

**Beyond Corporate Social Responsibility: Using Research to Advance Women's Empowerment through Entrepreneurship**

# Challenges to Growth for Women-Business Owners

## Economic Factors

Limited Access to Finance

Institutional Challenges

Lack of Technical Skills

Limited Access to Market Network

Lack of Prior Experience

Limited Access to Technology

➔ Limits economic empowerment of women

➔ Limits participation and voice of women in economic activities

## Socio-cultural Factors

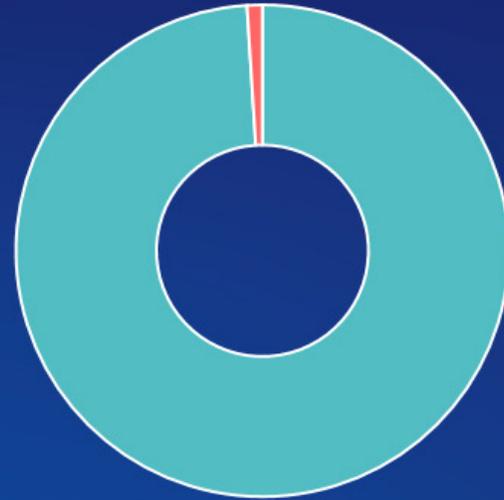
Family Matters

Restriction of Mobility

Gender Biased Economic Role

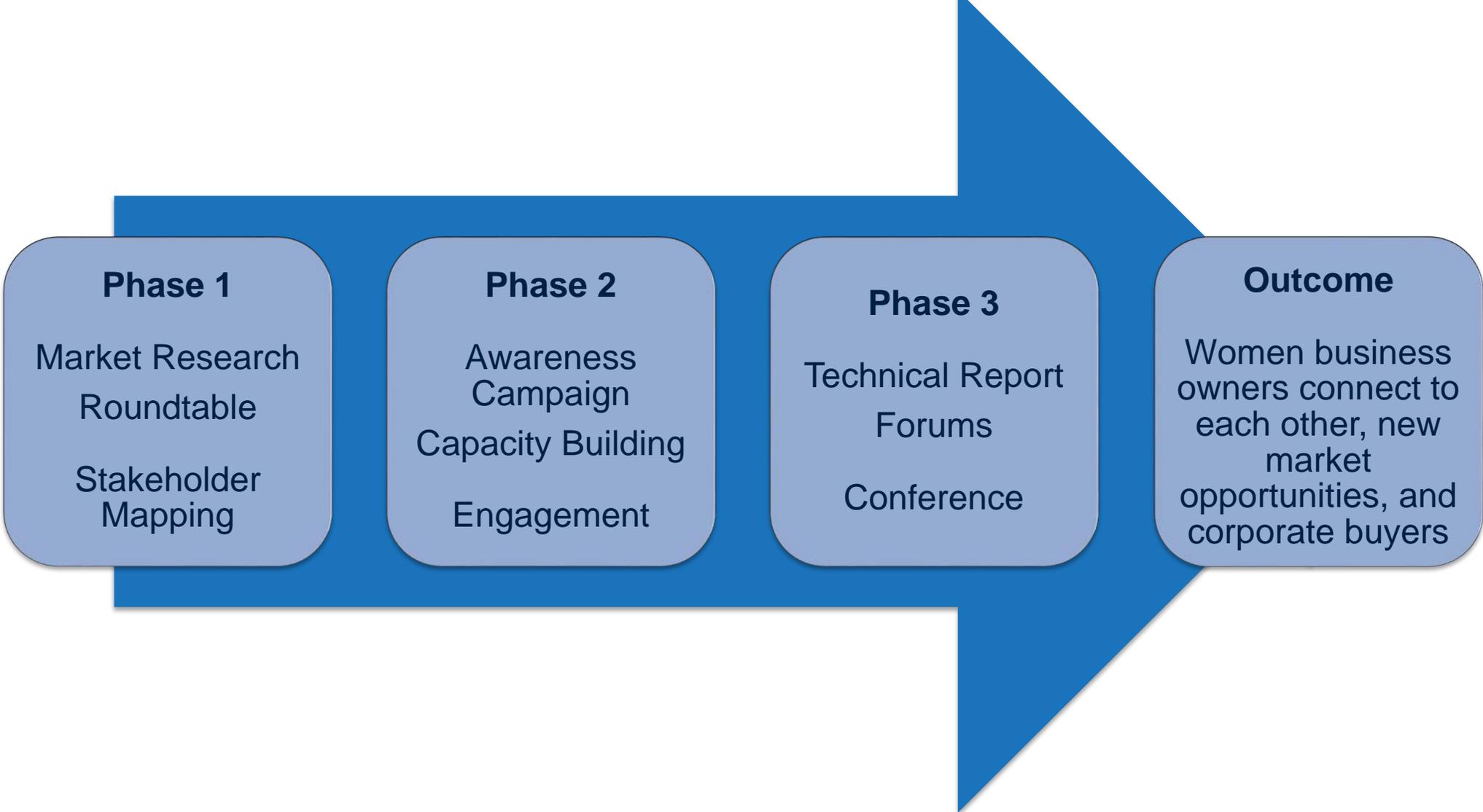
Poor Security Conditions

# Women in Value Chains Today



Today, **only 1 percent** of large corporate and government spend worldwide goes to women-owned businesses

# Introduction and Context



# Project Baseline

## Corporate Buyers

Key sectors for economic growth and job creation

Names of national and multinational corporations in these sectors and what they buy

Tier 1: Retail  
(products for resale)

Tier 1: Business Operations  
(products / services to run business)

Tier 2/3: Materials  
(products / services for production)



## Women-Owned Businesses

Types of women-owned businesses

Key sectors of operation

Products or services offered within each sector and which ones are owned, managed and controlled by women

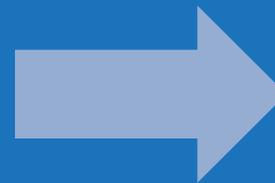
# Survey Process

**Literature review** of government policies, business associations and socioeconomic factors



**Questionnaire** with 38 senior executives and sourcing professionals from local and international corporations

**Questionnaire** with 60 women-owned growth-oriented businesses



**Roundtable discussion** to validate findings and generate actionable recommendations



**In-person one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions** with 17 women business owners, 16 corporate representatives, and 12 government, NGO and financial sector stakeholders

# Key Findings: Corporations

- **29 percent** had a corporate policy that encouraged sourcing from women suppliers
- Only **29 percent** know they procure from women suppliers
- Nearly **20 percent** did not know if they had women suppliers
- Many did not know how to buy more from women suppliers
- Many think of buying from women as CSR
- Many would use a database of women suppliers

