

**RSPO**

Roundtable on  
Sustainable Palm Oil



RSPO, Ernst Young

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## **PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON GENDER INCLUSION AND COMPLIANCE TO THE 2018 P&C AND 2019 ISH STANDARD**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>PREFACE</b> .....   | <b>1</b>  |
| Why is this gender guidance important? .....   | 1         |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>PART I WHAT IS WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR RSPO MEMBERS?</b> ..... | <b>8</b>  |
| The role of women in the palm oil sector .....   | 8         |
| What is women's economic empowerment? .....  | 9         |
| How can we achieve women's economic empowerment? .....   | 10        |
| The business case for women's economic empowerment .....   | 12        |
| <b>PART II THE COMPANY AS AN EMPLOYER</b> .....  | <b>13</b> |
| Strategies to address gender-based constraints of female employees .....                           | 13        |
| Strategy 1. Gender-equality in the workplace .....   | 16        |
| Strategy 2. Flexible working conditions for men and women .....                                    | 20        |
| Strategy 3. Addressing gender-based violence .....   | 24        |
| Strategy 4. Equal job opportunities .....  | 28        |
| <b>PART III WORKING WITH INDEPENDENT SMALLHOLDERS</b> .....  | <b>31</b> |
| Strategies to address gender-based constraints of female smallholders .....                        | 31        |
| Strategy 1. Engage women in smallholder groups/organisations.....                                  | 32        |
| Strategy 2. Equal access of women to the services of the group/organisation .....                  | 37        |
| <b>PART IV COMPANIES AND COMMUNITIES</b> .....   | <b>41</b> |
| Strategies to address the needs and interests of women in communities .....                        | 41        |
| Strategy 1. Involvement of women in Community Land Use Planning and FPIC processes .....           | 42        |
| Strategy 2. Organising gender-sensitive community initiatives .....                                | 45        |
| Strategy 3. Equal decision-making of men and women in the household .....                          | 48        |
| Strategy 4. Reduction of unpaid care and domestic work .....                                       | 51        |
| Strategy 5. Small business development.....  | 53        |
| <b>PART V INTERNAL PROCESSES AND CAPACITIES</b> .....  | <b>57</b> |
| 1. Gender risk assessment.....   | 57        |
| 2. Quick gender scan .....   | 58        |
| <b>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</b> .....  | <b>64</b> |
| <b>REFERENCES</b> .....  | <b>65</b> |





### Why is this gender guidance important?

In line with RSPO's commitment to achieving sustainability within the palm oil sector and ensuring that gender equality and the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles are applied and promoted, RSPO, in consultation with Angelica Senders and Marjoleine Motz of Fair & Sustainable Consulting, has developed this Practical Guidance on Gender Inclusion and Compliance to the 2018 RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) and the 2019 Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard.

This guidance is intended to be used as a logical manual that describes the building blocks of a gender-inclusive business, specifically for the palm oil sector, and embraces the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles. It aims to assist RSPO members to adopt best practices that promote the concept of gender balance in their operations using the RSPO standards while focusing on meeting specific criteria and indicators.

Although this guidance is not meant to be an overall solution to gender inequality within the sector, it will assist companies to take the necessary steps towards developing a strategy to close the gender gap by expanding women's economic opportunities, increasing awareness and education among the workforce, and thereby, ensuring compliance to the 2018 RSPO P&C and 2019 ISH Standard.

The information in this document has been updated with case references derived from a wide range of stakeholders and practitioners who have experience with palm oil workers in the field in different regions.

We are grateful to all RSPO members across Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, who have contributed significantly to the development of this guidance by sharing their experiences, lessons learnt, and recommendations. We would also like to thank the members of the RSPO Human Rights Working Group for their time and for providing oversight and input based on their collective years of experience within the sector and in gender-sensitive issues within the workforce.

This practical guide should provide RSPO members with an educational resource on the following:

- i. Why is gender equality and women's empowerment important?
- ii. What do you as an RSPO member need to do to ensure compliance with the gender-specific aspects of the 2018 RSPO P&C and 2019 ISH Standard?
- iii. What are the gender-based constraints within your organisation?
- iv. What is the first step to assess the level of gender inclusivity within your organisation?
- v. What are the strategies to address gender-based constraints within your organisation?

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## INTRODUCTION

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Research<sup>1</sup> in the palm oil sector has shown that women have been marginalised, discriminated against, excluded, and they do not receive equal opportunities, whether as workers and/or smallholders in the sector. This not only affects women but also the family as a whole. Difficulties faced by women in the palm oil sector include unrecognised landownership and land use, lack of training, lack of equal job opportunities, lack of protection (physical protection from harassment, and financial protection, e.g. insurance coverage because of their informal jobs), and lack of recognition for work performed, both as workers and smallholders.

Companies that lack awareness of the above issues not only run the risk of having an unstable workforce but may also limit potential profit, as the lack of gender inclusivity also means a lack of wholesome human resource engagement.

Companies that do not recognise or value the role women play in supplying Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) as smallholder family members, miss out on the potential increase in productivity, quality, and supply chain security that women smallholders can provide.

With the adoption of the new standard of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in November 2018, palm oil producing companies are now required to align their policies to recognise and integrate a more gender-equal view and practice in their operations. This key message is integrated into the 2018 RSPO P&C.<sup>2</sup> Adhering to the gender criteria is part and parcel of the RSPO standards, and doing so will contribute to increased gender equality, which is one of the sustainability objectives of RSPO. Besides, it will also contribute to the profitability of the member companies as RSPO is convinced that there is a 'business case' for applying the RSPO gender standards. A business case is a justification for an action that is expected to make corporate processes more valuable. The same can be said regarding the 2019 RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard and the responsibilities of the group manager and group members.

In this Gender Guidance, practical strategies that can be used by RSPO members are presented. It is a practical and intuitive guide that describes the building blocks of a gender-inclusive business, embracing women's economic empowerment. It is the responsibility of the company and the smallholder group to select the most appropriate and relevant strategies as the basis for their gender action plan. The presented strategies are based on the gender-related aspects of the P&C as formulated in the RSPO standards of 2018. At the end of this introduction, you can find a table in which the gender aspects of the P&C are linked to the strategies presented in this Gender Guidance.

Each strategy describes the gender-based constraints to be addressed, followed by guidelines for the actions to be taken. For each strategy, the results for women and businesses are described. Each strategy is linked to the relevant RSPO P&C.

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<sup>1</sup> There are numerous sources, e.g.: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Li, T. (2015). *Social impacts of oil palm in Indonesia: A gendered perspective from West Kalimantan*, Bogor, Indonesia.

Joselyn Bigirwa (2018). Gender-based impacts of commercial oil palm plantations in Kalangala, in: Richard Ssemmanda and Michael Opige (eds.) *Oil palm plantations in forest landscapes: Impacts, aspirations and ways forward in Uganda*, p. 31-36.

<sup>2</sup> The process of developing new guideline integrating a gender-equal view and practices was produced by CIFOR in cooperation with the Gender and Human Rights Working Group of RSPO: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bimbika Sijapati Basnett, Sophia Gnych and Cut Augusta Mindry Anandi (2016). *Transforming the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil for greater gender equality and women's empowerment*.

With this document, RSPO shows the importance of applying a gender-sensitive approach in the whole palm oil sector, on the plantation, in the mills, in smallholder schemes, and at the level of independent smallholder households and their organisations. Doing so will ensure that:

- Women are reached by and benefit from palm oil-related activities.
- Women are empowered, not only in companies and smallholder groups/organisations, but also in their families.
- Businesses benefit from risk reduction, reduced costs, value creation, and growth as a result of the gender strategies applied.

