

VEREDUS



WEConnect

Executive Director

June 2008

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A message from Erika Watson

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the new position of Executive Director for WEConnect.

WEConnect is a new membership organisation which brings together enterprises owned by women with the corporate sector to generate business opportunities. The organisation will make a key contribution to the development and impact of women owned businesses in the UK, which is low in comparison to male owned and led businesses.

Incubated by Prowess, the UK's voice for women's enterprise, WEConnect will become a separate legal organisation accountable to its membership. Although two distinct organisations, WEConnect and Prowess will continue to work together in the areas of policy and research where there are clear synergies.

This is a significant time and we are seeking an inspiring and dynamic director to build on the early success of WEConnect. Under your leadership, WEConnect will embed the organisation and its vision in the consciousness of national and multi national corporations and the public sector, with the ultimate aim of diversifying the supply chain and increasing business opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

I do hope you will agree that this is a remarkable opportunity to make a real impact in the growth of women's enterprise in the UK and look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully,

Erika Watson
Executive Director
Prowess

Background information

WEConnect was launched officially at a profile event at the House of Commons in February 2008. It is now ready to build significantly on the firm foundation established through its incubation by Prowess, the UK's voice for Women's enterprise, and become an independent organisation.

WEConnect is already building an impressive corporate membership but has ambitious plans to increase its membership, profile and impact. The current corporate membership includes:

Founding members

- Microsoft
- Bank of America
- Pfizer
- Accenture
- NewTechnology Steel
- Hewlett Packard
-

Corporate members

- Cisco Systems
- Mastercard
- Marriott
- Merrill Lynch
- Goldman Sachs
- Credit Suisse
- Citi

Supporters

- TelTech
- Global Capital Ltd

Mission Statement

WEConnect is the leading UK supplier diversity initiative spearheading the connection of women-owned business and multinational corporations and is the UK's leading advocate of women-owned businesses as suppliers to global and national corporations and government bodies.

Our mission is to ensure that:

- majority-women-owned businesses (51%) are given fair and equal access to corporate and public sector procurement opportunities in the UK
- corporate UK and UK government understands and is able to benefit from the diversity, innovation and brand value-add that women-owned businesses bring.

The Vision

Access to markets

Women owned businesses comprise just 3-5% of suppliers to the corporate and public sector. Businesses cannot grow without customers and with the most significant grouping of customers out of their reach, this restricted access to markets is a hugely significant barrier to the growth of women's businesses.

WEConnect will directly address this issue through the development of a practical programme connecting women's business enterprises (WBE's) to corporate and public sector contract opportunities; and indirectly through a broader programme of corporate and public sector influence and culture change.

Supply chain diversity

WEConnect will bring together practitioners of excellence in this field, and the standard for supplier diversity programmes.

Our approach incorporates:

- Top management (company buy-in)
- Training in diversity programmes
- Mentoring through supply chain organisations
- A service of 'best fit' relationship management
- An ever increasing database of certified women-owned businesses

Globalisation

Supplier diversity has widespread corporate leadership in the USA and is growing across Europe and Asia. Globalisation is ensuring that those national boundaries are less relevant and WEConnect is part of a broader movement adapting best practice in supplier diversity certification and development to specific cultural contexts.

Technology and Research

The global partners in WBE certification will work together to enable an international database of WBEs, a facility of importance to multi-national corporations. It will also enable statistical collation for future use in research into the global issues of supply chain diversity and business growth, particularly amongst WBEs.

Networks

WEConnect provides added value through high impact networking between WBE members and between Corporations wishing to expand their markets within the UK – working to create best practice models to grow wider understanding of supplier diversity.

The Market

Closing the market gap

“Forget China, India and the internet: economic growth is driven by women”
 The Economist 2006

As the Economist concluded in its 12 April 2006 cover story, women are *the* productivity gap in business in the developed world. This is most evident in corporate and public procurement where women-owned businesses comprise just 3% - 5% of suppliers.

