

SheTrades Risk Assessment Toolkit

DEVELOPED FOR CARIBBEAN WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES



FOREWORD

The UK Government is committed to supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth across the Caribbean. We recognise the vital contribution that women-led businesses already make – and will increasingly make – to the region’s economies and societies. The Caribbean has immense potential. Yet it is also exposed to significant risk: it is one of the world’s most disaster prone regions and sits on the frontline of the climate crisis. Strong, resilient women led businesses are essential both to seizing the region’s economic opportunities and to strengthening its ability to withstand shocks. But the challenges facing women entrepreneurs are substantial, not least because many shoulder considerable care and community responsibilities, alongside other gender related barriers.

The UK Government is therefore pleased to support this Risk Assessment Toolkit, and its accompanying Crisis Management Toolkit, developed through the SheTrades Commonwealth+ programme. These resources will help women-led enterprises across the Caribbean to better identify, assess and manage the risks they face; to prepare for and respond effectively to crises; and ultimately to strengthen the resilience and long-term success of their businesses. In doing so, they will play an even greater role in supporting the well-being, growth and development of their families, communities and the wider region.

These tools advance the UK’s longstanding support for women led businesses across the Caribbean, particularly support to access the opportunities of international trade. Ensuring businesswomen have the skills, resources and market access they need to compete globally is central to driving shared and sustainable prosperity. This partnership is also great for the UK, bringing UK consumers fantastic, high quality products from women led businesses across the Caribbean, while strengthening commercial links and creating new opportunities for UK firms to collaborate, innovate and grow alongside Caribbean entrepreneurs.

This work sits at the heart of our growth partnership with the region which strives to drive mutual prosperity and shared economic resilience.

Tom Coward
Development Director for the Caribbean
UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Understanding and managing risk is a fundamental part of running a sustainable business. Uncertainty can arise from many sources, including market changes, operational challenges, financial pressures, and external shocks. Climate-related risks such as extreme weather events, flooding, and heat stress are increasingly affecting business operations in the Caribbean and add to the range of risks that enterprises must consider. Without a structured approach to identifying and assessing risks, businesses may be exposed to disruptions that could otherwise have been anticipated and managed.

Women led businesses play an important role in the economies of the Caribbean, contributing to employment, income generation, and community . At the same time, limited resources and competing responsibilities can make it difficult for entrepreneurs to systematically assess risks and plan appropriate responses. Strengthening risk awareness and decision making is therefore essential for business continuity and growth.

Through the SheTrades Commonwealth+ Programme, the International Trade Centre supports women entrepreneurs to build resilient and well managed businesses. This Risk Assessment Toolkit provides a practical and structured approach to identifying potential risks, understanding their likelihood and impact, and deciding on appropriate actions. It supports businesses to clarify responsibilities, plan resources, and prepare for potential challenges before they occur, contributing to more informed and resilient business decisions.

Judith Fessehaie
Head of SheTrades Initiative
International Trade Centre



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ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit was developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC) SheTrades Initiative and adapted for women-led businesses in the Caribbean within the framework of the SheTrades Commonwealth+ (STC+) Programme, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom (UK).

ITC will collaborate with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), as the host institution of the SheTrades Caribbean Regional Hub, to support outreach and dissemination activities aimed at maximizing the effective use of this toolkit.

The ITC SheTrades Initiative

Established in 2015, the SheTrades Initiative is ITC's flagship women and trade programme. ITC SheTrades works with women, business support organizations, policymakers and value chain actors to strengthen the people, ecosystems, and policies that enable women to participate in and benefit from trade.

SheTrades Commonwealth+ (STC+) Programme

Funded by the UK Government and implemented by ITC, the STC+ Programme aims to foster an enabling gender-inclusive business ecosystem by promoting inclusive policy and data by engaging business support organizations and private-sector partners, as well as to connect women-led businesses in Programme countries to markets, ensuring the benefits of trade empowers women economically.

SheTrades Caribbean Regional Hub

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and ITC partnered to launch the SheTrades Caribbean Hub in September 2023. The SheTrades Caribbean Regional Hub serves as a resource center for women-led businesses in the 19 Caribbean Borrowing Member Countries where members benefit from a range of support including access to webinars and e-learning materials, training workshops, opportunities to participate in regional and international trade fairs and attend business networking events. For more information visit www.caribank.org/shetrades



01

Explanatory Note

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit helps women-led businesses understand risks, prepare for challenges, and make better decisions to protect and grow their businesses.

