

## ADDRESS: TOOLS 2.3–2.9

Following the self-assessment, companies can take action to address key bottlenecks and obstacles to engagement with women-owned businesses. Here is a step-by-step guide.

- 1. Define the criteria for ‘women-owned business’:** Before embarking on a program to increase engagement with women-owned businesses in the supply chain, companies need to consider which criteria they will use to define eligibility. Ownership, control, independence, and certification are all relevant factors to consider. (For more, see [TOOL 2.3](#).)
- 2. Develop a business case:** If corporate buy-in is low, a well-developed business case provides the basis for strengthening senior-level leadership and cultivating a supportive corporate culture. The business case should include quantitative and qualitative assessments of how more engagement with women-owned businesses will increase profitability and/or improve relations with the community. The gender equity champion can lead this effort, which should target senior management as well as all departments with purchasing and/or subcontracting needs. Use the business case to secure senior management buy-in and identify operational champions within departmental purchasing teams. (For more, see [TOOL 2.4](#).)
- 3. Update the local procurement policy to support increased engagement with women-owned businesses:** Based on results of the assessment, amend your local procurement policy to lower barriers to entry for women-owned businesses and—ultimately—to increase engagement with them. This includes altering policies and procurement criteria that needlessly disadvantage women-owned contractors and updating advertising and community engagement strategies for better outreach. (For more, see [TOOL 2.5](#) and [TOOL 2.6](#).)
- 4. Develop programs to support implementation of the updated policy:** This includes revising communications, arranging for procurement staff training, setting up local partnerships, and identifying accountabilities and incentives. (For more, see [TOOL 2.5](#).)
- 5. Identify and secure additional resources and tools needed to implement these plans:** Implementation of the updated plan may require additional staff, consultants, and training budget.
- 6. Support development of local suppliers to meet supply chain needs:** Based on the findings of the assessment, companies may need to update training programs and/or develop new community partnerships to support the development of women-owned businesses that could qualify as local suppliers.