



# Evaluation Summary

## Business Women in International Trade Initiative, 2018-19 to 2021-22



### ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Global Affairs Canada's Evaluation Division conducted an evaluation of the department's Business Women in International Trade (BWIT) initiative for the period from fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 to FY 2021-22. The evaluation aimed to highlight strengths and gaps in BWIT's objectives, resources and delivery of services, and to identify ways in which the initiative can maximize its results and support to businesses and partners.



### KEY FINDINGS

- There is a continued need for specialized support for women entrepreneurs and other underrepresented groups to support their access to international trade.
- BWIT was aligned with the Government of Canada's Export Diversification Strategy and inclusive approach to trade. It was complementary to other government departments and GAC trade programs through its distinct focus on women exporters.
- BWIT's decentralization enabled teams at both headquarters and the regional offices (ROs) to focus on their comparative strengths, and improved its performance.
- The Inclusive Trade, Free Trade Agreement Promotion and Trade Missions Division's (BPE's) inclusive trade promotion at GAC had a tangible impact on relevant policy and programming, and its engagement with women's support organizations increased the reach and awareness of relevant Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) support.
- Diversity champions in ROs fostered TCS engagement with a wider subset of Canadian women and underrepresented entrepreneurs. Reporting to ROs provided diversity champions with flexibility in applying the role, but limited BPE's oversight of services. BPE provided limited strategic direction and focused training for the application of the diversity champion role.
- While the BWIT Trade Program Fund was fundamental in enabling missions to organize successful initiatives to promote inclusive international trade, BWIT services were not designed to systematically align with sectors in which women entrepreneurs were mostly concentrated, which limited the targeting of services to this group.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formalize guidance and enhance support to regional offices on the diversity champion role and responsibilities in addressing the distinct needs of women entrepreneurs.
2. Prioritize the selection of BWIT Trade Program Fund initiatives that align with the sectors in which women entrepreneurs are most concentrated.