More specifically, by using this Risk Assessment Toolkit, your business can:

1. Identify risks¹: recognize problems or events that could affect your business in the future.
2. Understand how serious each risk is: assess how likely the risk is to happen and how big its impact could be
3. Decide what actions to take: choose practical steps to reduce, manage, or respond to risks.
4. Assign responsibility: decide who in your business is responsible for managing each risk.
5. Plan resources: understand what people, time, money, or equipment are needed to address risks.

Likelihood	ALMOST CERTAIN (81-100%) "is expected to occur"	5 MODERATE	10 MODERATE	15 MAJOR	20 SEVERE	25 SEVERE
	LIKELY (61-80%) "will occur"	4 MINOR	8 MODERATE	12 MAJOR	16 MAJOR	20 SEVERE
	POSSIBLE (41-60%) "could occur"	3 MINOR	6 MODERATE	9 MODERATE	12 MAJOR	15 MAJOR
	UNLIKELY (21-40%) "might occur"	2 MINOR	4 MINOR	6 MODERATE	8 MODERATE	10 MODERATE
	RARE (1-20%) "may [exceptionally] occur"	1 MINOR	2 MINOR	3 MINOR	4 MINOR	5 MODERATE

This risk assessment tool includes a 5 × 5 Risk Matrix to help you assess risk severity, a risk taxonomy to help classify different types of risks, and a worked example to show how the tool can be used in practice.

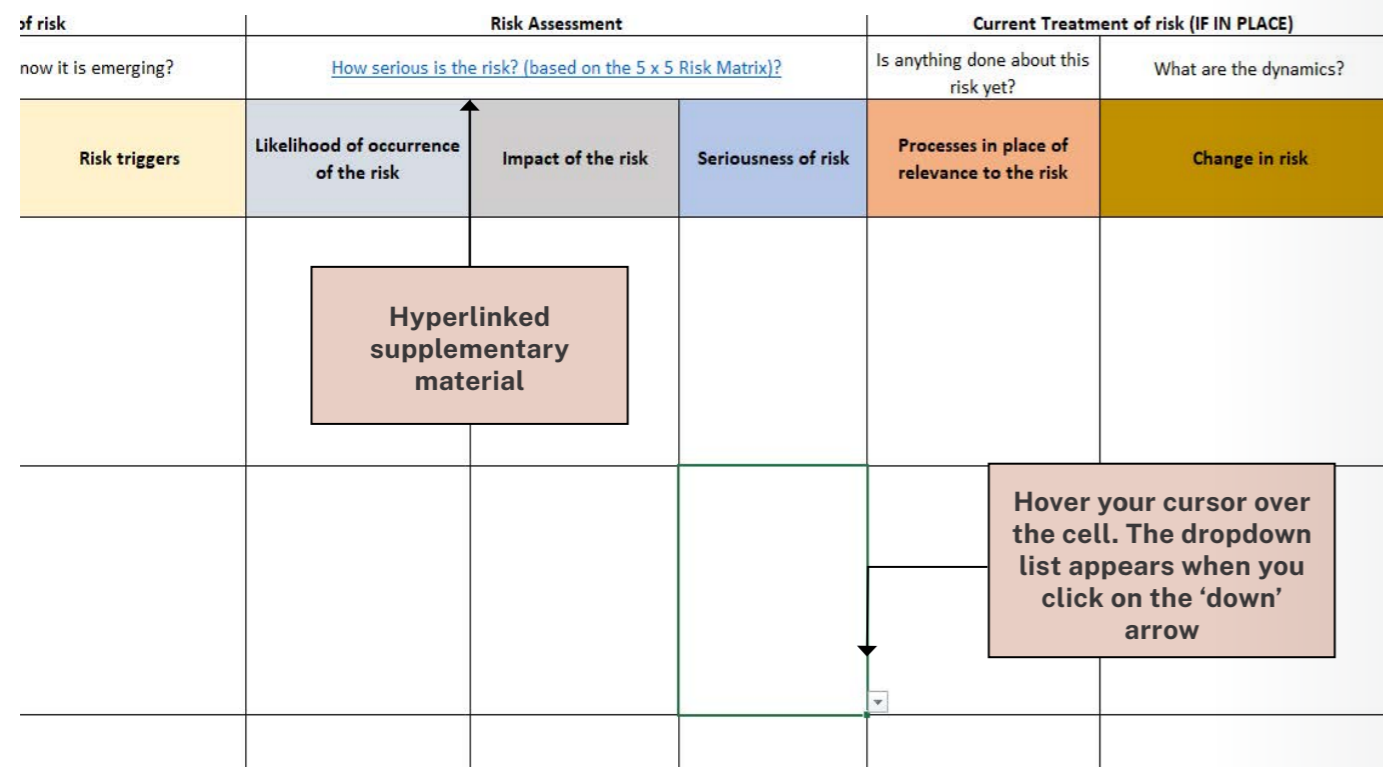
This toolkit does **NOT** define how much risk your business can accept; however, it is recommended that business owners or managers discuss and agree on how much risk the business is willing to take and which risks are acceptable and which are not.