This Gender Guidance is composed of five parts:

### **Part I What is Women's Economic Empowerment and why is it important for RSPO?**

This part provides the lens used for this Gender Guidance document. It visualises the important roles of women in the palm oil sector, especially as labourer and members of smallholder family farms. It explains what is meant by Women's Economic Empowerment, and how it can be achieved. Last but not least, it explains why Women's Economic Empowerment is important for the business strategy of companies in the palm oil sector.

### **Part II The company as an employer; strategies to address gender-based constraints of female employees**

This part provides practical strategies, with examples, that are relevant for all companies working with employees: plantations, mills, schemes, labour providers, and larger smallholders. In large companies, the management is responsible to ensure that specific gender-based constraints of female employees are addressed and strategies are developed together with the human resources management department or the corporate social responsibility department. But the implementation is the responsibility of all personnel, technical staff, supervisors at different levels, and field staff.

In the case of independent smallholders, the board and technical staff of the smallholder group/organisation are playing a similar role as the management of a company. They will have to promote and facilitate that their members apply a gender-responsive policy in dealing with their employees. The establishment of a Gender Committee is highly advised for these structures. The smallholder group/organisation could cooperate in this theme with the buying company. If needed, the assistance of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) could be asked for.

As indicated, this part on gender-responsive human resource management is important for all actors in the chain, including traders/processors and labour providers. Not all suggestions might be relevant to them, but they are advised to apply those elements that do correspond to their responsibility. Plantations and smallholder groups/organisations are advised to discuss and cooperate on this topic with other actors in the value chain.

### **Part III Working with independent smallholders: strategies to address gender-based constraints of female smallholders**

This part provides practical strategies, with examples for plantations working with independent smallholders and their organisations, and the smallholder groups/organisations themselves. It describes how services can be delivered to these groups or by the group to their members to make them equally accessible for women and men.

### **Part IV The company and the surrounding community**

This part is for all (large) companies that wish to establish good relationships with the communities surrounding their plantation. Doing so is the responsibility of the management of the company, involving relevant staff, for example, those working in their health clinics or day care centres or schools, and also staff of the corporate social responsibility department. If necessary, cooperation with an NGO, a women's organisation, or specialised consultants is advised.

## Part V Internal processes and capacities

This part provides a quick gender scan, which will help companies to assess the gender sensitivity of the company. A risk assessment tool is also provided, which can be used to make internal gender-sensitive processes of the company.

| Overview relation between RSPO P&C 2018 and the strategies described in the Gender Guidance  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Principles and Criteria<br>(Includes guidance in Annex 2)  | Indicators  | Strategy Gender Guidance   |
| PROSPERITY   | <b>1. Behave ethically and transparently</b>  |  |
|  | 1.1 Management documents comprise figures of gender distribution within all workers categorised by management, administrative staff, and workers (both permanent casual workers and piece-rate workers).  | Part II Strategy 1<br>Gender equality in the workplace<br><br>Part II Strategy 4<br>Equal job opportunities  |
|  | <b>2. Operate legally and respect rights</b>  |  |
|  | <b>3. Optimise productivity, efficiency, positive impact, and resilience</b>  |  |
| 3.4 Management documents may comprise social programmes [...] social programmes advancing community livelihoods and gender equality.<br><br>3.4 Assessment of potential social impacts on surrounding communities of a plantation, including an analysis of potential effects on livelihoods, and differential effects on women versus men [...].<br><br>3.6 An occupational health and safety plan is documented, communicated and implemented.<br><br>3.7 Training should be given to all staff and workers, including women smallholders and women plantation workers, within the unit of certification, as well as contract workers. | 3.7.1 (C) A documented programme that provides training is in place, which is accessible to all staff, workers, scheme smallholders, and outgrowers, taking into account gender-specific needs, and which covers applicable aspects of the RSPO P&C, in a form they understand, and which includes assessments of training. | Part IV Strategy 2<br>Organising gender-sensitive community initiatives<br><br>Part II Strategy 4<br>Equal job opportunities<br><br>Part III Strategy 2<br>Equal access of women to group and/or company services (including training) |
| PEOPLE   | <b>4. Respect community and human rights and deliver benefits</b>   |  |
|  | 4.2 Complaints should be dealt with by mechanisms such as Joint Consultative Committees (JCC), with gender representation [...].  | 4.6.2 (C) A mutually agreed procedure for calculating and distributing fair and gender-equal compensation (monetary or otherwise) is established   |



## Overview relation between RSPO P&C 2018 and the strategies described in the Gender Guidance

| Principles and Criteria<br>(Includes guidance in Annex 2) |   | Indicators  | Strategy Gender Guidance   |
|---|---|---|--|
|   | 4.5 [...] ensuring participation in decision-making of those groups that are considered to be politically disadvantaged, such as indigenous peoples and women.  | and implemented, monitored and evaluated [...].<br><br>4.6.3 Evidence is available that equal opportunities are provided to both men and women to hold land titles for smallholdings.   | Part IV Strategy 1<br>Involvement of women in Community Land Use Planning, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent processes  |
|   | <b>5. Support smallholder inclusion</b>   |   |  |
|   | 5.1 The unit of certification deals fairly and transparently with all smallholders (independent and scheme) and other local businesses.<br><br>5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains.  | 5.1.4 Evidence is available that all parties, including women [...], are involved in decision-making processes and understand the contract.<br><br>5.2.1 The unit of certification consults with interested smallholders (irrespective of type), including women or other partners in their supply base to assess their needs for support to improve their livelihoods and their interest in RSPO certification.  | Part III Strategy 1<br>Engage women in smallholder organisations as members and leaders<br><br>Part IV Strategy 5<br>Small business development  |
|   | <b>6. Respect workers' rights and conditions</b>  |   |  |
| PEOPLE  | 6.1 Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work.<br><br>6.1 Theme: Protection of women's right to work<br><br>Right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service, and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training; Right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of | 6.1.1 Publicly available non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy is implemented in such a way to prevent discrimination based on [...] gender, sexual orientation, gender identity [...].<br><br>6.1.2 (C) Evidence is provided that workers and groups including local communities, women, and migrant workers have not been discriminated against.<br><br>6.1.4 Pregnancy testing is not conducted as a discriminatory measure and is only permissible when it is legally mandated. Alternative | Part II Strategy 1<br>Gender-equality in the workplace<br><br>Part II Strategy 2<br>Flexible working conditions for men and women<br><br>Part II Strategy 4<br>Equal job opportunities<br><br>Part III Strategy 1<br>Engage women in smallholder organisations as members and leaders<br><br>Part III Strategy 2<br>Equal access of women to group |

## Overview relation between RSPO P&C 2018 and the strategies described in the Gender Guidance

| Principles and Criteria<br>(Includes guidance in Annex 2)   | Indicators  | Strategy Gender Guidance   |
|---|---|--|
| work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work.   | equivalent employment is offered for pregnant women.<br><br>6.1.5 (C) A gender committee is in place specifically to raise awareness, identify and address issues of concern, as well as opportunities and improvements for women.  | and/or company services  |
| 6.5 To eradicate all forms of gender-based violence against women; develop protocols and procedures addressing all forms of gender-based violence that may occur in the workplace or affect women workers, including effective and accessible internal complaints procedures.   | 6.5.1 (C) A policy to prevent sexual and all other forms of harassment and violence is implemented and communicated to all levels of the workforce.   | Part II Strategy 3<br>Addressing gender-based violence   |
| <p>6.5 [...] These policies should include education for women and awareness of the workforce. The right to protection of health and safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.</p> <p>6.5 There should be programmes [...] training on women's rights; counselling for women affected by violence; child care facilities to be provided by the unit of certification; women to be allowed to breastfeed up to nine months before resuming chemical spraying or usage tasks; and women to be given specific break times to enable effective breastfeeding.</p> | <p>6.1.5 (C) A Gender committee is in place specifically to raise awareness, identify and address issues of concern, as well as opportunities and improvements for women.</p> <p>6.1.6 There is evidence of equal pay for the same work scope.</p> <p>6.5.2 (C) A policy to protect the reproductive rights of all, especially women, is implemented and communicated to all levels of the workforce.</p> <p>6.5.3 Management has assessed the needs of new mothers, in consultation with the new mothers, and actions are taken to address the needs that have been identified. This can be monitored by the Gender Committee.</p> | <p>Part II Strategy 1<br/>Gender-equality in the workplace</p> <p>Part II Strategy 2<br/>Flexible working conditions for men and women</p> |

