In 2017, WEConnect International celebrated its eighth year of connecting growth-oriented women-owned businesses to corporate buyers around the world. Over the past year, our network of women-owned businesses grew to 7,000 in over 100 countries. We leveraged existing partnerships and forged new connections to multiply our impact.

For example, in 2017, WEConnect International’s partnership with Global Citizen inspired some of the world’s largest multinational corporations to join us at Global Citizen Festivals across the globe in pledging to buy more from women-owned businesses. These commitments, together with 2016 corporate commitments made on the Global Citizen stage, represent a total of $1 billion in spend with women worldwide.

Despite our progress, there is still work to be done. Across the globe, women continue to earn on average less than one percent of the money spent on suppliers by large corporations and governments. Our coalition of global partners, government allies, corporate members, and women business owners are integral to bridging that gap. Together, we are leading the way for a better tomorrow for everyone!

Elizabeth A. Vazquez
CEO & Co-Founder, WEConnect International
I am honored to serve as the Chair of the Board of WEConnect International, along with a remarkable roster of committed corporate professionals joined together to advance the mission and vision of the organization.

In 2017, our list of corporate members increased by 10% to nearly 80 multinational corporations, with a total combined spend of over $2.4 Billion with women-owned businesses based outside of the United States. WEConnect International also hosted its inaugural Awards Gala and Global Supplier Diversity and Inclusion Symposium in Washington, DC.

I would like to thank the WEConnect International staff for continuing to push the limits and reach of the organization. A special thanks and acknowledgment to Elizabeth Vazquez, WEConnect International’s President, whose passion and leadership remains a driving force for change. I applaud the progress WEConnect International and its network of buyers and sellers made in 2017 and look forward to continued growth and innovation in 2018.

Working together, we can help to ensure all women-owned businesses have an equal opportunity to access new markets, compete and reach their full potential.
WEConnect International helps women-owned businesses succeed in
global value chains. WEConnect International identifies, educates,
registers, and certifies women's business enterprises based outside of
the U.S. that are at least 51% owned, as well as managed, controlled,
and operated by one or more women, and then connects them with
multinational corporate buyers.

A world in which women have the same opportunity as their male
counterparts to design and implement business solutions that create
wealth and ensure the sustainable prosperity of their communities.
WHAT WE DO

EDUCATE
We educate women business owners on how to access new markets and grow their companies.

TRAIN
We train corporations on how to source from women business owners and we train women business owners on how to sell to corporations.

ASSESS
We identify women-owned businesses, assess their readiness to access new markets, and provide a certification for Women’s Business Enterprises wanting to do business with corporations committed to global supplier diversity and inclusion.

CONNECT
We break down the barriers that prevent women business owners from connecting to each other and to new market opportunities, including connections to local and multinational corporate buyers.
CORPORATE MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

"Walmart is focused on leveraging our size and scale to empower women across the globe. We believe increasing sourcing from women-owned businesses is the right thing to do and will make us a better retailer by providing more products and services which align to the needs of our customers. WEConnect International helps us identify women-owned businesses for our global supply chain."

Jenny Grieser, Senior Director, Women’s Economic Empowerment, Walmart

"Hilton is working to expand its global supplier diversity and inclusion efforts and we see WEConnect International as an integral part of our strategy."

Fred Lona, Senior Director, Supplier Diversity and Performance Management, Hilton Worldwide
Making an Impact: A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Development

Over the past five years, the ExxonMobil Foundation has supported WEConnect International in six key markets: Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and South Africa. Thanks to this generous support, WEConnect International achieved the following impact:

- Trained +3,000 women business owners in the skills and knowledge necessary to grow their business.
- Facilitated +10,000 connections between women business owners and corporate buyers.
- Supported +50 women business owners who won new business with corporations.

WEConnect International deeply values its partnership with the ExxonMobil Foundation and looks forward to continuing to empower even more women business owners in 2018 and beyond. The ExxonMobil Foundation's continued commitment to women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship writ large serves as an enduring precedent for global corporations everywhere.
MAJOR GRANTS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

2017 Major Grants

ExxonMobil Foundation 2017

International Development Research Centre

The World Bank Group Bangladesh Project

Thunderbird, WEAmericas

US State Department, Colombia

2017 Special Projects

Freeport-McMoRan, Indonesia

International Finance Corporation, Vietnam

Walmart Women Entrepreneur Development Program 2.0 in India

2017 P&G Global Training Program
It's been an amazing year for our network of women-owned businesses and corporate members. Thank you to everyone who attended our events, joined or led a webinar, hosted a supplier meeting or matchmaking event, and did their part to #BuyWomenOwned. And a big congratulations to all the women's business enterprises that landed contracts with our corporate members!
CERTIFICATION

Statistics:

764 Certified Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs)

6,373 Self-Registered Women-Owned Businesses (WOBs)

23 Countries Offering WBE Certification

+251 Total Women-Owned Businesses added in 2017

Certified WBEs By Revenue

- <100K
- 100K-500K
- 500K-1M
- 1M-5M
- 5M-10M
- >10M

Launch of Virtual Certification

Launched in September of 2017, WEConnect International's Virtual Certification provides a new, innovative method to certify Women's Business Enterprises by utilizing the power of technology to conduct online assessments and interviews through our E-Network.

