next iteration of the programme. The approach should also promote inclusion and participation by employing gender equality and human rights responsive approaches with a focus on women's economic empowerment, especially gender-responsive market approaches. The evaluation will be gender-responsive in that it will employ mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches) to account for the complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate.

Methodological approach

The inception report should describe the approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review. The final evaluation will be a mixed-methods approach using the following:

Review of existing reports (Inception Report, First and Second Progress Report), programme document, including the Annual Work Plan

Review of the programme result based management framework including baseline and endline survey data

Desk review of existing documents and sources related to the programme (event and meeting concept notes, links to events available on websites, social media reports, financial documents, etc.)

Key informant interviews/focus groups of relevant stakeholders

A case study approach can be taken to allow for in-depth look at key issues or implementation modalities at the country level, (e. g. progress and completion reports, workshop and mission reports, knowledge and advocacy products, and other appropriate documentation produced by UN Women and implementing partners). The criteria for case study selection will be identified during the inception phase. The evaluator must integrate gender and human rights approaches and perspectives throughout data collection and analysis.

In collecting data and information, the evaluator will include a plan on how to guarantee the protection of subjects and respect for confidentiality. The evaluator should develop a sampling frame such as the rationale for selection, area and population represented, mechanics for selection and limitations of the sample, and specify how it will address the diversity of stakeholders in the action. The evaluator should take measures to ensure the quality and appropriateness of data collection tools and methods and their responsiveness to gender equality and human rights. Limitations of the sample, if any, must be clearly stated and the data cross checked against other sources to ensure robust results.

⁴⁷ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

⁴⁸ <https://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

⁴⁹ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

⁵⁰ <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

⁵¹ <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>

The evaluator will conduct consultation with stakeholder groups, to the extent possible, using participatory tools and suggest a plan for inclusion of women and individuals or groups who are vulnerable and/or discriminated against in the consultation process. Based on consultations, the evaluator may visit a maximum of four selected programme sites in Thailand and Viet Nam to validate the findings of the desk review and documentation analysis, and identify good practices and lessons learned.

The independent evaluator will include a section of the report setting out the final evaluation's evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be included in the executive summary of the report.

The entire evaluation will be undertaken as per UNEG guidelines and consider a human-rights-based and gender empowerment approach. The evaluation experts and all their direct collaborators will follow UN Women’s Evaluation Handbook and UNEG Ethical guidelines.

Evaluation Phases

The evaluation will be conducted according to the following tentative timeline and with the main deliverables outlined below. The Evaluator will be engaged in stage 1-3 (September to December 2024) for approximately 45 days of work (this is an indicative number that should be used as a guideline).

STAGE 1: INCEPTION (September 2024)

Briefing and consultation with the programme team

Desk review of key documents

Inception report including the evaluability assessment, stakeholder mapping, proposed sampling for case studies, methodology, work plan, evaluation matrix, and data collection tools

Presentation of the inception report to the programme team

Task	Responsible Party	Remarks
Briefing and consultation with the programme team	Evaluator in cooperation with UN Women, WE RISE Together, WEE team	Home-based
Desk review of key documents	Evaluator	Home-based
Inception report including the evaluability assessment, stakeholder mapping, proposed sampling for case studies, methodology, work plan, evaluation matrix, and data collection tools	Evaluator	Home-based

Review of WEA programme approach on market access in Asia Pacific (from WEA evaluation report)		
Presentation of the inception report to the programme team	Evaluator in cooperation with UN Women, WE RISE Together, WEE team	Home-based
Finalization of the inception report after taking into account feedback record from ERG and EMG		

STAGE 2: DATA COLLECTION (September and October 2024)

Data collection, including virtual and on-site interviews and debriefing to UN Women and implementing partners

Task	Responsible Party	Remarks
Data collection, including virtual and possible on-site interviews	Evaluator	On-site interviews and meetings, may be considered as required
Debriefing to UN Women upon finalization	Evaluator in cooperation with UN Women	Home-based

STAGE 3: REPORTING (November to mid-December 2024)

Present the preliminary findings to the programme team to validate findings and allow the evaluator to incorporate preliminary feedback in the draft report

Draft report

Comments and feedback from Evaluation Management and Reference Groups tracked for transparency

Final evaluation report

Presentation of the final evaluation report to the Joint Programme Steering Committee, comprising UN Women and DFAT

Task	Responsible Party	Remarks
Data systematization, analysis and interpretation of findings	Evaluator	Home-based