PEOPLE

## Overview relation between RSPO P&C 2018 and the strategies described in the Gender Guidance

| Principles and Criteria<br>(Includes guidance in Annex 2) |   |  | Indicators  | Strategy Gender Guidance |
|---|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| PEOPLE  |   | 5.5.4 A grievance mechanism, which respects anonymity and protects complainants where requested, is established, implemented, and communicated to all levels of the workforce.                                     |   |                          |
| PLANET  | 7. Protect, conserve and enhance ecosystems and the environment |  |   |                          |
|   |   | 7.2.11 (C) No work with pesticides is undertaken by persons under the age of 18, pregnant or breastfeeding women, or other people that have medical restrictions and they are offered alternative equivalent work. | Part II Strategy 1<br>Gender-equality in the workplace<br><br>Part III Strategy 2<br>Equal access of women to group and/or company services |                          |

## PART I WHAT IS WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR RSPO MEMBERS?

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### The role of women in the palm oil sector

The palm oil sector is known for being a male-dominated sector. The fact that women increasingly play important roles in this sector is often not recognised. The exact roles of women differ per country, continent, and node of the value chain. RSPO members are expected to have a strategy to contribute to increased gender equality within the company as this is part and parcel of the sustainability standard of RSPO. To do so, it is important to know the actual situation: where are women active, and what challenges do they face because they are women?; in other words, what are their gender-based constraints, and how can these be addressed?

In many countries, both men and women perform oil palm maintenance tasks as labourers on a plantation or as smallholders: clearing undergrowth, pruning trees, spreading fertiliser, spraying herbicides, and using pesticides. Harvesting generally is considered a task for men. Work in tree nurseries is typically considered the work of women. Besides, women also do other work on the plantations, for example in the administration and financial management and the social facilities (like childcare centres, schools, health clinics) of the company. In the headquarters of large companies, the percentage of women is even higher; they work in administration but also as an engineer and sustainability manager. The labour force of mills is known for being predominantly male.

To get a clear picture of the role of women in the palm oil sector it would be good to have a gender-sensitive visual presentation of the palm oil sector. If the specific groups of women are known, it is possible to analyse the gender-based constraints they face and look for solutions. Such a map can be made at the level of a company and/or of a sector. For this guide, we created a gender-sensitive sector map.<sup>3</sup>

In this guidance document, the focus is on addressing the gender-based constraints of women in the whole palm oil sector and contributing to greater gender equality. We will formulate this objective in more specific terms and use the concept of women's economic empowerment.

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<sup>3</sup> This map is based on the logic of the gender-sensitive value chain map as described in several toolkits of AgriProFocus, for example in *Sustainable coffee as a family business; approaches and tools to include women and youth*, a publication by Hivos, AgriProFocus, Fair & Sustainable Advisory Services, and The Sustainable Coffee Program, powered by IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative, available in English (2014) and Spanish (2015).

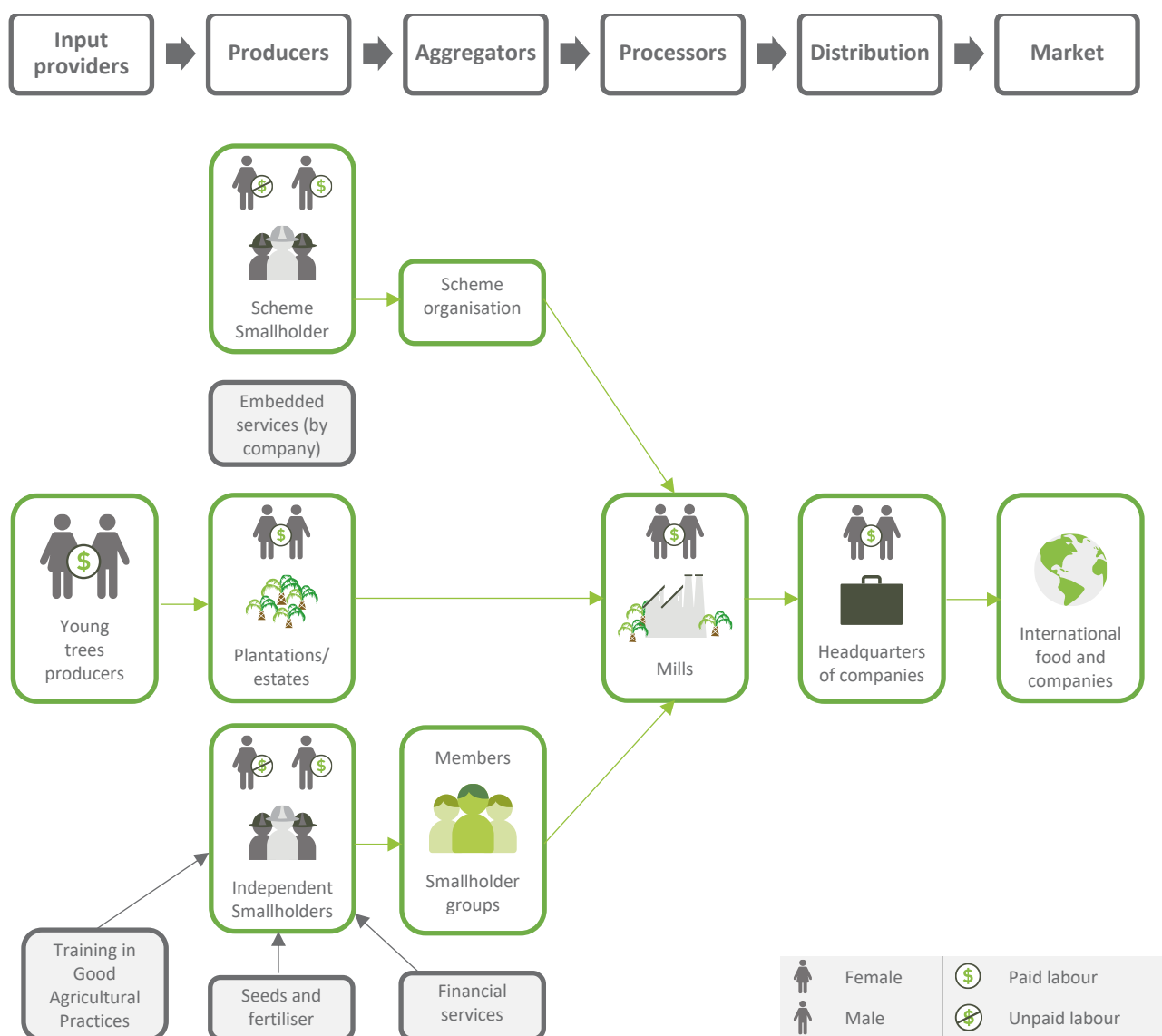


Figure 1 Example of a gender-sensitive palm oil sector map

## What is women’s economic empowerment?

The concept of women’s economic empowerment is used by several international institutions, especially those active in economic development like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED). They use slightly different wording but stress the complementarity of the two components. According to DCED, ‘A woman is economically empowered when she has both: (a) access to resources: the options to advance economically; and (b) agency: the power to make and act on economic decisions.’<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Golla, A., Malhotra, A., Nanda, P. and Mehra, R. (2011) *Understanding and Measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment: Definition, Framework and Indicators*, by the International Center for Research on Women (2011). In: Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED), Erin Markel (2014). *Measuring Women’s Economic Empowerment in Private Sector Development*.