The number of women-owned businesses has grown considerably in recent years. Women-owned businesses are, however, significantly smaller and grow more slowly than their male counterparts. The latent productivity in these firms is essential to the UK economy, and unequal access to procurement markets has been identified as a significant barrier to the growth of women-owned businesses.

Women’s business ownership in the UK

While self-employed women now exceed over 1 million, there are 738,148 who own their own business and 141,533 of those who have employees.

Regional breakdown of self-employed females

Region	Self-employed Females
UK	966,000
England	839,000
North East	22,000
North West	101,000
York/Humber	62,000
East Midlands	67,000
West Midlands	77,000
East England	92,000
London	150,000
South East	165,000
South West	102,000
Wales	41,000
Scotland	65,000
N. Ireland	20,000

Sectoral breakdown of self-employed females, winter 2005

Industry Sector	Self-employed Females
Agriculture & Fishing	3.6%
Energy & Water	--
Manufacturing	5.8%
Construction	1.7%
Hotel & Restaurants	17.4%
Transport	3.0%
Banking, Finance & Insurance	20.9%
Public Admin, Education & Health	24.4%
Other Services	23.1%
All Services	88.8%

Learning from WBENC

WBENC was founded in the U.S. in 1997, by 11 founder corporate members and a database of 500 certified women business owners. By 2007, the demand from the corporate sector and women business owners to work together became clear: WBENC has grown to 235 Corporate Members and over 6,000 certified women business owners.

This growth has occurred within an environment of narrowing supply chains in the U.S., which WBENC in partnership with its network of affiliates, has addressed through the promotion of first, second and third tier supply relationships.

WBENC Corporate Board members operate in a global marketplace and are eager to use the certification of women-owned businesses provided by organisations in other countries that apply WBENC certification standards.

Positive Action

WEConnect is about levelling the playing field and enabling women to have a fair chance to tender for contracts. After that it is business as usual and participating companies assess tenders on their merits, with no regard to gender. Positive action is about encouraging under-represented groups to take advantage of opportunities. It should not be confused with positive discrimination, which is illegal. To ensure that there is no ambiguity on this issue WEConnect has sought legal advice and is assured that this programme is in-line with UK Sex Discrimination legislation.

“Bank of America uses and promotes the growth of diverse suppliers who can provide the bank with quality products and services, and competitive pricing. Our commitment to supplier diversity is consistent with our corporate values. It supports our efforts to build a diverse workplace and mirrors the growing diversity in our customer base. Supporting diverse businesses helps our communities grow stronger, which creates a favourable economic environment for our clients and supports our future growth.”

The Business Case for women-owned supplier diversity

A supplier base that reflects the diversity of customers makes business sense.

Women are involved in 85% of purchasing decisions – but their businesses access is less than 3% of procurement opportunities.

Women’s businesses are innovative. Female entrepreneurs are more likely to have a product or service unfamiliar to the market and they are more likely to be using technology than their male counterparts¹. Current procurement routes often exclude those women and the innovation they can bring to the supply chain.

The U.S. effect. Supplier diversity programmes are now well established in the U.S. and their multinationals increasingly expect diversity to be a priority through their own international supply partners.

¹ ‘Stairways to Growth: enabling the Ascent of women’s enterprise in the UK’ GEM/ Prowess 2006.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Reputation. There is a growing premium on Brands which are evidently serious about diversity. There is also evidence that a positive reputation can be an important factor in recruitment and retention and impact on staff morale, loyalty and productivity.

Legislation. In the U.S. Government procurement targets for public sector contracts have been a powerful driver of change in the U.S. While the low targets of 5% of contracts for women-owned small businesses have not been met, their existence has informed broader understanding of the benefits of supplier diversity, which has itself been enthusiastically embraced by the corporate sector.

In the UK and Europe there are indications that Government may introduce similar procurement goals to the U.S. For example, the EU General Discrimination Directive (2000) may be expanded to include supply contracts. This has encouraged some companies and public bodies to both pre-empt and be in a position to shape potential legislation.

