



The Role of Government Procurement in Enhancing Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women

Overview of the GrOW Project

The Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) East Africa initiative seeks to spur transformative change to advance gender equality in the world of work. GrOW East Africa is a partnership between the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Canada's International Development Research Centre.

GrOW East Africa funded a research project by Strathmore Business School on *Enhancing the effectiveness of government procurement programs in achieving women's economic empowerment in Kenya*.

The project focused on Kenya's Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) Program. The research had the following objectives:

- i. Assessing the effectiveness of the AGPO program in promoting women's economic empowerment;
- ii. Examining the barriers that women face in accessing these opportunities;
- iii. Identifying appropriate interventions that can be integrated into current government initiatives to enhance women's participation in the AGPO program and promote their economic empowerment.

The findings of the research showed that:

The AGPO program was effective in **empowering women entrepreneurs** in four dimensions – economic, agency, social and institutional empowerment.

The **key policy barriers** were: inadequate communication from government agencies on AGPO, the tender procedures that were described as complex and burdensome, non-compliance of the procuring entities with the law, corruption and failure to pay suppliers on time.

The **key barriers among the enterprises** were: inadequate finances to service tenders, weak technical expertise to complete tender documents, inability to navigate the procurement platform, lack of continuous training on AGPO and lack of self-efficacy by the women entrepreneurs.

The **key policy interventions** to enhance participation in the AGPO program included: making financing readily available to AGPO-registered women entrepreneurs, making timely payments to suppliers, providing access to timely, quality information on the AGPO program, strengthening the procurement process to make it fair and transparent, and allowing for consortia bidding by AGPO registered firms.

The **enterprise-based interventions** were capacity building to women entrepreneurs and providing technical support during the registration and tendering processes.

More women should seek to participate in the AGPO program to reap its benefits and grow their enterprises.



HOW TO APPLY FOR AN AGPO CERTIFICATE ONLINE

Steps for applying for an AGPO Certificate are as follows:

1. Go to www.agpo.go.ke and click on 'Register'
2. Create an account by filling in your personal details, email address and set a password.
3. An activation link will be sent to your email account. Follow the link and verify your account.
4. Log back to the AGPO system using the email address and password you have set.
5. Register your business by providing information in the required fields and attach the required scanned documents mentioned below.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR AN AGPO CERTIFICATE INCLUDE:

- National Identity Card or Passport.
- Business Registration Certificate/Certificate of Incorporation.
- KRA PIN and/or VAT Certificate.
- Tax Compliance Certificate.
- Partnership Deed for Partnership Business.
- Memorandum and Articles of Association and CR12 for registered limited companies.

Please note that there are some industries that need letters and certificates from relevant bodies, e.g., construction, tourism, medicine, energy, communication or other technical and professional bodies.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES THAT AGPO PARTICIPATION MAY OPEN UP:

- Access to other business opportunities
- Access to private sector procurement
- Easier access to credit
- Easier access to more bids after succeeding once
- Opportunities for business training

HOW TO CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR APPLICATION ON THE AGPO WEBSITE

Have you applied online for AGPO registration and want to check the status of your application?

Please follow the steps below:

STEP 1: GO TO WWW.AGPO.GO.KE

STEP 2: CLICK ON LOGIN AT THE TOP LEFT SIDE OF THE AGPO HOMEPAGE.

STEP 3: THIS WILL LEAD TO A PAGE FOR RETURNING USER.

STEP 4: INPUT THE EMAIL ADDRESS AND PASSWORD YOU USED TO CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT DURING THE INITIAL REGISTRATION.

STEP 5: ONCE LOGGED IN, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE THE STATUS OF YOUR APPLICATION: APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED AND THE REASONS WHY.

STEP 6: IF DISAPPROVED, MAKE THE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS.

STEP 7: LOG OUT OF THE ACCOUNT.

I started government procurement in 2017. I learnt about AGPO and registered for it. I also learnt about the Request for Quotations (RFQ) tendering method, which is easy and straightforward. I chose this option. Each year, I send out my business profile to about 60 state corporations. I have been prequalified by a number of them and I get many tenders. Government procurement is a full time job for me.

~Anne M., Kajiado County~

I registered because of the benefits which AGPO offers and opportunities to network with other entrepreneurs and suppliers.

~Geraldine O., Kisumu County ~

It is easy and fast to register for AGPO. I used a Huduma Centre. There was no fee charged, all the information is readily available.

~Mueni M, Kitui County~

I registered for AGPO in 2017. I looked for all the documents required for the application, and it was straightforward – getting the AGPO certificate was easy

~E. Chebet, Trans Nzoia County~

From the money I got from the tenders, I started an export business of macadamia nuts and coffee to China and my business is doing very well. Thanks to the seed capital from AGPO tenders. I also purchased a car that I use to run my other business. I have also employed some people to help me run the business. I have gained a lot of business acumen.

~M. Wangui, Nyeri County ~

AGPO tendering has really opened me up to think about government tendering more broadly. I started applying for open tenders, and I have been successful there too.

~Lucy W., Embu County ~

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