**Access to productive resources** includes access to assets such as land and equipment, as well as agricultural and financial services. If only access to resources is addressed, women are not yet empowered since women are also confronted with making decisions about the use of these resources, and with norms and traditions that need to be challenged.

**Agency** is defined as the ability to make autonomous choices and transform those choices into desired outcomes. It includes control over resources and income, as well as capabilities and self-confidence.

Source: DCED (2014).

According to FAO (2016)<sup>5</sup> the main components of women's economic empowerment are access to productive resources and power and agency, as visualized in figures 2 and 3.



Figure 2. Access to productive resources

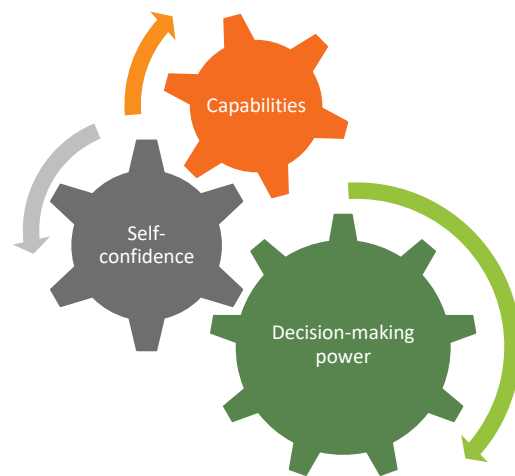


Figure 3. Power and agency

## How can we achieve women's economic empowerment?

The Reach - Benefit - Empower framework is very helpful in formulating effective strategies to achieve women's economic empowerment in the palm oil sector. It is developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).<sup>6</sup> The framework is meant to be used: 1) To formulate objectives for programmes aiming at empowerment of women; 2) To design strategies to achieve these objectives; strategies that aim at women and men, at household and company levels; 3) To monitor the results achieved.

The framework makes a distinction between reach, benefit, and empower and points out that simply *reaching* women, by including them as employees in a firm, or even by training them, does not ensure that they will *benefit* in terms of improved (socio-economic) well-being or that they will be *empowered*, or that they will have the power to make decisions in their family or the company. To achieve economic empowerment of women, companies should aim to go beyond merely reaching women: they should ensure that women really benefit from the actions and also strive to empower them, and strengthen their ability to make strategic life choices and put those choices into action.

<sup>5</sup> FAO (2016) *Developing gender-sensitive value chains. A guiding framework*, p. 16-20.

<sup>6</sup> IFPRI, Meinzen-Dick, Ruth, et al. (2017). *Do agricultural development projects reach, benefit, or empower women?* Expert paper prepared by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

The framework is not only for general use in the development context, but also applicable to companies. Table 1 summarises the Reach - Benefit - Empower framework as adjusted by the authors for use by RSPO members.

|             | Reach   | Benefit   | Empower   |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Objectives  | Women participate actively in the palm oil sector as a smallholder, as member of a smallholder household, or as employee.   | Increase the economic and social well-being of women.   | Strengthen the ability of women to make strategic life choices, including financial decisions, and to put those choices into action in the form of expenditures and investments.  |
| Strategies  | <p>Seek to reduce the barriers to the participation of women in smallholder schemes (as farmers and as spouses).</p> <p>Implement a quota system for the percentage of women in training events.</p> <p>Actively hire women, also for permanent jobs and management positions.</p>  | <p>Follow up if women apply the knowledge and skills learned during training courses if women get promoted to more permanent and managerial positions, etc.</p> <p>Improve the applied strategies or add additional strategies e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add input supply to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training.</li> <li>• establish a mentoring programme for female staff.</li> </ul> | <p>Enhance women's decision-making power in households and communities, applying a couples' approach.</p> <p>Ensure the support from husbands and community leaders.</p> <p>Address key areas of gender inequality or disempowerment of women (e.g. gender-based violence) by sensitising men and women.</p>  |
| Measurement | <p>Number/proportion of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• female smallholders.</li> <li>• female employees in different types of jobs (also permanent jobs, technical jobs and management positions).</li> <li>• women using a service, e.g. getting a (larger) loan or attending Good Agricultural Practices training.</li> </ul> | <p>Sex-disaggregated data for outcomes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positions in the company.</li> <li>• income/ loan.</li> <li>• productivity.</li> <li>• assets.</li> <li>• nutrition.</li> <li>• time use, etc.</li> <li>• as a result of their activities in the palm oil sector.</li> </ul>  | <p>Women's decision-making power over, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agricultural production.</li> <li>• income or household food consumption.</li> </ul> <p>Reduction of disempowerment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gender-based violence.</li> <li>• time burden.</li> <li>• restricted mobility.</li> </ul> |

Table 1. The Reach – Benefit – Empower framework adapted for the palm oil sector

## The business case for women’s economic empowerment

RSPO recognises that there are business arguments for companies to actively promote women's economic empowerment. The International Finance Corporation (IFC)<sup>7</sup> and several other international organisations<sup>8</sup> supported that there is a ‘business case’ for a gender-sensitive business strategy. A business case is a motivation or justification for an action that is expected to make corporate processes more efficient or products more valuable. It is proclaimed that gender matters in business decisions, and that promoting gender equality is an opportunity for businesses - not a limitation.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC)<sup>9</sup> and other institutions list several potential benefits for agribusinesses that implement gender-aware policies and practices in employing workers. These benefits for the company as employer range from enhanced reputation, reduced staff turnover, and an increased talent pool, to improved work processes and broader strategic gains.

Benefits for companies that source products from smallholders are mostly linked to supply chain stability, product quality, and yield. The benefits can be grouped into four main areas (see figure 4).<sup>10</sup> These four areas will be used when describing the business argument for applying the different strategies in this guide.