## Profile of Corporate Buyers

**34%** of respondents were **Senior Executives**

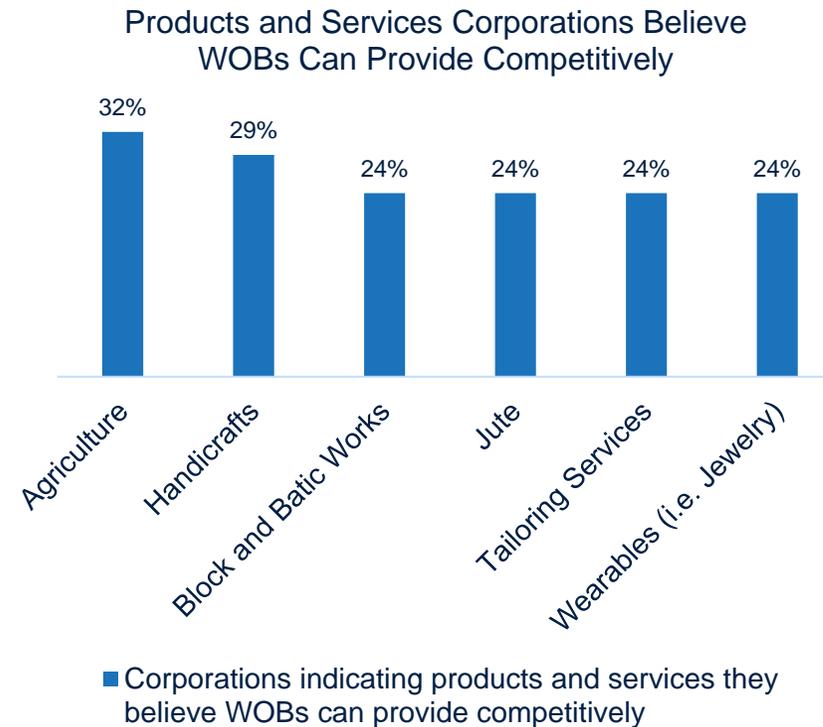
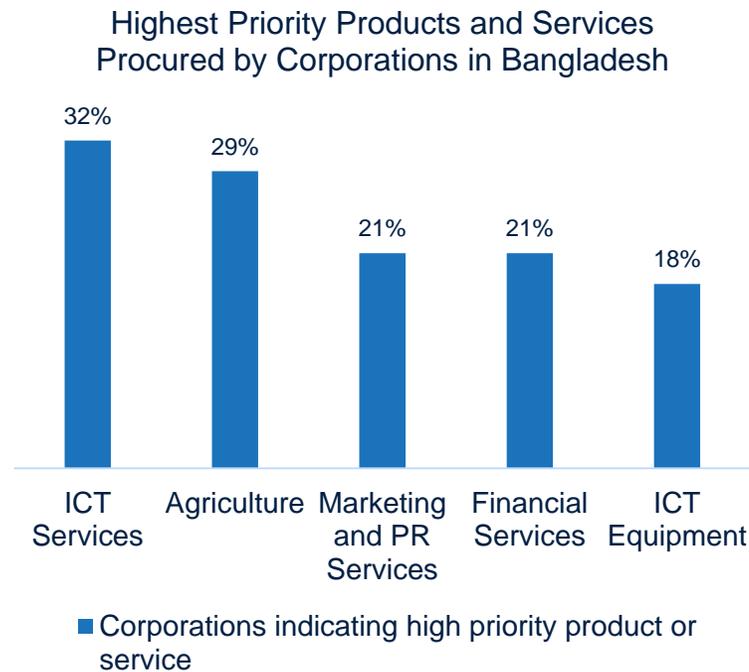
**21%** of respondents were **Procurement Specialists**

**29%** of respondents were **Women**

**74%** of the corporations are headquartered in **Bangladesh**

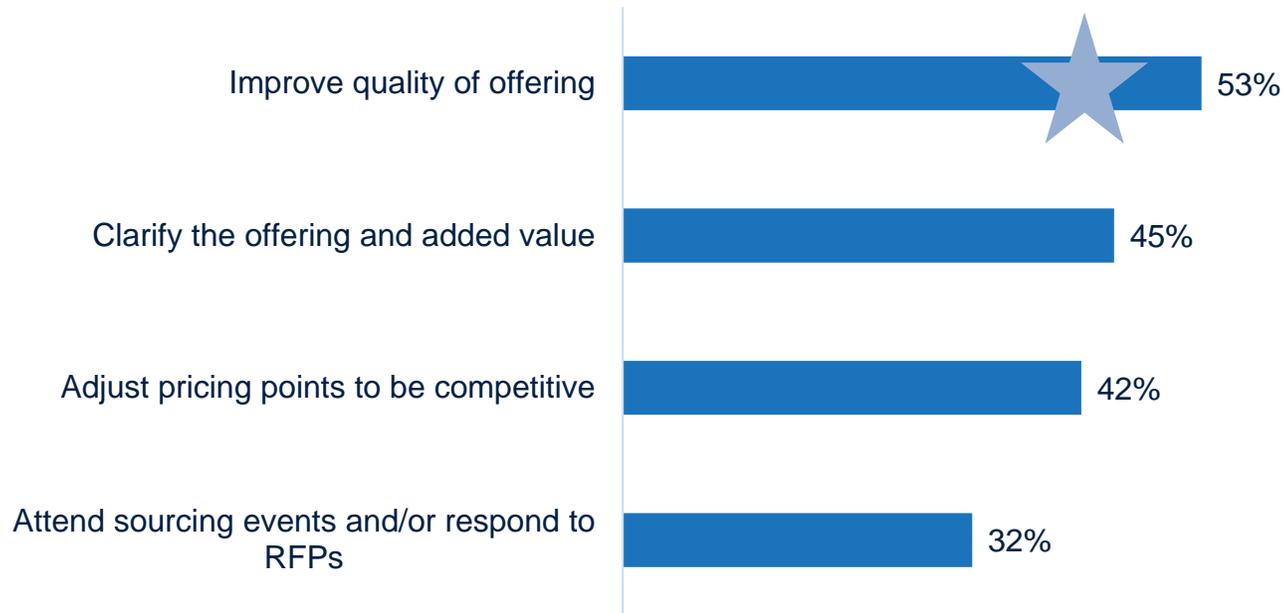
# Key Findings: Corporations

55 percent do not believe that women-owned businesses can competitively provide the highest-priority products and services that are procured locally by corporations



