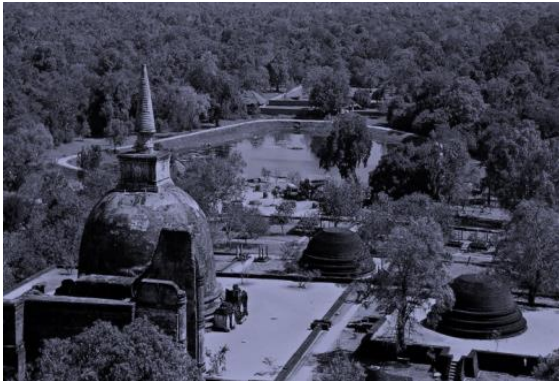


# Empowering women through gender responsive trade facilitation: LLDCs of North and Central Asia



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International Trade Centre  
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**Gender equality and women empowerment is both about men and women. It is about everyone...**

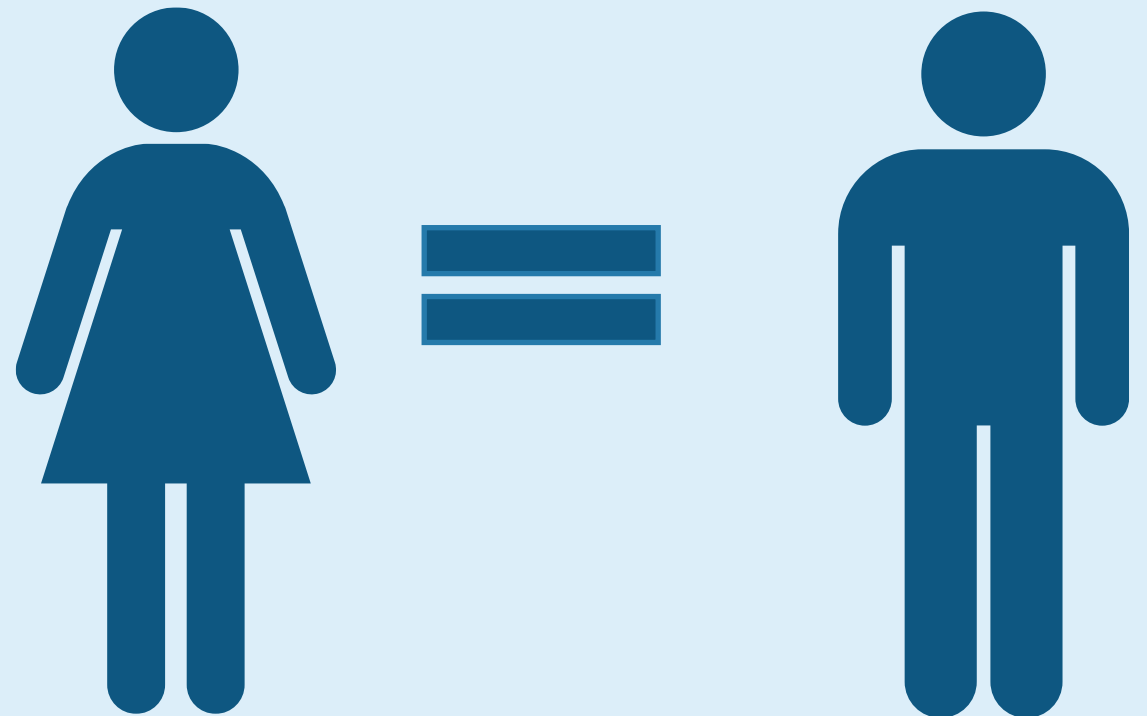


**.... and it is also about great economic opportunity for all**

# 400 MILLION USD

of additional **GDP** for Eastern Europe and Central Asia  
by 2025

**if** women played identical  
role in economy to men





**Survey of 1500 women entrepreneurs in Central Asia revealed obstacles for women to conduct trade activities**

Increased household responsibilities and limited time to spend on business and trade activities

**62%**

**ENGAGE IN TRADE TO SUPPLEMENT FAMILY INCOME WHILE KEEPING WORKING TIME FLEXIBLE**

*"Combining business activities with family life is not an easy task and I am afraid my personal life could suffer due to this."*

Lack of information on cross border trade

**57%**

**FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCESS TRADE INFORMATION & CONSULTING**

*“Women are unaware about the legislation underlying business and trade processes. They think there is too much bureaucracy and too many regulations.”*

Insufficient confidence for trade activities

**Only 35%**

OF SURVEYED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS RECEIVED  
TRADE-RELATED TRAINING

*“When we held training seminars for rural women, it turned out that 80% of participants were unaware of the existing tools for the business support.”*

”

I realize that I probably  
know only 10%  
of required cross border  
trade knowledge to  
export

GAIZAMIRA VIKTOROVNA,  
workshop participant





# And many other challenges



**57%** claim that they are not consulted on proposed changes to official procedures



Only **25%** of women have a bank account



**29%** of women admit trading informally



**65%** of government entities reported that they don't collect data disaggregated by gender

”

While my husband was in hospital, I had to meet with male business partners. But they didn't take me seriously. I had to fight hard to win their trust!

WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR FROM KYRGYZSTAN



# Trade Facilitation helps to solve many of the problems raised



**Reduces the costs of conducting trade and protects women from potential harassment and discrimination through automation.**



**Reduces the time spent on conducting trade and provides women with time to do household chores.**



**Provides advantages for small businesses owned by women who often lack resources to access relevant trade information.**



**Ensures transparency, benefiting women-owned enterprises, especially those with fewer contacts and connections.**



ITC is already implementing gender sensitive solutions across LLDCs in Central Asia

# Beneficiaries across 5 Central Asian countries

650

BORDER AND POLICY  
OFFICIALS



350

WOMEN TRADERS

# Foster women's participation in trade through gender-responsive trade facilitation reforms



## Creating a conducive border environment for women

- **Sensitize border officials** to make trade **gender-inclusive**
- Provide recommendations to collect **gender-disaggregated data for trade policy making**
- Foster adoption of **gender-sensitive infrastructure** at borders



## Empowering women through participation in trade

- **Enhance confidence and knowledge** of women to engage into trade activities and enter new markets
- **Strengthen women's export management skills**
- **Raise awareness and prepare young graduates for careers in trade**

# Foster women's participation in trade through gender-responsive trade facilitation



Increasing transparency and ease of trade for women

- **Develop Trade Facilitation Portals** for ease of information accessibility
- **Support establishment of STR** for SSCBTs, including women
- **Establishing TID** to support SSCBTs navigate the border environment



Informing gender-sensitive policy-making

- **Incorporate gender aspects** in reforms implementation
- **Adapt internal institutional practices** to empower women
- **Increase women representation** in institutions and PPD
- **Strengthen skills of women in customs and other government agencies** for career progression and reaching leadership positions

# Main take - aways



Women traders often face more challenges compared to men, when engaging in cross border trade, and it is often harder in LLDCs



Trade Facilitation can provide solutions to many of these challenges if necessary reforms and gender sensitive practices are implemented



Gender responsive trade facilitation, transport and connectivity reforms shall be emphasized in the implementation of the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs



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