Impact:

By limiting the time and cost associated with providing physical assessors on the ground in each country, we now have the capabilities to grow and scale our network exponentially, certifying and empowering more women, in more countries around the world.
This year, WEConnect International continued its partnership with Global Citizen, the world’s largest movement to social action. Global Citizen utilizes content, global festivals, grassroots organizing, and digital channels to end extreme poverty by 2030. In 2016, WEConnect International and Global Citizen launched a campaign that led to **20,000 global citizens committing to join the global movement** to buy more from women-owned businesses and called on companies to commit as well.

WEConnect International and corporate members **Accenture, Citi, EY, IBM, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, P&G, Pfizer, UPS, and Walmart** took action to leverage their purchasing power and support more women entrepreneurs around the world. These commitments, together with 2016 corporate commitments made on the Global Citizen stage, represent a total of **$1 BILLION IN SPEND WITH WOMEN.**
As a woman entrepreneur growing her business in Brazil, Monica Cardoso Schimenes de Oliveira has faced many challenges. Becoming active with WEConnect International gave her a network of women who faced similar obstacles: It was "like recognizing my life in the lives of so many other businesswomen", says Monica. "It gave me the confidence to participate in the certification process."

MCM Brand Group is located in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Since 1997, it has offered integrated communications services that promote meetings between ideas, brands, and people in diverse environments in both Brazil and the United States. For CEO Monica, the opportunity to attend events and meetings with corporations has provided critical business connections and insight into how companies think about diversity in practical ways. It was this insight and exposure that led MCM Brand Group to be accepted to, and later graduated from, Monsanto’s Supplier Diversity Mentorship Program.

WEConnect International Women's Business Enterprise Certification and market access events also helped MCM Brand Group win a contract with Dell Brazil for 2018. Dell invited them to apply for a contract and they were able to submit a proposal that specifically addressed Dell’s needs and was in accordance with Dell’s Supply Chain and Marketing requirements.

WEConnect International Certification has not only driven new business and connections to MCM Brand Group, it has driven Monica and her company to pursue larger goals, improve their processes and productivity, and become results oriented.
The UN High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment presented its first report, “Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment,” to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the 71st session of the UN General Assembly. WEConnect International CEO and Co-Founder Elizabeth Vazquez served on the UN High-Level Panel comprised of the heads of the UN, UN Women, the World Bank Group, the IMF, the UK Department for International Development and other influential leaders from various fields of government, business, academia, and civil society, and co-chaired by Luis Guillermo Solis, President of Costa Rica, and Simona Scarpaleggia, CEO IKEA, Switzerland.

UN High-Level Panel members were charged with supporting and providing guidance on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to improve economic outcomes for women and promote women’s leadership in driving sustainable, inclusive, gender-responsive and environmentally sensitive economic growth. The Panel’s first report, second report, and toolkits were designed to address challenges and find solutions that will eliminate legal barriers to women’s economic empowerment, reduce gender pay gaps, ensure financial and digital inclusion, and foster female entrepreneurship.
SPOTLIGHT: TRAINING FOR WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

Women Entrepreneurship Development Program (WEDP)

In April 2017, thirty-two women entrepreneurs graduated from the inaugural Walmart Women Entrepreneurship Development Program (WEDP) in India implemented in partnership with WEConnect International. From that graduating class, eleven participants were onboarded with Walmart as registered suppliers. Later in 2017, Walmart and WEConnect International launched the second iteration, WEDP 2.0. This program built the capacity of 60+ women business owners and equipped them with professional and personal skills to strengthen their abilities to compete for large contracts.

In 2017, P&G partnered with WEConnect International to implement capacity building programs for women-owned businesses in China, Mexico, South Africa, and Turkey. These programs aim to empower women business owners to grow and scale their business through targeted training, professional development, and mentorship. In 2018, P&G will launch similar programs with WEConnect International in India, Mexico, Nigeria, the UK.
In 2017, WEConnect International hosted its inaugural International Awards Gala in Washington D.C., bringing together over 200 of our Fortune 500 corporate members, government officials, diplomats, thought leaders, and philanthropic and civil society organizations who are champions for women’s entrepreneurship and economic empowerment writ large. The evening celebrated the work of six distinguished guests and highlighted several WEConnect International certified Women's Business Enterprises.

