



**Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Women Entrepreneurship**  
**Terms of Reference**  
**May, 2019**

**Background**

On May 20, 2019, the Honourable Tina Beaudry-Mellor, Minister responsible for Advanced Education, Innovation and the Status of Women Office announced the creation of the Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Women Entrepreneurship.

A 2018 Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) report, commissioned by WESK, entitled Women Entrepreneurship in Canada provides significant baseline data and reveals a gender gap in entrepreneurialism. Some highlighted findings include:

- Female-owned businesses contribute \$148 billion to the Canadian economy, according to a 2011 study. Growing women entrepreneurship could add \$150 billion to \$420 billion to the Canadian economy by 2026.
- In Saskatchewan, only 13.7 per cent of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are majority female-owned, compared to 15.7 per cent nationally and 17 per cent in Ontario.
- In Canada, men are twice as likely as women to own and operate a business, and progress toward entrepreneurial gender parity has stalled in the past two decades, growing 0.3 per cent annually. Should this trend continue, it would take 180 years to close the gender gap.
- Financing is the number one barrier to women starting businesses, for reasons such as lending discrimination, barriers to venture capital, having less income to invest and a personal lack of confidence.
- The rejection rate for financing, according to Industry Canada data from 2015, is skewed to favour men: 65.7 per cent of women's applications were rejected, compared with 24.8 per cent of men's applications. Lack of industry stability was cited as rationale. Insufficient collateral was another reason for which 66.6 per cent of women's applications were rejected, compared with 35.7 per cent of men's applications.
- Women are lagging in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education: In 2016, women filled just 22 per cent of STEM-related jobs in Canada, according to Statistics Canada.
- The "digital revolution" will more negatively impact women, as women tend to work in industries facing technological advancements, including in service, financial, insurance and administrative sectors.
- Most innovative entrepreneurship happens between the ages of 25 and 44 — when women tend to have children and raise families.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the **Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Women Entrepreneurship** (the Advisory Committee) is to advise on the development of strategy, policy, and activity to level the playing field for women entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan.

## **Role**

Drawing on new and existing evidence and utilizing the skills and knowledge of Committee members, the Advisory Committee will undertake the following to advance women entrepreneurship in Saskatchewan:

- Advise on strategic direction – the development of strategies and actions to be taken by WESK and/or the stakeholders within the entrepreneurial eco-system;
- Advise on priority areas and topics – the development of new priority areas and recommended actions or interventions to be taken to address priorities;
- Advise on policy – identify areas of policy gaps or improvement;
- Advise on research – apply existing research and identify data gaps necessary for further understanding of current and future state;
- Advise on access to capital and venture capital – identify opportunities to enhance access to capital and venture capital; and,
- Advise on measures – utilizing baseline data, identify best measures to track meaningful change to the current state.

The Advisory Committee will also:

- Serve as a spokesperson for key issues and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan;
- Advocate for the advancement of women entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan through public speaking, providing access to professional networks, and outreach to stakeholders and influencers; and,
- Engage in a reflective, self-evaluative process to improve the effectiveness of such bodies.

## **Responsibilities**

Advisory Committee members are responsible for:

- Attending all meetings of the Advisory Committee;
- Contributing to the work of the Advisory Committee through the provision of expertise and knowledge;
- Respecting mutually agreed norms and confidentiality;
- Speaking with “one voice” as per the consensus of the Advisory Committee; and,
- Participating in task groups as identified by the Advisory Committee.

## **Decision-Making Authority**

The Advisory Committee is advisory in nature and not a decision-making body.

The Advisory Committee shall provide recommendations to the WESK Board of Directors and the Government of Saskatchewan.

Recommendations of the Advisory Committee shall be consensus-based.

### **Membership**

The Advisory Committee shall be selected by WESK and be comprised of a maximum of twelve (12) women and men committed to the advancement of women in entrepreneurship. The majority of the committee will be comprised of women.

The Advisory Committee must have members with experience in entrepreneurship. Specifically, experienced entrepreneurs with knowledge in scaling a business, expansion and diversification, trade (export and import) and accessing capital.

Additional members will be selected to fulfill a cross section of skills and competencies including but not limited to finance, legal, policy, strategy, research, management, venture capital.

Members should have connection to capital and business networks in Saskatchewan and beyond with an understanding of the Saskatchewan business and entrepreneurial landscape as well as current and future trends in small and medium sized enterprises.

Efforts will be made to ensure committee diversity in ethnicity, geography, and gender as well as, representative of a variety of industries and sectors.

### **Term**

Advisory Committee members shall be appointed for a one-year term ending June 30, 2020.

### **Frequency, structure and location of Meetings**

The Advisory Committee will meet in-person approximately every two months (approximately five meetings) in either Regina or Saskatoon for not longer than three hours per meeting.

The first meeting will involve a one-day strategic planning session followed by an evening networking event.

Conference calls may be requested during interim periods.

Meetings may consist of formal meetings, workshops, and/or task groups

### **Remuneration**

Advisory Committee members will be reimbursed for expenses at Government of Saskatchewan rates.

Participation in the Advisory Committee is considered voluntary. There is no remuneration for time.

## **Reference Materials**

Advisory Committee members are encouraged to review the following contextual materials:

WESK website <https://wesk.ca/>

Women Entrepreneurship in Canada <https://wesk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/WESK-Report-Oct.-15-2018-PwC-1.pdf>

Leader-Post article regarding launch of the Advisory Committee

<https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/entrepreneurial-gender-gap-under-scrutiny-with-new-advisory-committee>