Present the preliminary findings to the programme team and the Evaluation Management and Reference Groups to validate findings and allow the evaluator to incorporate preliminary feedback in the draft report	Evaluator in cooperation with UN Women	Home-based
Prepare the draft evaluation report	Evaluator	Home-based
Prepare the final evaluation report. [Tracking feedback from Evaluation Management and Reference Groups and the evaluation team response for transparency]	Evaluator in cooperation with UN Women	Home-based
Presentation of the final evaluation to the Joint Programme Steering Committee	Evaluator	Home-based

Evaluation Management

The evaluation will be managed by the WEE M&E Specialist under the oversight of the Regional Advisor, Women's Economic Empowerment of UN Women RO. The Evaluation Management Group (EMG) will be comprised of the UN Women programme manager, the UN Women Deputy Representative, and the UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist. The EMG will provide quality assurance to the entire evaluation process and approve all deliverables. All evaluation products must meet the GERAAS criteria prior to being approved.

An evaluation reference group (ERG) will be established comprising representatives from the key stakeholders and representing the different types of stakeholders (e.g., government, UN, CSO's, donors). The ERG will be consulted throughout the evaluation process: they will provide inputs on the inception report, preliminary findings, and final report to ensure it is participatory and has the ownership of the key programme stakeholders. The ERG will participate in the inception meeting, and presentation of preliminary findings to provide feedback and validation.

The Evaluator will be responsible for the following:

Perform desk review of the programme's key documents including Program Document, Annual Work Plans and Budget, all progress reports of UN Women, and implementing partners, all knowledge products including studies, research and outcome documents from all conferences and workshops that have been conducted within the framework of the programme.

Prepare an Inception Report detailing the evaluator understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures.

Collect primary data, including interviews with the programme team members and key stakeholders involved in the programme at regional level and national level, primary Thailand and Viet Nam. UN Women, will provide a list of stakeholders and will assist with liaising and coordinating the meeting schedules as needed.

Analyse the primary and secondary data provided by the national consultants and collected by the evaluator in line with the objectives and key questions of the evaluation to identify findings, conclusions and recommendations as detailed in the evaluation report.

Present the preliminary findings to the programme team to validate and integrate feedback in the draft report.

Prepare a draft evaluation report and integrate feedback received from evaluator into the final evaluation report not exceeding 40 pages (with annexes not to exceed 50 pages) in word format and in line with UN Women GERAAS standards.

Prepare a presentation of the final evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

Contract period and work location

From 01 September to 30 December 2024. This assignment is primarily home-based, data collection will be both online and field visits. For travel on the mission, travel costs and Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) will be provided by UN Women. Travel Authorization will be granted to the consultant prior to the travel date.

Expected deliverables

No.	Deliverables	Indicative Delivery Date
1	<p>Inception report and presentation (PPT) to the ERG</p> <p>An Inception Report detailing the evaluator's understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables, designating a team member with the lead responsibility for each task or product.</p> <p>Inception report presentation</p> <p>The inception annexes should include: evaluation matrix, data collection tools e.g. survey questionnaire etc. A detail plan on how protection of subjects and respect for confidentiality will be guaranteed. The evaluator should develop a sampling frame.</p> <p>The inception report and PPT will be reviewed by the EMG prior to submission and presentation to the ERG.</p>	15 September 2024
	<p>Data collection phase</p> <p>Debriefing on data collected and field visits</p>	15 October 2024
	<p>A draft evaluation report</p> <p>Preliminary findings presentation to the ERG (the presentation should be reviewed prior to the presentation by the EMG)</p>	<p>30 October 2024</p> <p>(Data collection to complete by 30 October 2024)</p>
2	<p>The draft evaluation report will synthesize the key findings into numbered statements, conclusions that are based on the findings, and the recommendations based on the conclusions; it will also include a summary of lessons learned, recommendations should be focused on actions to be taken by UN Women.</p>	First draft of the report by 15 November 2024

	A tracking tool will be used to track feedback from UN Women, ERG and the evaluation team response for transparency.	
3	<p>A final evaluation report</p> <p>The final report should include an executive summary</p> <p>The report is not considered final until it meets the standards of UN Women (GERAAS). The report will incorporate comments from all stakeholders and the tracking form will be submitted for transparency</p> <p>An analytical and comprehensive final evaluation Report not exceeding 40-50 pages (with no more than 60 pages of annexes) to be submitted;</p> <p>The report should follow UN Editorial Guidelines and be formatted in accordance with UN Women Branding Guidelines for evaluation reports.</p> <p>A 2-3 page brief should be developed based on the final report</p> <p>A final PowerPoint presentation</p> <p>A presentation file detailing evaluation conclusions and recommendations to be submitted</p>	15 December 2024

* This assignment is primarily home-based, data collection can be both online and field visits.