A big THANK YOU to all of our sponsors:
GLOBAL SUPPLIER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SYMPOSIUM

Designed for corporate supplier diversity and inclusion professionals, as well as corporate social responsibility and sustainability professionals, the 2017 inaugural Global Supplier Diversity and Inclusion Symposium was the first event of its kind. The event brought together expert practitioners, in an intimate setting, to share tools and resources to successfully begin a global supplier diversity and inclusion journey or to enhance current global efforts.

A big THANK YOU to all of our sponsors:

AMBASSADOR SPONSOR

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SUPPORTERS

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IBM

Intel

MONSANTO

Live streaming for the WEConnect International Symposium was provided by Certified Women's Business Enterprise:

WORLD WIDE PICTURES
Thank you to all of the sponsors who made our annual WEConnect International Day at the 2017 WBENC National Conference and Business Fair the most successful to date!

+200 Total Attendees
+70 Corporate Executives
+15 Countries Represented
+100 Women-Owned Businesses

GOLD

SILVER

SUPPORTERS

BRONZE

AMBASSADOR

ADVOCATES

High performance. Delivered.

Save money. Live better.
Ebru Yıldırım, CEO of Parlonist, was already familiar with WEConnect International from her previous work at Accenture, one of WEConnect International’s corporate members. She pursued certification for Parlonist because of the incredible benefits it offers, including a network of women-owned businesses, education, mentoring opportunities, and the ability to attend events to meet leaders of international companies, such as BKM and Marriott. According to Ebru, “It’s a dream to meet those inspiring people and get their advice and continue your way with refreshed thoughts.”

Parlonist is a professional translation agency that provides translation and interpretation services to companies in the medical, legal, marketing, and sales fields. Located in Istanbul, Turkey and established in 2014, it became a certified Women’s Business Enterprise through WEConnect International in September 2016.

Following the connections facilitated by WEConnect International, Parlonist is now working with Marriott International, The Interbank Card Center (BKM), Turkey Relocation Management Services, and Affani Group. Ebru and her team worked diligently to make these connections by attending events and following leads from WEConnect International. “I’ve never seen such an effective network of people,” Ebru said. “You really witness that actions speak louder than words.”

Ebru and her team hope that the new business facilitated through WEConnect International Women’s Business Enterprise Certification will continue to drive their company to pursue larger goals, improve their processes and productivity, and expand their own network of suppliers.
**SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHTS**

**Freed Translations, Germany**

"As a WEConnect International Certified Women's Business Enterprise, we have been a Tier 1 supplier of PepsiCo for over 10 years. After attending a matchmaking event, we are collaborating with another Women Owned Business to work with Intel."

**Mo's Food & Pastries, South Africa**

"Since becoming a WEConnect International Certified Women's Business Enterprise, I have catered for events for P&G and am now a registered supplier. I have also gained incredible confidence through the quarterly matchmaking events."

**Malena Gourmet, Peru**

"After becoming a WEConnect International Certified Women's Business Enterprise, we approached corporate members EY and Sodexo directly. Shortly after the initial introduction, EY tested our services in a small event and have now incorporated Malena Gourmet into their supplier database."
SUCCES STORY HIGHLIGHTS

SB Café Los Santos, Costa Rica

"After pursuing WEConnect International Women's Business Enterprise Certification for SB Café Los Santos in 2016, all of our products now proudly display the Women-Owned Logo. That brand visibility has helped position our products to be readily available for purchase on Amazon.com."

Axiomatech, Canada

"With WEConnect International, I met different partners such as BDC, who I now work with. I received excellent advice from other WEConnect International certified and self-registered women by attending seminar sessions and have built relationships with corporate reps which has led to contracts."

Winnow Chocolates, Australia

"Our company is now beginning to excel in the corporate market through its certification with WEConnect International. Winnow was encouraged to certify by the Marriott Hotel Sydney Harbour and has subsequently been engaged by other major global corporations."
WEConnect International Ambassadors are a very select group of internationally successful women business owners devoted to bolstering WEConnect International’s commitment to opening doors for women business owners, economic empowerment, and inclusive growth. We are honored to recognize the outstanding work our global Ambassadors have done this year to advocate for women business owners around the world.

Thank You!