If your business has not done this before, this toolkit can help start that discussion.

¹ | 'Risk' is used here to refer to future events which might occur; it does not however refer to events which have already taken place.

TWO VERSIONS OF THE TOOLKIT

The Risk Assessment Toolkit is 'dropdown' and clickable version, and second, a 'manual' version.



DROPDOWN

Version 01

- In the dropdown version, you choose answers from a list in each cell.
- Helpful tools, such as the 5 × 5 Risk Matrix and Risk Treatment options will be shared.
- You need a computer and Microsoft Excel to use this version.

Identification of risk		Risk assessment			Current Treatment of risk
What is the risk and how to know it is emerging?		How serious is the risk? (based on the BSO Risk Matrix 5x5)?			Is anything done about this risk yet?
Type of risk [cause + effect]	Risk triggers	Likelihood of occurrence of the risk	Impact of the risk	Seriousness of risk	Processes in place of relevance to the risk
What is the risk about [in cause + effect format]	What are the warning signs indicating that the risk is likely to occur?	What is the probability of occurrence of this risk? (Please use the risk matrix)	How much this risk would impact the entity, if it would occur? (Please use the risk matrix)	What is the overall seriousness of the risk? Derivative from the combination of the other two criteria (Please use the risk matrix)	Describe anything that is already done with respect to the risk
[Choose one:] USE BSO RISK TAXONOMY	[Enter text:] Identify warning signs	[Choose one:] Almost certain (81-100%) Likely (61-80%) Possible (41-60%) Unlikely (21-40%) Rare (1-20%)	[Choose one:] Catastrophic Major Moderate Minor Insignificant	[Choose one:] Severe Major Moderate Minor	[Enter text:] Describe relevant measures

MANUAL

Version 02

- In the manual version, you can write your own answers directly into the table. This can be done in Excel or by writing on a printed copy.
- Unlike the dropdown version, supporting tools such as the Risk Taxonomy, 5 × 5 Risk Matrix, and Risk Treatment options are provided on separate sheets.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

The Risk Assessment Tool is based on the Crisis Management Toolkit (CMT) but can also be used on its own for regular business planning.

It supports the CMT in two ways:



Usage 01

Use this Toolkit on its own to identify risks that could affect your business, understand how serious each risk is, and decide what actions to take to manage them.

(This option is useful if you want a full picture of your business risks.)

Usage 02

Use this Toolkit with other planning tools.

It can support business planning or crisis response tools and helps you look more closely at risks and how they affect your decisions.

(In both cases, the goal is to help your business anticipate problems and prepare before they happen.)