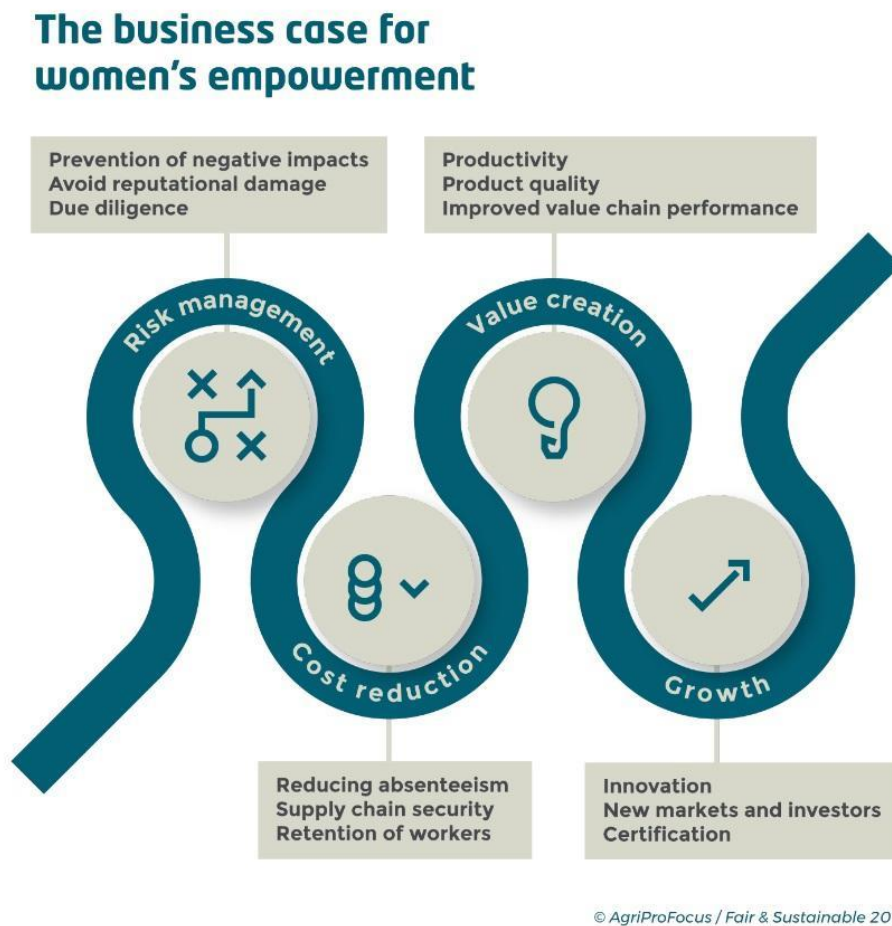


Figure 4 The business case for women’s empowerment

<sup>7</sup> IFC/World Bank Group (2016). *Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains*.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the benefits of gender diversity within employment, other useful sources are Credit Suisse 2012; Oak Foundation, Dalberg, ICRW, and WITTER 2014; and McKinsey & Company 2017.

<sup>9</sup> IFC (2013). *Investing in Women’s Employment, Good for Business, Good for Development*, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> AgriProFocus/ Fair & Sustainable (2019). *The business case for women’s empowerment* a figure based on the IFC figure (2013) p. 4.

### Strategies to address gender-based constraints of female employees

**Principle 3 Optimise productivity, efficiency, positive impacts and resilience**

**Principle 6 Respect workers' rights and conditions**

#### Why is gender-sensitive human resource management important?

A company benefits from attracting, developing, and retaining a required talented workforce, especially if they do that in a way that promotes gender equality. In many countries, this is even a legal obligation. As this is in line with the United Nation's ambition for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the 2010 UN Global Compact and UN Women have developed the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) for companies to put this in practice.<sup>11</sup> The 2018 RSPO Principles and Criteria are in line with the WEPs.

#### Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development of women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report progress to achieve gender equality.

Source: UN Global Compact and UN Women, 2010

Management is usually strongly motivated to identify and mitigate any risks to their business. All of the following obligations and risks can have a gender component:

- Regulatory obligations (compliance with standards and legislation, e.g. on non-discrimination, maternity leave, and occupational health and safety).
- Operational risk management (ensuring women are well-equipped for their work and use protective gear, and ensuring women are safe on vast plantations and are not harassed).
- Reputational risk management (avoid the exploitation of women workers, and harassment at the workplace).

Addressing these issues avoid costs, for instance, to repair reputational damage. It also brings advantages because an improved or secured reputation of a conflict-free plantation/mill is favoured by buyers/manufacturers. It facilitates access to substantial investments from financial institutions, investors, and parent companies, for example for the investments in replanting.

In this part, we look at workers directly employed by the company, on the plantation, or in the mill for instance, and also at workers within smallholder schemes.

<sup>11</sup> UN Women and UN Global Compact, 2010 Women's Empowerment Principles. Watch this animation video by Global Compact Turkey on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xP2pOKsQUc8>

## Why is the company responsible for gender-responsive human resource management in smallholder schemes?

According to the RSPO, 'scheme smallholders' are landowners or their delegates who do not have the: (1) enforceable decision-making power on the operation of the land and production practices; and/or (2) freedom to choose how they utilise their lands, type of crops to plant, and how they manage them (how they organise, manage and finance the land). This means that the company manages most if not all operational activities on the scheme farms. For certain activities like for instance harvesting, they might recruit workers through service providers, but all in all the company is also responsible for ensuring that scheme smallholders comply with the RSPO principles. Therefore in this chapter, the strategies indicated also apply to the (female) workers of scheme smallholders.

In the case of independent smallholder groups/organisations, the board of the organisation is responsible for ensuring and facilitating that their members deal with their employees in a gender-responsive manner, meaning they have to address gender-based constraints of their female labour force to provide them with equal opportunities as their male counterparts.

## What hinders addressing gender-based constraints of female employees?

### *Women are not considered as an important part of the labour force*

The division of work on the plantation, based on tradition and social norms, in many places, has become a pattern. This has resulted in women workers often doing jobs like applying fertilisers, spraying pesticides, and collecting loose fruits, while men are responsible for harvesting, pruning, and truck driving. Also, pollination is often a job for women. The activities undertaken by women are generally piece-rate or casual jobs with a lower wage paid by the day. They do not benefit from the social security benefits that accompany the permanent contracts, which men more often have. As a result, women have very little possibilities of upward mobility within the company.

Women also form a smaller proportion of the plantation labour force because they often have to combine work as a labourer with unpaid care work, including care for children and dependent adults, housework (such as cooking, cleaning, or collecting water or firewood), and unpaid community work. Unpaid care work affects women's time availability, mobility, and agency. It reduces women's ability to engage in permanent wage labour and leads to dropout from better-paid work for lack of 'flexible' arrangements when they become mothers. Many female employees rely on older women and children, typically daughters, to care for their small children or resort to poor quality childcare arrangements that may be unsafe or inhibit early childhood development. This causes stress among employees, distracts them from work, and often leads to absenteeism. Although businesses do notice the absenteeism and at times the high staff turnover rates, it is uncommon to analyse the root causes and address them.

There is also a misconception that investing in women does not benefit men, but there are best practices from the palm oil industry and other sectors that demonstrate that closing the gap between men and women strengthens the stability of the company and secures family income and well-being.

### *The business case is not seen*

There is still a lack of awareness of how investing in female employees can lower costs and provide support in obtaining a skilled and stable workforce. The report of IFC, "The Business Case for Women's Employment in Agriculture" focuses on directly employed women and waged labour, predominantly among larger-scale agribusiness employers. It highlights that when companies invest in women workers, they help improve their labour and talent pool, lower recruitment and turnover costs, increase innovation, and provide opportunities for diverse perspectives in the workforce and management. Moreover, high labour standards and quality employment can increase access to buyers from high-end markets. Companies thereby improve their business gains while ultimately supporting inclusive growth for women workers in agribusiness.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> International Finance Corporation (2016). *The Business Case for Women's Employment in Agriculture*



Another IFC report ‘Investing in women along agribusiness value chains’ illustrates the business case for investment in female actors in the value chain and agri-business. For businesses that depend heavily on agricultural commodities, gender gaps remain a persistent barrier to growth, profitability, and sustainability. Gender gaps in inputs and production can reduce the quantity and quality of the harvest; gender gaps in post-harvest processing and storage can lead to post-harvest losses; and gender gaps in transportation, marketing, and sales can result in fragmented and inefficient markets. Companies that apply gender-smart solutions perform better. While this is true for large-scale agribusinesses, brands or retailers, a key message of this report shows that numerous opportunities also exist for small to mid-scale businesses.<sup>13</sup>

The publication of Unilever and Oxfam ‘Business Briefing on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work’ (2019) mentions the following business arguments for recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work by women and girls:

1. Talent acquisition and retention: Businesses with policies like paid parental or family leave and flexible work arrangements enable employees to manage unpaid family and household care responsibilities and find it easier to attract and retain workers.
2. Productivity and employee engagement: Employers that take a holistic view of workers’ lives, including caregiving and household responsibilities, which help address aspects that cause employee distraction, fatigue, and absenteeism, can improve workforce performance and engagement.
3. Supply chain resilience and diversity: Businesses that encourage employers in their supply chain to address unpaid care work issues can help build stable and diverse sources of supply, contributing to their ability to mitigate risks and serve customer needs.<sup>14</sup>

### Strategies for female employees

To address the detected social issues of female employees and to stimulate further compliance with the RSPO P&C, this guidance describes four strategies related to female employees that will allow companies to improve their performance.