Mei Xu
Founder and CEO of Chesapeake Bay Candle

Janice Bryant Howroyd
Founder and CEO of The Act I Group

Margery Kraus
Founder and Executive Chairman of APCO Worldwide
2017 AT A GLANCE
REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

+1,420 Self-Registered Women-Owned Businesses

WEConnect International in Africa operates in both South Africa and Nigeria. Both markets held several matchmaking and training events in 2017. In Israel, WEConnect International continues to work with the Jasmine organization to offer women entrepreneurs access to events and the opportunity to join the WEConnect International network.

+2,000 Connections Facilitated Between Women-Owned Businesses and Corporate Members

88 Certified Women's Business Enterprises

+660 Women Business Owners Trained

Event Spotlight: WEConnect International in South Africa Annual Conference

An action-filled program with a variety of contributions from local and international speakers made the 2017 WEConnect International in South Africa Annual Conference particularly memorable. Drawing over 160 attendees, the day’s lively panel discussions between corporate members and women business owners offered useful insights, information, and guidance on working successfully with multinational corporations as well as in-depth information about supplier inclusion.
WEConnect International is active in five markets in the Asia Pacific: Australasia, Bangladesh, Greater China, India, and Indonesia. Activities in Bangladesh are funded by the World Bank Group. In 2017, the groundwork was laid to launch certification in two new countries in 2018: Japan and Singapore. In addition, WEConnect International co-hosted a business forum with the IFC in Vietnam.

**Event Spotlight: THINKBIG 2017 Summit**

On November 13, 2017 over 85 speakers, 50 exhibitors, 1,650+ visitors, 150 industry thought leaders, 30+ outreach partners led by TTC and Business and Women's Associations came together in Gurugram, India, for ThinkBig 2017 to give a resounding yes to our shared vision of creating an inclusive ecosystem focused on women entrepreneurs. ThinkBig 2017 was Asia’s largest women’s entrepreneurship platform to connect women-owned businesses with public and private sector opportunities.
REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

+230
Self-Registered Women-Owned Businesses

+280
Connections Facilitated Between Women-Owned Businesses and Corporate Members

+420
Women Business Owners Trained

142
Certified Women's Business Enterprises in Canada

62
Registered Women's Business Enterprises in the U.S, certified by WBENC*

WEConnect International has been active in Canada since 2009 working with strategic partners, government agencies, corporate members, and women business owners across the country. Businesses based in the U.S. that are Certified by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)* as a Women's Business Enterprise can also join WEConnect International's eNetwork.

Event Spotlight: Power the Economy 2017

WEConnect International in Canada hosted its annual "Power the Economy" signature event in 2017 for women-owned businesses, multinational corporations, senior government officials, and partner organizations to support the growth of women’s entrepreneurship across Canada. The event provided education for business owners seeking to grow their businesses as well as a rich environment for corporations interested in creating or improving their inclusive sourcing programs.
2017 was a pivotal year for WEConnect International in Europe as efforts to launch certification were initiated in Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The existing markets in the UK & Ireland continued to grow and Turkey hosted its first annual conference in Istanbul.

**Event Spotlight: WEConnect International Europe Conference 2017**

Europe’s flagship event of 2017 took place in central London and featured dynamic panel discussions, presentations and breakout sessions based on the conference theme of inspiration, innovation, and insight to empower women business owners to succeed in global value chains. Over 170 attendees took advantage of the exclusive opportunities to network, connect, and engage with other female business owners and representatives from WEConnect International’s corporate members.
WEConnect International operates in seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru. During 2017, the region continued to grow and expand, hosting over 10 Meet the Member events and two Annual Conferences in Mexico and Costa Rica.

**REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:**

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

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<td>Women Business Owners Trained</td>
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**Event Spotlight: WEConnect International in Mexico Annual Conference**

The Sixth Annual WEConnect International in Mexico Conference demonstrated the positive impact that the WEConnect International certification has had on women-owned businesses in the country. This event brought together senior diplomatic representatives, Mexican government officers, international and national organizations, executives of large multinational and national corporations as well as certified Mexican women’s business enterprises.
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Join our Global Network

BECOME A CORPORATE MEMBER

WEConnect International provides members with the global database and resources required to develop and leverage a diverse and inclusive global value chain. Membership benefits include business growth, global innovation, vendor development, knowledge exchange, brand enhancement, and leader engagement. Join the global movement to build a diverse business environment where more women compete to grow their companies and create jobs.

https://weconnectinternational.org/membership-opportunities

GET CERTIFIED AS A WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

If your women-owned business is focused on growth, WEConnect International can support your ambitions to succeed in local and global markets. Certification benefits include access to the eNetwork, invitations to forums presented by corporate members, networking opportunities with corporate buyers, and learning opportunities to develop your business capacity. Start making connections to grow your business, today!

https://weconnectinternational.org/get-certified