Public sector engagement

Supplier Diversity is a growing priority for UK Government, yet there has been to-date almost no focus on women. WEConnect will help Government and RDAs to close that gap and also to meet broader aspirations regarding women’s enterprise development and its contribution to national and regional productivity and GVA². For WEConnect this is a clear two-way partnership as the public sector is also a powerful development and marketing partner.

WEConnect is a priority of the Government’s Women’s Enterprise Task Force and the Task Force’s leadership and championing of supplier diversity is an important part of WEConnect’s promotional strategy.

"SEEDA is delighted to be supporting this scheme which delivers one of the five priorities of the WETF - diversifying supply chains. There are 620,000 majority women-owned businesses in the UK – that’s more than ever before but the number of such businesses winning corporate and public sector contracts is still shockingly low".

A representative from SEEDA added "Companies need access to contracts in order to grow and generate prosperity. By creating new routes to procurement opportunities, WEConnect will encourage more women to think big, expand their businesses and fulfil their potential. With respected heavyweight companies like Microsoft and Pfizer already behind it, we hope WEConnect will bring about real change in procurement policies."

"Encouraging supplier diversity is a concern of this Government, a personal concern of mine, and a priority for all progressive governments".

Rt Hon Paul Boateng Her Majesty’s Treasury Minister, UK

² Gross value added is the difference between output and *intermediate consumption* for any given sector/industry. That is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production.

The Government is also supporting work to connect women-owned businesses with multi-national corporations, to ensure that women-owned businesses are given fair and equal access to corporate and public sector procurement opportunities. Government is working with WEConnect – whose corporate members include Accenture, Cisco, Goldman Sachs, Microsoft, Merrill Lynch and Pfizer – and with the RDAs to extend, develop and promote WEConnect's certification programme. This will certify enterprises as women owned and by managing and developing a practical programme will connect those certified as Women's Business Enterprises (WBE's) to corporate, and public sector contract opportunities.

Excerpt from the Government's Enterprise Strategy

Supplier Diversity has growing resonance with current UK government policies to promote equal opportunities, greater social inclusion and local economic development. It also fits with the 'think small first' public sector procurement guidelines.

The economic development of the UK is delivered through the Regional Development Agency and Devolved Nations structure, divided between 9 RDAs and 3 devolved nations. Their partnership will create easy routes through to potential WBEs and local corporate representatives. WEConnect aligns with the Regional Economic Strategies of several RDAs, including the London Development Agency (LDA), East of England Development Agency (EEDA), East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) and South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). SEEDA are the lead RDA on women's enterprise.

Supplier diversity is being taken increasingly seriously across Government departments, such as the Department of Health and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). It is also a growing priority for Local Authorities. The government has also recently launched its weblink service www.supply2gov.uk to increase ease of access to government contracts.

Adding value

WEConnect has no direct competitors offering a certification standard for women-owned businesses. There are two other minority supplier diversity certifying organisations currently operating in the UK and Europe.

Minority Supplier Development–UK (MSD-UK) operates a similar certification process to WEConnect, targeting ethnic minority led companies in the UK only. WEConnect already works closely with MSD-UK. In fact WEConnect was initiated partly due to encouragement from MSD-UK. We are developing a memorandum of understanding regarding shared events and activities.

Supplier Diversity Europe (SDE) is a research forum with an online self-certification process. WEConnect's process is significantly more rigorous, they are not comparable, however SDE certification could be a useful stepping stone. SDE has a broad market of 'visible minority' groups across Europe, including women, minority ethnic groups and others. Targets for implementation and the feasibility of this model will be reviewed by SDE in late 2007.

In addition there are a plethora of organisations providing services strongly complementary to formal certification, for example, training and development to assist small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and minority-owned businesses to access procurement opportunities, especially in the public sector. WEConnect works alongside and adds value to those services.

WEConnect will also work with relevant corporate associations such as CIPS (the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply) and Business in the Community to integrate best practice and communicate with their members.

Marketing and PR Strategy

WEConnect has two audiences for marketing and PR. Our strategy for engaging with each of those audiences is outlined below.