Strategy 1. Gender-equality in the workplace

Strategy 2. Flexible working conditions for men and women

Strategy 3. Addressing gender-based violence

Strategy 4. Equal job opportunities

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<sup>13</sup> International Finance Corporation (2016). *Investing in Women Along Agribusiness Value Chains*

<sup>14</sup> Unilever and Oxfam (2019). *Business Briefing on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work*.

## Strategy 1. Gender-equality in the workplace

**Indicator 6.1.6 Equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value**

**Criterion 6.7 The working environment is safe and without undue risk to health**

**Criterion 6.1 Any form of discrimination is prohibited**

**Criterion 3.6 An occupational health and safety plan is documented, communicated and implemented**

### What are the gender-based constraints?

Most employees in the palm oil sector are men. They work in the plantations and mills and do work perceived as heavy. Most of them have permanent contracts. Women are mostly doing casual labour leading to continued irregular and low family income. As mentioned in the introduction, women are mostly involved in spraying and fertilising, or harvesting loose fruit, which are casual jobs with low pay. The irregular nature of these jobs makes it hard for women to plan and combine these jobs with family obligations like unpaid care and household chores. Men are often employed for long periods like the entire season or have a permanent position. This brings stability and besides the payment, it brings additional benefits like inclusion in social security, health insurance, and sometimes also pension schemes. There are some exceptions, where women working in office administration or the lab have permanent contracts, similar to women working in health services and child care facilities of the company. Head offices of companies in many cases have a higher proportion of female staff.

Labour conditions in the plantation are in general harsh. Workers in plant maintenance units (mostly women) are given targets for the number of sacks of fertiliser that they should spread, tanks of chemicals that they need to spray, or rows of plants that they need to weed. If the worker is unable to meet the target, her daily wage will be lower or the work that she hasn't completed will be added to her next day's target. This creates the need to bring in unregistered workers (female or male, sometimes children) to reach the target. Payment is not always net payment; sometimes costs are deducted from it. Workers have to pay for their protective equipment, the motorcycle transport within the plantation, etc., which will reduce their already small wage even more. Spraying pesticide brings reproductive health risks, such as miscarriages, preterm deliveries, low birth weight, and birth defects, and the application of fertilisers can have health impacts.

Some casual labourers (mostly female) are not hired by the company directly but indirectly via a third party. They get their salary from the foreman without payslip and any right for health insurance, holidays, or recovery costs caused by health accidents. Casual workers are often hired for a maximum of certain days per month, to keep them in the status of casual workers. In Indonesia, this is usually a maximum of 20 days, but sometimes less. Sometimes women appreciate this as they also have other activities that keep them busy, such as a vegetable garden, a plot of rice, or small business. Women also report feeling unsafe in the plantation. They sometimes have to walk long distances alone and they fear snakes and other wild animals. They also fear sexual harassment.

The above-mentioned issues are topics dealt with in Collective Bargaining Agreements and other negotiations between the management and organised workers. But the reality is that workers committees and/or trade unions, in general, are male-dominated and do not sufficiently represent women workers and their needs. Gender committees do support management in analysing and suggesting ways to address gender needs but they are not always experienced or aware of the experiences of other companies that could be used as examples or inspiration.

### Key actions to address these gender-based constraints

- 1.1 Ensure equality in contracting and payment arrangements.
- 1.2 Improve the working conditions of women in the plantations.
- 1.3 Involve women in communication between workers and management.

## How to carry out these key actions

### 1.1 Ensure equality in contracting and payment arrangements.

- Anchor gender equality in the human resource management policy of the company. This policy includes the following: (Criterion 6.1)
  - Equal job security and all benefits and conditions of service.
  - Equal remuneration, including benefits, and equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work.
- Give more women permanent contracts, seasonal or permanent, including the associated benefits.
- Consider hiring couples, but give both husband and wife a contract to avoid the wife loses her job if her husband leaves.
- Fight exploitation of (female) workers by third party contractors, preferably hire directly.
- Do not deduct costs for Protective Personal Equipment and transport in the plantation (by motorcycle or truck) from the salary, thus reducing a salary that is already low.
- Pay equal salaries for men and women for equivalent jobs. (Indicator 6.1.6)
- Communicate the non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy of the company and make sure the policy is implemented in such a way to prevent discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. (Indicator 6.1.1)
- Document gender distribution within all job categories. (Criterion 1.1)
- Monitor workers and groups, including local communities, women, and migrant workers, to ensure they have not been discriminated against. (Indicator 6.1.2)

#### **Example: Company Musim Mas - Employment contracts for couples**

Singaporean multinational corporation Musim Mas introduced a new contracting system to address high turnover, especially amongst women workers. Previously, the company would separately recruit men for harvesting the Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) and women for spraying the palms. In line with the widespread practices in the palm oil sector, men would more often have a contract compared to women. The women workers were mostly casual workers. The company experienced a high turnover of especially casual workers and was faced with ever returning costs for recruitment, as well as high costs for training of the newly recruited women.

Musim Mas has introduced a new recruitment system whereby both the husband and wife of one family are now offered a contract. Turnover has decreased. Both men and women are paid and can enjoy other benefits, such as insurance and social security. They both receive training. Loyalty to the company has increased. Also, savings on the provision of housing were mentioned by the company. One house would now benefit two employees at a time. When both husband and wife have a contract they also have their own income. For women, this contributes to their financial independence and also boosts their self-esteem.

### 1.2 Improve the working conditions of women in the plantations (Criteria and Indicators 6.7 - 6.7.3 - 6.7.4, and Principle 2 on ethical practices).

- Ensure that payment is reasonable and targets/quotas feasible, make this part of the negotiations on contracts, both with permanent and casual workers.<sup>15</sup>
- Organise women in groups so that they are not alone in the plantation, and are working together and teaming up.

<sup>15</sup> The P&C do refer to the implementation of DLW, but until benchmarks are available it is important to pay a minimum wage even if payment is done on an hourly or piece rate basis – see for instance P&C 6.2.6.

- Ensure that treatment for snake bites or other small injuries is available in the plantation, and not only at a central faraway location.
- Ensure that protective clothing for spraying is available for women and used.
- Ensure regular health checks (blood tests, etc.) to control the health situation, and communicate the results of the test so that women know their health situation.
- Provide training on health and safety, which is accessible to all staff, workers, scheme smallholders and outgrowers, taking into account gender-specific needs, and covers applicable aspects of the RSPO P&C, in a form they understand, and includes assessments of training. (Indicator 3.7.1).