# Key Findings: Corporations

Actions women-owned businesses can take to do more business with or start doing business with corporations (% of respondents)



Nearly **60 percent** of corporate respondents felt that if women-owned businesses in Bangladesh had equal access to financial services, they would be more inclined to use them as suppliers

## Profile of Women Business Owner Respondents

**87%** say they are at least **51% owned, managed and controlled by women**

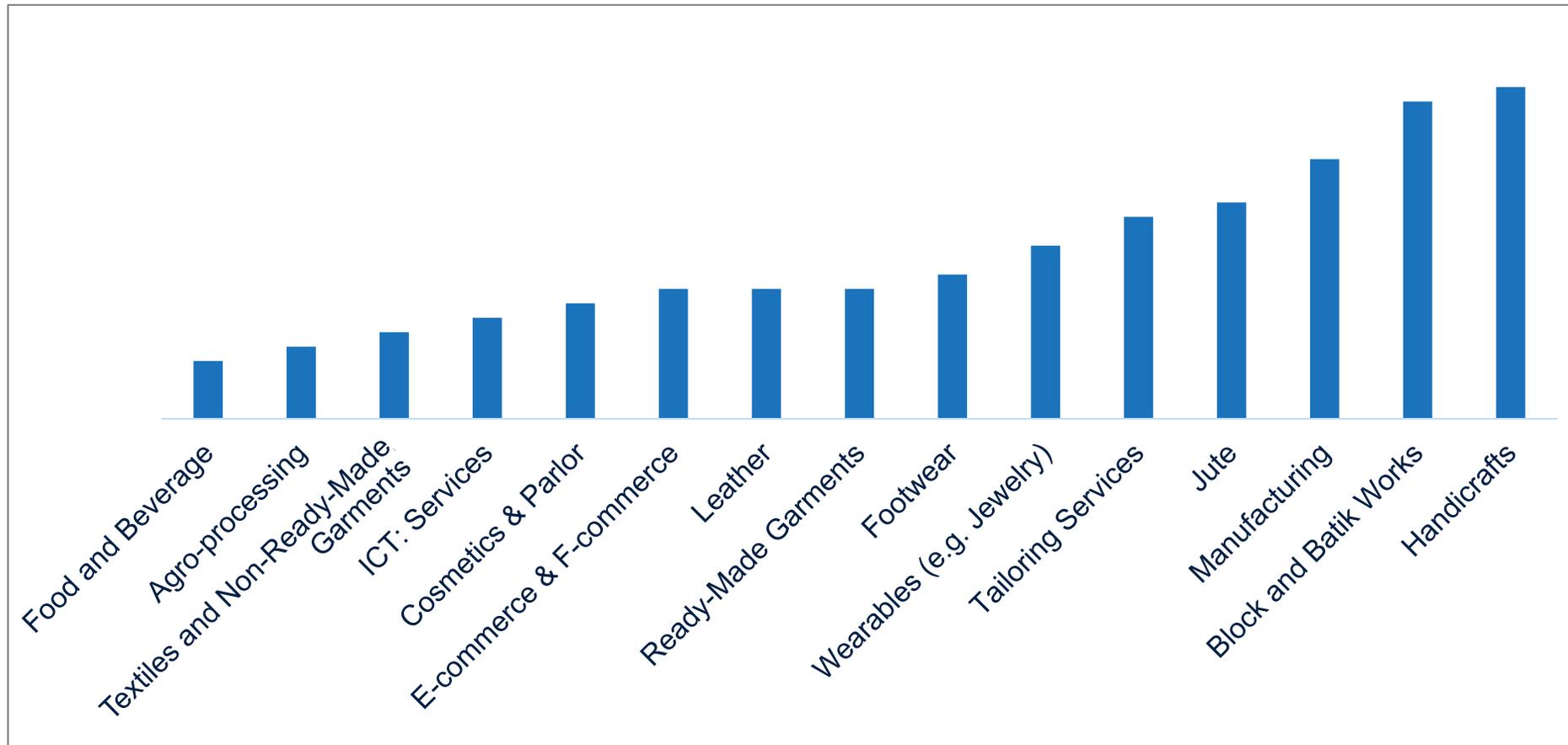
**27%** are currently doing business with a **multinational corporation**