Corporate members

US affiliates. The initial target market for the WEConnect membership will be UK-based affiliates of US corporations and progressive UK-based corporates. We will initially target WBENC members' UK and European affiliates and invite them to join us to develop this new partnership with WBENC. The liaison and support between the US based company and its Europe based partner is a vital element of developing the corporate membership base.

Founding Corporate Members are highly committed to ensuring that WEConnect is a success and have undertaken to directly promote the initiative to colleagues in associated UK based corporations.

Women's Enterprise Task Force. Government is an important customer to many MNCs and the leadership and support of the WETF signifies high-profile and long-term support, which is an important marketing message. Public sector pump priming to keep corporate membership fees at a reasonable level in the first three years, also presents a more attractive proposition.

Partnership. Affiliation with key corporate membership associations such as BiTC and CIPS, and also with Regional Development Agencies, is another important route to market.

Benefits. Tangible membership benefits include:

- Participation in a nationwide information and referral network
- High profile recognition as a supporter of women-owned businesses
- Sourcing capability with internet access to an international database
- Inclusion of corporate identity symbol on www.weconnect.org.uk and hyperlink to corporate or supplier diversity website from the WEConnect website
- Listing as a "Corporate Member" in all WEConnect marketing materials, brochures and press releases
- Assistance with the development or expansion of women's business supplier programmes utilising WEConnect Best Practices in Supplier Diversity
- Confidence in awarding contracts to WBEs whose certification has been processed with internationally standardised procedures.
- Stringent certification standards that help corporations identify bona fide WBEs so buyers can accurately report expenditures
- Use of the WEConnect member seal on supplier diversity marketing materials as recognition for supporting women's business enterprises

- Access to "Best Practices" supplier diversity research conducted by WBENC and similar studies facilitating comparisons with UK market activity
- Regular information on what is happening in supplier diversity globally

Founding Members will receive:

- prime advertising space
- headline recognition at all events
- first option on prime sponsorship opportunities
- opportunity to speak at major WEConnect events.

Certified Women Business Owners

Benefits

Access to corporate markets. For WBEs this is a major market development opportunity. As certified women-owned businesses they will have direct access to Corporate Members and the opportunity to develop relationships with those Corporate Members through "Market Match" programme. .

Differentiation. Additionally, certification will provide WBEs with a marketing edge in other markets and business to business networks with other WBEs – as businesses that are themselves serious about working with and providing goods and services to women.

Organisational development. The process of certification will be structured to encourage and enable women-business owners to reflect on and review their growth strategy and to engage with appropriate business support and development services.

Market match events. Targeted approaches to 'quick hit' WBE market matches will be undertaken to add momentum. To do this, key sector procurement needs will be identified, with the cooperation of Founders, to ensure that the WBE market development is meeting corporate demand and early success of WBE/corporate contract potential is met.

PR. Press and media coverage will be important to engage women business owners. Case studies are essential and WEConnect will compile regional and sectorally focused case studies for launch and for key PR milestones.

Prowess. The partnership with Prowess is particularly important with regard to attracting WBEs to WEConnect. As the national association for the promotion of women's enterprise, Prowess's 250 members support over 100,000 women business owners each year. Promotion to WBEs through the Prowess network builds on highly trusted referrals.

Self certified Women Business Owners

Women business owners will be offered the option of applying to go on the database but with clear differentiation between those who self certify and those who have been fully certified. They will not receive any of the benefits associated with full WBE status. Stepping stones will be offered toward full certification, with an initial online self-certification option.

Job description

Reports to: At the moment this is Prowess Executive Director and WEConnect Advisory Board.

Main purpose of the job: Responsible for the overall management, leadership and development of WEConnect as the key membership organisation for Multi National and National corporations offering contract opportunities to women business enterprises. .

Directly responsible to: At the moment this is Prowess Executive Director and WEConnect Advisory Board.