### 1.3 Involve women in communication between workers and management (Indicator 6.1.5 and Principle 2)

- Promote the participation of women in workers' committees, trade unions, and/or gender committees to make their voices heard and ensure that they are strongly represented in all communication between the management and workers to make sure women's rights and needs are addressed.
- Promote and support women to become a member of any of these structures. This can be done by inviting labour union speakers to the company to explain the benefits of membership.
- Make use of these channels to raise awareness on the rights and needs of women.
- Promote and support women to speak up in these structures by having women team up and coach each other in standing up for their rights and by setting clear targets to increase the number of women in these structures.
- Put in place a gender committee specifically to raise awareness, and identify and address issues of concern, as well as opportunities and improvements for women. (Indicator 6.1.5)
- Complaints should be dealt with by mechanisms such as Joint Consultative Committees (JCC), with gender representation. (Criterion 4.2)
- Ensure the participation in decision-making of the groups that are considered to be politically disadvantaged, such as indigenous peoples and women. (Criterion 4.5)
- A grievance mechanism that respects anonymity and protects complainants where requested, is established, implemented, and communicated to all levels of the workforce. (Indicator 6.5.4)

## Gender committees

According to RSPO (2017), a gender committee specifically addressing areas of concern to women may be requested to comply with the RSPO P&C. This committee, with representatives from all areas of work, will consider matters such as training on women's rights, counselling for women affected by violence, childcare facilities to be provided by growers and millers, women to be allowed to breastfeed up to nine months before resuming chemical spraying tasks, and women to be given specific break times to enable effective breastfeeding. Complaints may be dealt with by mechanisms such as Joint Consultative Committees (JCC), with gender representation. Grievances may be internal (employees) or external.

### **Gender Committee Cargill - Indonesia**

The Cargill Gender Committee is set up for all female employees with representatives from mills and plantations. They hold monthly meetings and deal with topics like finance, etc. The chairperson reports to the head of the company and information on the sessions held is shared with employees. The Committee does not represent independent smallholders, but when requested they can advise female farmers on different topics. However, when harassment is detected it will be mentioned to the village head.

Separately, there are villages where the wife of the village head organises sessions with female smallholders to raise awareness on different topics. The relationship between husband and wife at the household level and balancing tasks remain difficult topics to discuss as in the Muslim culture the man is the head of household and this culture is still strong in villages. In their experience, it is easier to discuss joint decision-making around the education of the children than anything related to agricultural work as women prefer to leave that to men.

Source: Interview with Yunita Widiastuti

## **Results for the company**

### ***Risk management***

Avoidance of reputational damage: Consumer and media interest in supply chain conditions is growing as the world becomes smaller and more interconnected. Being aware of the real conditions in the company's value chain, and engaging in a constructive dialogue that encourages continual improvement in gender equality, greatly reduces a company's risk of sudden reputational damage, for instance when it becomes clear that women do not receive equal pay for equal work.

### ***Cost reduction***

Reduced recruitment and training costs: Casual labourers come and go. High turnover of staff leads to costs related to the continuous recruitment and training of new employees. If women have longer-term contracts or permanent jobs they are more likely to stay available for the company. It lowers recruitment and overstaffing costs to cover for absenteeism.

Reduced costs related to absenteeism: Businesses with policies like flexible work arrangements enable employees to manage unpaid family and household care responsibilities and find it easier to attract and retain workers. This lowers absenteeism.

### ***Value creation***

Standard compliance: the suggested actions lead to improved compliance with RSPO P&C, verified in RSPO audits. Audit status is mentioned on the RSPO website and supports a company's risk mitigation strategy.

Improved productivity, as the retention of workers increases and absenteeism, decreases. It also has a link to the element of cost reduction.

### ***Growth***

Reputation as a gender-responsive employer: Access to high(er) value sustainability markets.



## Results for women

|             | Reach   | Benefit   | Empower   |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Objectives  | Equal payment and contracts for men and women.  | Higher pay and greater stability and income security and better working conditions.   | The voice of women is heard in communication between the management and workers.  |
| Strategies  | Develop different types of arrangements to replace casual labour and piece-rate arrangements for women.<br><br>The human resources department checks if women get paid less than men for similar work. If so, contracts are adjusted. | Follow up if women are benefitting from (new) arrangements to replace piece-rate arrangements for permanent work and possibilities to be included in social security (and pension) schemes.<br><br>Improve the working conditions of women.<br><br>Make health service available.<br><br>Ensure safety in the plantation. | Communicate the gender-equal contracting policy amongst employees.<br><br>Create awareness amongst all personnel and supervisors about the importance of good working conditions for women.<br><br>Communicate achievements.<br><br>Promote and support women to become members of workers' committees, trade unions, and gender committees, and participate in collective bargaining agreements. |
| Measurement | Percentage or number of men and women<br><br>- in seasonal and permanent jobs.<br>- get the same salary for similar jobs.   | Percentage or number of men and women<br><br>- social security schemes.<br>- other benefits (e.g. housing).   | Percentage or number of men and women<br><br>- in the different structures.   |

## Strategy 2. Flexible working conditions for men and women

**Indicator 6.5.3 Allow paid breaks**

**Indicator 6.1.4 Alternative employment is offered for pregnant women**

**Indicator 6.1.5 A gender committee is in place**

### What are the gender-based constraints?

An overall constraint is that women combine work with unpaid (family) care. They look after small children, take family members to medical appointments, or look after elderly family members. All these are done on top of their regular household chores. Generally, men leave these unpaid care work to their wives, mothers, or daughters. A common practice is that women choose family care over doing a shift at work. It is a constraint that comes back in several forms, is self-explanatory and adds to the general low-income situation of female workers: permanent work is not flexible and casual work is flexible but unsure. For companies, however, it means a cost due to high staff turnover and absenteeism.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women are restricted in working with chemicals as otherwise, they run serious health risks. This is correct, but unfortunately, it also means that women drop out of work when they become pregnant. Attending pregnancy checks often conflicts with regular working hours. Though this is illegal, sometimes women are fired when they are pregnant. Powder milk is expensive and sometimes of

a low quality, which does not make it a good alternative for breastfeeding, which is healthier. Additionally, affordable child care is not always available. This makes women decide to stay at home or to ask a daughter or family member to stay at home from school to take care of the children.

### Key actions to address these gender-based constraints

- 2.1 Allow more flexibility in working hours to allow the combination of employment with care work.
- 2.2 Offer alternative employment for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- 2.3 Recognise and support employees with care responsibilities.
- 2.4 Communicate the new policies and sensitise men on redistribution of care tasks in their families.

### How to carry out these key actions

- 2.1 Allow more flexibility in working hours to allow the combination of employment with care work.
  - Develop programmes and training on women's rights, provide child care facilities to allow women to breastfeed up to nine months before resuming chemical spraying or usage tasks, and give women specific break times to enable effective breastfeeding. (Criterion 6.5)
  - Management has assessed the needs of new mothers, in consultation with the new mothers, and actions are taken to address the needs that have been identified. This can be monitored by the Gender Committee. (Indicator 6.5.3)
  - Analyse how working hours could be made more flexible and ensure that no mandatory overtime is required to compensate for the time taken for care responsibilities.
  - This might mean allowing workers to start later when having a medical appointment or creating flexible breaks or shifts.
  - This could also be achieved by having more flexible opening hours for the medical clinic or childcare facility, for instance, allowing parents and especially mothers to combine appointments with work.
  - A more flexible work schedule helps retain female workers and does not force women to choose to do care tasks instead of working.
  - Create awareness on the fact that men also have care responsibilities.
  - Instead of changing casual work into permanent jobs, a company could also consider improving the lives of casual workers.

#### Improving the quality of life for women and casual workers

According to Lim Shu Ling, head of sustainability communications at Singapore-based palm oil company Golden-Agri Resources (GAR), the issue of women's work status is more complex and the division of labour in the palm oil industry does not necessarily reflect discrimination against women. "Some jobs, such as harvesting heavy palm oil bunches, are physically demanding and are thus assigned to men", she says. However, this might be looked at differently in other regions.

"I suppose one might look at agribusiness and think that the women may not be treated equally as men, because of the perception that more women are doing part-time jobs," she says. "But there's a danger of not looking closely enough at the specific conditions in the agricultural sector and how women's roles play out in more rural settings in an agricultural community."

She added that many women prefer flexibility in their working hours and are usually juggling a variety of household jobs, which is why most of them are hired as part-time workers. GAR offers women workers who choose to work part-time fixed-term positions so that they can attend to other responsibilities such as tending to the household, maintaining family gardens, and running side businesses.