02

**Risk
Assessment
Toolkit**



IDENTIFICATION OF RISK		RISK ASSESSMENT			CURRENT TREATMENT OF RISK (IF IN PLACE)		RESPONSIBILITY	CHOICE OF [NEXT] RISK TREATMENT		ACTION PLAN								
What is the risk and how do you know that it is emerging?		How serious is the risk? (based on the 5 x 5 Risk Matrix)?			Has anything been done with respect to the risk?	What are the dynamics?	Who is / will be in charge?	What should be done about this risk?		When would the measures be implemented?	Where do I acquire the resources that I lack?						Where to get the lacking resources?*	
TYPE OF RISK [CAUSE + EFFECT]	RISK TRIGGERS	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK OCCURRENCE	IMPACT OF THE RISK	SERIOUSNESS OF RISK	PROCESSES IN PLACE TO RESOLVE THE RISK	CHANGE IN RISK	OWNER(S) OF THE RISK	CHOICE OF RISK TREATMENT (RISK RESPONSE)	DETAILS OF RISK TREATMENT	TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	NECESSARY RESOURCES AND THEIR MOBILIZATION						DETAILS OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION ACTIONS, IF ANY	
What is the risk about [in cause + effect format]	What are the warning signs indicating that the risk is likely to occur?	What is the probability of occurrence of this risk? (Please use the risk matrix)	How much this risk would impact the entity, if it would occur? (Please use the risk matrix)	What is the overall seriousness of the risk? Derivative from the combination of the other two criteria (Please use the risk matrix)	Describe anything which has already been done with respect to the risk	If the risk had been assessed before, how has it evolved? *Skip if the risk is new or has never been assessed*	Who is responsible for managing this risk within the entity?	Choose the approach for addressing this risk	What exact measures are envisaged?	When should risk treatment measures be implemented?*	What resources are needed and how exactly should they be managed? (Mark available resources which could contribute to the solutions)						How exactly the resources are expected to be mobilized?	
											PEOPLE	TIME	EQUIPMENT	WORKING SPACE	INFORMATION	EXPERIENCE	MONEY	
Choose one: Use Risk Taxonomy	Enter text: Identify warning signs	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost certain (81-100%) Likely (61-80%) Possible (41-60%) Unlikely (21-40%) Rare (1-20%) 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catastrophic Major Moderate Minor Insignificant 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe Major Moderate Minor 	Enter text: Describe relevant measures	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New or never assessed Has not changed Decreased Increased Was eliminated or avoided 	Enter text: Name of the responsible individual or group	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid or terminate Transfer Mitigate Tolerate (and monitor) 	Choose one: Describe the relevant measures	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately Within a week Within a month Within a quarter Continuously, before the next assessment / major change in circumstances 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Hire Dismiss Transfer Assign new / extra tasks Outsource task(s) Second Train Motivate Suspend 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Extend Prioritize Reschedule 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Acquire Rent Share Pool together Update/upgrade Dispose of/ Recycle 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Rent Offer for rent Share Purchase 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Collect Systemize Purchase access to Process Share 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Gain Pay for (purchase) Outsource ("sell") Share/Pool together 	Choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant nor available Raise Borrow Claim back/ recover Cut on expenses Reallocate funds Earn 	Enter text: Provide more details about the relevant steps, if needed