Responsible for: WBE Support and Development Role
Operations Manager
Event's Coordinator

Key external relationships: Corporate members
National and multi national companies
Women business owners
Public sector organisations
Government, particularly on women's enterprise
UK and European funding bodies
WBENC (USA) and other global partners in supply chain diversification
Supply chain organisations
Prowess

WEConnect is currently a project of Prowess. One of the first tasks for the newly appointed executive director will be to review options regarding setting WEConnect up as a separate legal company accountable to its membership and to progress this as appropriate.

Key Areas of Responsibility:

To ensure the efficient and effective management and development of WEConnect in accordance with its business plan.

In particular:

Leadership To provide leadership for WEConnect by:

- a) Creating, developing, leading and implementing WEConnect's vision and communicating this through a comprehensive and achievable business plan.
- b) Developing the necessary impact, partnerships, resources and expertise for WEConnect to succeed in its mission of certifying women business owners and facilitating access to supply chain contract opportunities.

- c) Maintaining a high level of knowledge and understanding of the issues relevant to women entrepreneurs, and best practice in supply chain development and opportunity.
- d) Influencing policy development on at local, national and international levels to increase support for diversity in procurement activity.

Information & membership support

- a) To establish WEConnect as the key membership organisation for national and multi national corporations active in supply chain development
- b) To grow the membership base to ensure a viable, vibrant and sustainable organisation
- c) To provide high quality relevant and timely information to members and WBE's e.g. training, briefings, newsletter, web-site.

Development of good practice

- a) Development and delivery of a robust certification process for WBE's, complementary to that of WBENC and accepted by MNC's worldwide.
- b) Lobby for and promote best practice standards in procurement purchasing by national and multi national corporations (MNC's).
- c) To facilitate the development of best practice through providing the membership and WBE's with opportunities for joint working.
- d) Strengthen critical relationships amongst the procurement community.

Organisational Sustainability

- a) To fund-raise and develop revenue streams to ensure the long-term viability of the organisation in line with the mission.
- b) To be entrepreneurial, to develop appropriate new initiatives, to lead the organisation through continuous improvement and change.

Promotion & Awareness Raising

- a) To build and develop WEConnect's profile in the media and with key stakeholders e.g. government departments, lead organisations.
- b) To develop and maintain effective networks and partnerships and maintain a high profile with WEConnect's potential and current members.
- c) To be the principal public face of the organisation in relation to the media and other key stakeholders.
- d) To lead on the development of the corporate image and oversee the production of relevant publicity, reports and membership communications.

Research & Policy Development

- a) To work with Prowess to educate policy makers about the significant economic impact of women's business enterprises in corporate supply chain contracts
- c) Oversee research on the impact of WEConnect
- d) Provide matrix on success to corporates, WBEs and government.

Effective Organisational Management & Development

- a) To provide the Board of Directors with timely and appropriate management & financial information.
- b) To work with the Board of Directors to continually develop strategy; to involve staff in the development of strategy and ensure they understand and support WEConnect' mission, values and direction.
- c) To review the Strategic Aims & Objectives annually in conjunction with the Board of Directors, meet the measurable targets within the Strategic Aims & Objectives and to ensure that all projects complement the long-term objectives.
- d) To recruit, lead and develop a professional staff team.
- e) To ensure that staff have the resources, support and systems to enable them to work effectively to achieve the mission of the organisation.
- f) To ensure the proper management, smooth running and effective financial management of the organisation.
- g) Working with all staff, contractors, consultants and board members to promote equality, and maintain a culture of quality management, professional accountability and self-management.

Other

- a) To undertake any other duties which may from time to time be required; this job description is not intended to be either prescriptive or exhaustive but is issued as a general guideline to the main areas of duties and responsibilities.
- b) To adhere to the Company's Equal Opportunities Policy, both in the delivery of services and in the treatment of other employees.

