

WEAmericas: Women's Entrepreneurship in the Americas



PRESIDENT OBAMA launched the Women's Entrepreneurship in the Americas (WEAmericas) initiative at the Summit of the Americas in 2012. WEAmericas leverages public-private partnerships to encourage inclusive economic growth in the Western Hemisphere. The initiative reduces barriers and increases opportunities for women entrepreneurs to start and grow small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) by improving: access to markets; access to capital; skills and capacity building; and leadership opportunities.

WEAMERICAS PARTNERSHIPS

Through WEAmericas, public, private, and nonprofit partners are working together to build a stronger and more collaborative environment for women entrepreneurs to achieve mutually beneficial goals: inclusive economic growth; social impact from commercial activity/growth; formalization of informal sector work; and enhanced competitiveness for firms and local economies. WEAmericas partnerships expect to benefit more than 20,000 women in more than 17 countries in the region by 2015.

WEAmericas Policies and Programs

ACCESS TO MARKETS

WEAmericas is increasing women's access to markets by connecting women-owned businesses to global supplier databases; identifying barriers to and best practices for sourcing from women-owned business; and creating incentives to advance the success of women-owned businesses at the national and international level.

Through partnerships with WEConnect International in Mexico and Jamaica, WEAmericas is increasing market access for women-owned businesses through business registration and certification and providing opportunities for supply chain integration with multinational organizations.

ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

WEAmericas is connecting women with new and existing networks, organizations, and business opportunities across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada and will support programs that facilitate dialogues between women leaders throughout the Americas.

Through the WEAmericas International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the U.S. Department of State provides an annual three week exchange with intensive training and meetings to strengthen the business skills of women entrepreneurs and organizations that support them. In 2012, alumnae of the WEAmericas IVLP formed the WEAmericas Network, an independent body with a democratically elected Executive Board. The Executive Board, along with several U.S. and international partners, will host their second annual WEAmericas Convention in October 2014 in Chile.

ACCESS TO CAPITAL

WEAmericas is increasing women's access to capital by raising awareness of the need, reason, and benefits of expanding financial inclusion for women; promoting the adoption of best practices in service and product delivery for women by financial institutions; and developing innovative models that leverage technology and regulatory frameworks to expand women's access to capital.

The Inter-American Development Bank is providing up to \$5 million in technical assistance grants to train loan officers and credit managers at financial institutions on innovative lending models that support women-owned SMEs.

ACCESS TO SKILLS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

WEAmericas is increasing women's access to skills and capacity building by connecting women entrepreneurs with business mentors to advise them as their businesses grow and to help them develop critical skills through training in business management and entrepreneurship.

Technology experts, civil society organizations and women entrepreneurs will partner during a series of four WEAmericas TechCamps between 2014 and 2015 in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, and El Salvador to develop low-cost, easy-to-implement technological solutions to challenges women entrepreneurs face in growing their businesses.

For more information please contact: WEAmericasInitiative@state.gov.