
News release

Communiqué

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SUPPORTS WECONNECT CANADA'S
PROJECT TO OPEN CORPORATE MARKETS TO WOMEN**

OTTAWA – The federal government is pleased to support WEConnect Canada as it launches its *Opening Doors to Corporate Markets: An Education, Training, Coaching and Mentoring Program*. The announcement was made by the Honourable Helena Guergis, Minister of State (Status of Women), at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier in downtown Ottawa.

The project addresses one of Status of Women Canada's priority areas – women's economic autonomy – by providing women entrepreneurs with the business literacy they need to access supplier diversity markets made up of a wide range of corporations and governments. This in turn will enable them to expand their businesses and compete internationally.

"In Canada today, women are starting business at twice the rate of men. In working with WEConnect, we are giving those women access to markets which were unavailable to them previously," said Minister Guergis. "Status of Women Canada, in partnership with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, is committed to ensuring the success of Canadian businesswomen as they conduct trade around the globe. By partnering with such worthy projects as WEConnect, this Government continues to advance women's full participation in all aspects of Canadian life, including helping them expand their businesses to the next level of success."

"Women entrepreneurs are one of the fastest-growing segments of Canada's economy," said the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway. "As business leaders, these women are playing a critical role in helping our economy ride out the storm, and build the foundation of tomorrow's prosperity."

"Thanks to the support of the Government of Canada and Minister Guergis, as many as 2,500 business women will gain the knowledge they need to significantly increase their economic opportunities," said Ms. Laraine Kaminsky, Lead Strategist for WEConnect Canada.

WEConnect Canada will receive \$611,000 over three years for the *Opening Doors* program, which will focus on increasing economic opportunities for women-owned businesses through corporate supply chains in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries that promote supplier diversity. In addition, it will seek to enable qualified women's business enterprises to participate in economic growth through access to large contract opportunities.

WEConnect Canada delivers the leading international certification standard for women-owned businesses. An independent, non-profit organization, WEConnect Canada is responding to the growing demand for a diversity of suppliers by certifying businesses solely or primarily owned by women.

Funding for the *Opening Doors* project comes from the Women's Partnership Fund of the Women's Program of Status of Women Canada.

Status of Women Canada is a federal government agency working to promote the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada.

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Ce texte est également disponible en français.

For news releases and information on Status of Women Canada, go to <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca>.