



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Women's **Green** Business Initiative

**Turning Climate Change Challenges into
Economic Opportunities for Women**

United Nations Development Programme

Women's Green Business Initiative

The world is shifting from traditional economic growth models based on fossil fuels towards a green economy based on low-emission and climate-resilient sustainable development. The financial and economic crises have prompted increased investments in environmental infrastructure and green jobs. Countries continue to make commitments to support emerging financing mechanisms and development strategies that help communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Women's Green Business Initiative is an innovative global programme designed to promote women's employment and entrepreneurship opportunities around the green economy and related climate change responses.

Investing in women entrepreneurs is smart business and represents a relatively untapped market that has proven excellent repayment rates and potential for high growth. Worldwide, women-owned firms represent 20 to 40 percent of all registered small and medium businesses. Yet women's potential contributions to small and medium green enterprises and climate investments have largely been overlooked, partly due to discrimination that limits women's access to policy-making, finance, credit, information and quality jobs with equal pay. With targeted support from governments, development agencies and investors, women can contribute to and benefit much more from the new economic opportunities being created as part of climate responses and the shift to greener development models.



The Women's Green Business Initiative aims to remove existing structural barriers to women's economic advancement and facilitate equal opportunities for women to participate in the green economy. It works to ensure that emerging climate funds and green growth policies address the needs of poor women and men equitably. Working in close collaboration with governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, UNDP is establishing "service delivery platforms" that offer capacity building, finance, information and increased access to new technologies for women workers and entrepreneurs in developing countries.

The Women's Green Business Initiative has three strategic elements:

- **Building capacity for female entrepreneurs, workers and women's organizations:** The Initiative provides training, advisory services and business networks to support female entrepreneurs, workers and women's organizations to start businesses and to scale-up micro businesses into small and medium green enterprises. It offers specialized training in green jobs skills and helps replicate locally successful mentoring and business approaches to the national level.
- **Increasing women's access to climate change finance mechanisms and new business opportunities in the green economy:** The Initiative promotes gender-responsive public and private investments. It facilitates women's increased access to existing climate change funds and supports the establishment of new targeted financing options for women's green business enterprises.
- **Creating a policy environment that enhances equal economic opportunities for women:** The Initiative supports government efforts to remove the legal, administrative and financial constraints on women's economic advancement and to provide incentives for women's green jobs. This includes flexible policy options informed by local experience and consultation, including anti-discrimination laws, carefully designed quota-systems and targeted investments that help reduce wage gaps and gender-based job segmentation in the green economy.

The Women's Green Business Initiative is designed to ensure that efforts to promote greener, more resilient, and sustainable societies are successful from an economic, environmental and social perspective, including through a greater focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Types of enterprises and activities supported by the Women's Green Business Initiative:

- Producing and marketing low emission, more efficient stoves and equipment
- Producing, marketing, and installing renewable energy technologies
- Producing biofuels and biogas for lamps, cookers and motorized equipment
- Expanding existing businesses using new energy efficient and renewable energy sources
- Preserving forest and biodiversity through tree planting, ecosystem conservation and sustainable use of indigenous resources
- Employing sustainable agricultural practices
- Managing water resources
- Providing financial, business and environmental management and consulting services



Evidence shows that investing in gender equality can accelerate sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty. The Women's Green Business Initiative aims to empower women workers and entrepreneurs in developing countries to engage in the design, production and delivery of green technologies, products, services and information that can help societies adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Initiative supports broader efforts to remove the legal, policy and regulatory obstacles that hinder women's entrepreneurship and employment in the new and emerging industries of the green economy.



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