For more information please visit : www.weconnect.org.uk

Person specification

PART ONE

Knowledge/Qualifications/Experience

Essential

- A proven track record of senior leadership, strategic management and team building.
- Experience and success in business development and relationship management with the corporate sector in particular.
- Experience of promoting an organisation through external networks with the ability to develop and maintain good working relationships and networks with government, multi national corporations and women's businesses (WBEs).
- A track record in income generation and financial management.
- Project management experience, with evidence of start up through to delivery.
- Genuine empathy with women business owners preferably with experience of setting up and running their own business.
- Awareness of issues affecting the small business sector, particularly the specific barriers faced by women who are setting up and developing their own business.

Desirable

- Awareness of procurement practices nationally and internationally.
- Knowledge of supply chain systems and processes.
- Experience of media relations, including development of new relationships.
-

PART TWO

Skills and attributes

- Inspirational leadership skills.
- Research and analytical skills, with the ability to monitor and report on activity and evaluate impact.
- A skilled networker and partnership player with the ability to influence others.
- Entrepreneurial flair and vision.

- Sound judgement and good political skills.
- Results focused with clear ability to develop and manage marketing plans resulting in revenue generation.
- Excellent written communication skills and capable of delivering messages to a variety of audiences.
- A self starter, highly motivated with the ability to work alone and as part of a team.
- A flexible approach to work with the capacity for international travel.

Equal Opportunities

All members of staff will be expected to contribute towards the Company's Equal Opportunities Policy and ensure that they discharge their duties in an anti oppressive and non-discriminatory manner.

Recruitment package and indicative timetable

Salary: For a discussion about salary please contact Penny Wood on 020 7932 4260 or Philippa Fabry on 0870 190 4317.

Benefits include - pension scheme with 6% employer contribution and 25 days holidays

Location: There are office bases in London and Norwich but as this role has a national remit the Executive Director could also be based from home.

Stage	Timescale
Closing date for applications	9 July 2008
Veredus interviews	w/c 14 July 2008
Shortlist meeting	23 July 2008
Final panel interviews	30 July 2008

How to apply

Should you have any queries or wish to have an informal discussion about this role then please contact Penny Wood on 020 7932 4260 or Philippa Fabry on 0870 190 4317.

To apply for this role, please submit a detailed CV and supporting statement that addresses the criteria set out in **PART ONE** of the person specification clearly indicating **Ref: 7051**. The selection process is a competency-based approach. Please therefore ensure that your supporting statement provides concise and specific examples to demonstrate your competencies, achievements and skills addressing the specific criteria as set out. For those candidates who are invited to interview, this information will be explored further, together with the areas highlighted under **PART TWO** of the person specification.

Please give the names, positions, organisations and telephone contact numbers of at least two referees, one of whom should ideally be your current or most recent employer. If you specifically do not wish referees to be approached without your prior permission, then you should clearly indicate this fact.

Please also complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. The information on this form will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes only. This form will not be treated as part of your application, and will not be seen by anyone involved in the selection process.

Finally, please ensure that you have included work, mobile and home telephone contact numbers and an e-mail address if applicable.

The closing date for applications is **9 July 2008**. Applications should be emailed to natasha.wood@veredus.co.uk or faxed on 020 7932 4201. If you fax your application, please follow this up by post. Alternatively you can send your application to:

Natasha Wood
Ref: 6792
Veredus
17 Rochester Row
London
SW1P 1RP

Equal opportunities monitoring form

Enter Job Reference Number Here: 7051

Name:

Date of Birth:

Current
Job
Title:

Full time:

Part-time:

If yes, No. of Hours:

Female:

Male:

Marital Status (please state) :

Please tick as appropriate

ETHNIC ORIGIN INFORMATION These categories are not about nationality, place of birth or citizenship. They relate to broad ethnic group categories as recommended by the EHRC. When you have read them all please tick the box that most accurately describes you.	Asian or Asian	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
	British;	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Black or Black	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
	British;	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chinese or Other	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Mixed;	White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
		White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
		White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	White;	British	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other Ethnic Origin (please describe)		
	Religion (please state)		

Section 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act defines a person as having a disability if he or she 'has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Do you have such a disability? YES NO

Please describe the nature of your disability together with details of any adjustments that you may require to do this Job.

In which publication or website did you see the post advertised?