**52%** of the businesses **employ 11-100 workers**

**27%** have average **revenue growth** between 5-10% per year

# Key Findings: Women-Owned Businesses

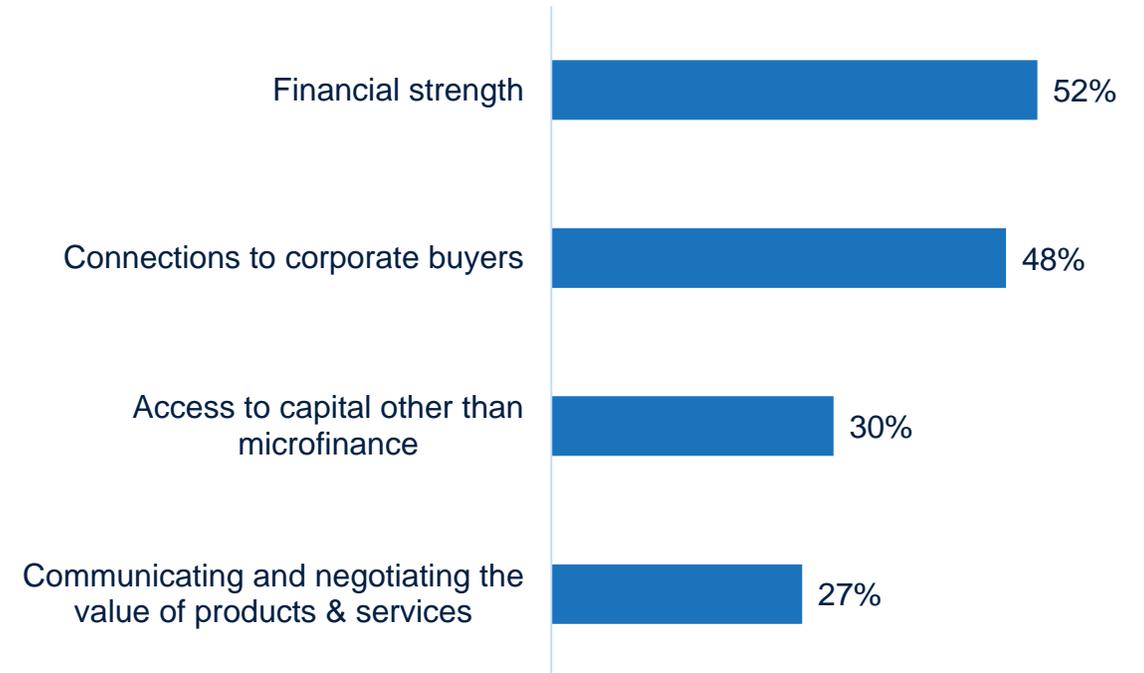
## Sectors of Operation from Survey



# Key Findings: Women-Owned Businesses

- **48 percent** experienced difficulty in making connections to corporate buyers
- Only **38 percent** had advertised at least once in the last six months
- Only **36 percent** have up-to-date social media or marketing campaigns
- **27 percent** recognized the need to better communicate and negotiate the value of their products and services

Challenges faced by WOBs in all sectors when considering doing business with a multinational corporation (% of respondents)



# Key Findings: Women-Owned Businesses

## Business Environment Challenges

- Acquiring and maintaining business insurance, a trade license, or tax certification is **costly** and **time-consuming**
- Applying for a **business loan** was perceived as **complicated**, with few lending institutions willing to offer the amount of financing at the terms and conditions sought

## Socio-Cultural Factors

- **28 percent** felt that women engaging in business faced obstacles that their male counterparts do not
- **3 percent** had faced gender discrimination from corporate buyers based on explicit discriminatory statements
- Women-owned businesses perceive entrepreneurship is **not a respected career** path for women in Bangladesh

# Areas of Opportunity

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