NOTE:

Payment will be made upon submission of deliverables with an approval of the Regional Advisor, WEE, UN Women

All deliverables should be in line with the UN Women Editorial Style Guide and the programme's visual identity.

All deliverables should be written and generated in English. Data collected is property of UN Women if so requested.

All deliverables should be in accordance with GERAAS standards.

Ethical code of conduct

UN Women has developed a UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form for evaluator that must be signed as part of the contracting process, which is based on the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. These documents will be annexed to the contracts. All data collected by the evaluation team members must be submitted to the evaluation manager in Word, PowerPoint or Excel formats and is the property of UN Women. Proper storage of data is essential for ensuring confidentiality and a data protection plan will be developed during the inception phase. The evaluation's value added is its impartial and systematic assessment of the programme. As with the other stages of the evaluation, involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluator(s) have the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report, and the evaluator(s) must be protected from pressures to change information in the report. Proper procedures for data collection with rights holders who may have been affected by violence must be adhered to as outlined in the WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for research on violence against women. Additionally, if the evaluator(s) identify issues of wrongdoing, fraud or other unethical conduct, UN Women procedures must be followed, and confidentiality be maintained. The UN Women Legal Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct, and accompanying policies protecting against retaliation and prohibiting harassment and abuse of authority, provide a cohesive framework aimed at creating and maintaining a harmonious working environment, ensuring that staff members do not engage in any wrongdoing and that all allegations of wrongdoing are reported promptly, investigated and appropriate action taken to achieve accountability.

III. Competencies

Corporate competencies:

- Awareness and sensitivity regarding gender issues;
- Creative problem solving;
- Effective communication;
- Inclusive collaboration;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the United Nations' values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission and strategic goals of the UN and UN Women;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Ability and willingness to work as part of a team to meet tight deadlines and produce high quality work.

Core values:

- Integrity: Demonstrate consistency in upholding and promoting the values of UN Women in actions and decisions, in line with the UN Code of Conduct.
- Professionalism: Demonstrate professional competence and expert knowledge of the pertinent substantive areas of work.
- Cultural sensitivity and valuing diversity: Demonstrate an appreciation of the multicultural nature of the organization and the diversity of its staff. Demonstrate an international outlook, appreciating difference in values and learning from cultural diversity.

Please visit this link for more information on UN Women's Core Values and Competencies:

https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/employment/application-process#_Values

IV. Required Qualifications

Academic qualifications:

Master's degree in relevant discipline or a first-level university degree in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience (e.g., law, international development, gender studies, etc.) may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

Essential knowledge and experience:

A minimum of 7 years of experience in evaluation conduct, with at least 5 as a Team Leader of evaluations, including evaluations of multi-stakeholder programmes for multilateral organizations is required;

Extensive knowledge of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods is required;

Extensive experience of gender-responsive approaches, gender equality, women's economic empowerment and human rights work within development cooperation preferred.

Knowledge in results-based programming in support of gender-responsive market approach is highly desirable;

Proven experience in drafting and writing to produce and present concise and analytical reports;

Working experience in the Asia and the Pacific is preferred;

Knowledge on gender equality and gender responsive market approach in Thailand, Viet Nam and Mekong countries is an asset;

Experience working with the UN system a strong asset;

Proficiency in English and report writing skills.

V. How to Apply

P11 (P11 can be downloaded from: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/About%20Us/Employment/UN-Women-P11-Personal-History-Form.doc>)

2 Writing samples e.g. evaluation reports relevant to the assignment (1 piece in English).

UN Women GERAAS evaluation quality assessment checklist: <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Download?evaluationId=4918>

UN Women Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form: <https://gate.unwomen.org/resources/docs/SiteDocuments/UNWomen%20-%20CodeofConductforEvaluationForm-Consultant.pdf>

UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787>

UN Women Evaluation Handbook: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

VI. Annexes

Annex 1: UN Women GERAAS evaluation quality assessment checklist

<https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Download?evaluationId=4918>

Annex 2 UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

<https://gate.unwomen.org/resources/docs/SiteDocuments/UNWomen%20-%20CodeofConductforEvaluationForm-Consultant.pdf>

Annex 3 UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787>

Annex 4 UN Women Evaluation Handbook

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

At UN Women, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment of mutual respect. UN Women recruits, employs, trains, compensates and promotes regardless of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, national origin, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, competence, integrity, and organizational need.

If you need any reasonable accommodation to support your participation in the recruitment and selection process, please include this information in your application.

UN Women has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UN Women, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, and discrimination. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to UN Women's policies and procedures and the standards of conduct expected of UN Women personnel and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. (Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL
CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN
WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE
PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS
WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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