IDENTIFICATION OF RISK		RISK ASSESSMENT			CURRENT TREATMENT OF RISK (IF IN PLACE)		RESPONSIBILITY	CHOICE OF [NEXT] RISK TREATMENT		ACTION PLAN									
What is the risk and how do you know that it is emerging?		How serious is the risk? (based on the 5 x 5 Risk Matrix)?			Has anything been done with respect to the risk?	What are the dynamics?	Who is / will be in charge?	What should be done about this risk?		When would the measures be implemented?	Where do I acquire the resources that I lack?							Where to get the lacking resources?*	
TYPE OF RISK [CAUSE + EFFECT]	RISK TRIGGERS	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK OCCURRENCE	IMPACT OF THE RISK	SERIOUSNESS OF RISK	PROCESSES IN PLACE TO RESOLVE THE RISK	CHANGE IN RISK	OWNER(S) OF THE RISK	CHOICE OF RISK TREATMENT (RISK RESPONSE)	DETAILS OF RISK TREATMENT	TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	NECESSARY RESOURCES AND THEIR MOBILIZATION							DETAILS OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION ACTIONS, IF ANY	
											PEOPLE	TIME	EQUIPMENT	WORKING SPACE	INFORMATION	EXPERIENCE	MONEY		
What is the risk about [in cause + effect format]		What are the warning signs indicating that the risk is likely to occur?	What is the probability of occurrence of this risk? (Please use the risk matrix)	How much this risk would impact the entity. If it would occur? (Please use the risk matrix)	What is the overall seriousness of the risk? Derivative from the other two criteria (Please use the risk matrix)	Describe anything which has already been done with respect to the risk	If the risk had been assessed before, how has it evolved? *Skip if the risk is new or has never been assessed*	Who is responsible for managing this risk within the entity?	Choose the approach for addressing this risk	What exact measures are envisaged?	When should risk treatment measures be implemented?*	What resources are needed and how exactly should they be managed? (Mark available resources which could contribute to the solutions)							How exactly the resources are expected to be mobilized?
C2 ICT and Related	Unstable and weak internet connection due to power outage blocking remote work and online coordination	Likely (61-80%)	Moderate	Major	Staff attempt to stagger online tasks	Increased due to repeated storm-related outages	IT Manager	Avoid	Ensure the internet connection is strong for staff work without limitations and interruptions	Within a month	Outsource	Extend	Upgrade/Update	Offer for rent	Collect	Outsource (sell)	Reallocate funds	Keep a record of internet problems and upgrade to a more reliable internet plan.	
B5 Internal / Financial	Sharp decline in customer demand after the storm; delayed payments from buyers; higher transport and input costs.	Almost certain (81-100%)	Major	Severe	Basic cost cutting, emergency fund, exploring access to credit lines	Not changed	CFO	Mitigate	Minimize the budget deficit to be able to perform to the maximum extent possible	Immediately	Train	Prioritize	Upgrade/Update	Offer for rent	Systemize	Outsource (sell)	Claim back/Recover	Train staff to work better, focus on the most important tasks, and consider renting out or moving from unused office space.	
D5 Internal / People	Reports of flooded communities; road blockages; increased caregiver responsibilities; sick leave after storm events.	Almost certain (81-100%)	Moderate	Moderate	Flexible hours introduced; work redistributed among available staff.	Has not changed	HR Manager	Tolerate (and monitor)	Monitor the situation to ascertain possible changes therein	Continuously	Assign new / extra tasks	Reschedule	Available	Available	Collect	Available	Available	Set up regular monitoring by project managers.	
E2 Internal / Other Operational	Roof leaks, flooding, damaged equipment; unstable electricity; safety concerns flagged by staff.	Unlikely (41-60%)	Catastrophic	Major	Piloting remote-work modalities and exploring avenues for temporary relocation of some essential activities. Equipment insurance.	Has not changed.	Operation Manager	Transfer	Engage professional security to ensure the safety of the employees and alleviate concerns	Within a month	Outsource tasks	Reschedule	Share	Offer for rent	Collect	Pay for (purchase)	Reallocate funds	Continue to monitor security risks and check the quality of outsourced work.	

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The risk taxonomy is the categorization of risk types that could be referred to in risk identification. These risk types are non-exhaustive.

Internal Risks (Inside the business)

Technology and ICT

1. Internet failures
2. Cybersecurity breaches
3. Data loss

People

1. Staff shortages
2. Illness or caregiving responsibilities
3. Low motivation or burnout

Financial

1. Loss of income
2. Rising costs
3. Cash-flow problems

Compliance

1. Not meeting legal or regulatory requirements

Financial

1. Damage to buildings or equipment
2. Unsafe working conditions

External Risks (Outside your control)

Reputation

1. Negative customer feedback
2. Bad publicity
3. Loss of trust

Market and partnerships

1. Loss of buyers or partners
2. Changes in donor or customer priorities

Trade and policy

1. New trade restrictions
2. Changes in regulations

Competition

1. New competitors
2. Loss of market advantage

The risk matrix offers a visualization of the levels of risk based on its likelihood and impact. The resultant cell therefore indicates the overall severity of the risk.

Likelihood	ALMOST CERTAIN (81-100%) "is expected to occur"	5 MODERATE	10 MODERATE	15 MAJOR	20 SEVERE	25 SEVERE
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Impact →

INSIGNIFICANT

Fairly insignificant, may lead to a short delay in the achievement of the objectives and/or have small impact on quality and costs.

MINOR

Some impact, albeit no serious harm / delays/ cost increases

MODERATE

Moderate, non-negligible impact

MAJOR

Significant impact on the enterprise's or institution's goals and potential damage

SEVERE

May cause key objectives to fail.



Avoiding / Tolerating Risk

Monitoring the risk to trace changes in its seriousness, without taking actions aimed at its mitigation or reduction.

Mitigating Risk

Controlling the risk to reduce the likelihood of its occurrence/ or minimize its impact before its occurrence.

Terminating Risk

Eliminating the risk by changing inherently risky practices and processes.

Transferring Risk

Shifting the risk to third parties.

#SheTrades

HER SUCCESS. OUR FUTURE.

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