Source: [www.eco-business.com/GAR](http://www.eco-business.com/GAR)

## 2.2 Offer alternative employment for pregnant and breastfeeding women (Indicator 6.1.4).

- Ensure the education for women and awareness of the workforce on the right to protection of health and safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction. (Criterion 6.5)
- Having an in-house daycare facility, a cafeteria, and/or a school offers alternative places for women to work. These are not only a good social benefit for workers, but create more alternative work for pregnant and/or breastfeeding women.
- Another option could be to employ these women in the nursery or mills. Although the general opinion is that women do less intensive work as compared to men in the plantation, this is not entirely true. Carrying containers with pesticides and fertiliser bags is far from light work and probably comparable with some work in the mills.
- An idea could be to give pregnant women the possibility to follow training on a variety of topics: literacy, female leadership, training on health and safety, on labour rights awareness-raising, etc., thus creating more opportunities.
- Consider applying organic fertilisers as this lowers the health risk for all involved considerably.

## 2.3 Recognise and support employees with care responsibilities (Criterion 6.5).

- Support employees (also casual workers) with care responsibilities by providing daycare, schools, and health services within the company or in the community. Make services available without deducting the costs from the salary (which sometimes happens).
- Provide spaces for breastfeeding or pumping breast milk.
- Consider accessible storage facilities for mother's milk within the company or in the community.
- These arrangements prevent stress and concern about the welfare of women's small children and allow older children (especially daughters) to stay in school.

## 2.4 Communicate the new policies and sensitise men on redistribution of care tasks in their families (Indicator 6.1.5).

- Ensure the buy-in of men. The new policies should be well communicated to all workers.
- This should be combined with awareness-raising of men on more equal distribution of unpaid care in their families.
- Stress that when men don't shoulder their fair share of unpaid care work, they can miss out on positive and life-affirming experiences, such as the lifelong bonds that can come from spending time with their children as they grow.

## Results for the company

### *Risk management*

Avoid reputational damage: Knowing and being transparent about conditions in the supply chain is an important step in avoiding (sudden) reputational damage. Participating in constructive dialogues with stakeholders and making improvements where possible greatly reduces reputational risks.

### *Cost reduction*

Reduced recruitment and training costs: High turnover of staff leads to costs related to the continuous recruitment and training of new employees. If women have more flexible working hours and receive alternative jobs when pregnant or breastfeeding they stay available for the company.

### *Value creation*

Higher morale and productivity: Women that are supported to combine work with family obligations, or can work in alternative places when they are pregnant, show greater loyalty to the company. This generally increases productivity and overall quality of work.

### *Growth*

Ability to respond to increased demand in a cost-efficient, gender-sensitive way.

## Results for women

|             | Reach   | Benefit  | Empower  |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| Objectives  | Flexible work arrangements in place.  | Work is more easily combined with unpaid care work.  | Recognition of unpaid care work of women.  |
| Strategies  | <p>Make working hours more flexible.</p> <p>Identify alternative jobs for pregnant and breastfeeding women.</p> | <p>Follow up on the use of flexible working hours, and child care parental leave arrangements. What are the bottlenecks in using them?</p> <p>Adjust strategies and/or add new ones: Set up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- affordable arrangements for child care.</li> <li>- parental leave.</li> </ul> | <p>Involve caregivers effectively in design and decision-making so that they can voice their concerns and shape plans that reflect their needs and interests.</p> <p>Sensitise men on the redistribution of unpaid care work in the family.</p> <p>Create awareness amongst supervisors to allow employees to take up parental leave, facilitate the use of breastfeeding facilities or temporarily take up another job while being pregnant or breastfeeding.</p> |
| Measurement | <p>Flexible work arrangements.</p> <p>Support for caregivers.</p>   | <p>Percentage or number of men and women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- making use of the arrangements.</li> <li>- appreciating the arrangements.</li> </ul>  | <p>Examples of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- caregivers feel recognised.</li> <li>- men make use of flexible work arrangements.</li> <li>- tasks redistributed in the families of the workers.</li> </ul>  |

### Example: The SolTuna company: Reducing Absenteeism and Turnover of Female Workers

As the only tuna filleting and canning facility on the Solomon Islands, a country where the tuna industry accounts for 18% of GDP, SolTuna faces several challenges. The remote location of the facility means that the costs for labour, shipping, and support services are higher than its traditional competitors from Thailand and the Philippines. To remain competitive and protect this significant sector, SolTuna needs to reduce its costs of operation. The major costs that can be reduced are the costs associated with the high employee absenteeism and turnover, particularly among production staff with relatively high participation of women.

Most workers in the facility come from subsistence agriculture or informal work and have low literacy and numeracy levels. A total of 86% of the workers have run out of money one day before payday. To cover the household costs, they have no choice but to sell their own goods such as local fish on the market, instead of working their shift at SolTuna. This way they do get money immediately, but they miss out on a significant attendance bonus at the factory.

The absent workers are mostly young, married women, who have to take care of their children and other family members. A total of 44% of resignation letters cited child or elder care as the reason for leaving SolTuna, while 38% of all absences at SolTuna are due to sick leave, and a further 10%

are due to 'family problems', including gender-based violence. In the company, the women had little career perspective and access to company housing.

SolTuna started addressing these constraints by offering women more flexibility in work hours and access to alternative jobs. Workers were helped to understand the calculation of salary based on the number of days worked and especially on the amount of overtime worked. This will ensure that workers are motivated to work overtime when necessary. They also looked at how to make the distribution of benefits more equal between men and women. A woman was appointed as chairperson of a specifically installed committee and equal representation of workers was achieved.

It significantly reduced the costs for overstaffing and overtime costs from unanticipated employee absences. Employee satisfaction rates went up and supported the retention of staff.

Source: Fair & Sustainable/AgriProfocus, 2019<sup>16</sup>

## Strategy 3. Addressing gender-based violence

### Criterion 6.5 There is no (gender-based) harassment or abuse in the workplace

#### What are the gender-based constraints?

According to FAO<sup>17</sup>, gender-based violence (GBV) is violence against someone specifically because he or she is male or female. Gender-based violence affects both men and women, but women are usually the target. This is the result of an unequal power balance between men and women. The most common form of gender-based violence is abuse against a woman by her male partner. Abused partners may feel depressed, less interested in their work or hobbies, have trouble sleeping, feel lonely, isolated, worthless, and unattractive. They can feel very dependent on their partner, afraid, anxious, and helpless. They might be denied opportunities to earn money and to participate in community or religious events.

Gender-based violence mostly affects the productive population aged between 15 and 45. It has a devastating impact on the agriculture sector and food security: illness (including HIV), injuries and early pregnancies as a result of violence, and reduce work capacity, productivity, and livelihood assets. Many victims and survivors of gender-based violence are stigmatised and excluded from community and social activities and deprived of support.

Also in the workplace, women around the world are disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault. Millions of female workers are forced to work in an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating environment, and experience various unwelcome forms of sexual conduct. Women are asked for sexual favours, exposed to inappropriate jokes, insinuations and comments, and unwanted physical contact that can amount to an assault. Despite its massive scale, sexual harassment in the workplace remains underreported because of fear of disbelief, blame, or social or professional retaliation.

Gender-based violence not only harms the victims, mostly women and their families, but also reduces the productivity of women as farmers or employees. Companies should take an active stand against gender-based violence in their field of work and where possible address it also at community level, involving men and women, and their leaders.

#### Key actions to address these gender-based constraints

3.1 Develop and install a zero-tolerance policy for gender-based violence.

3.2 Install separate toilets and changing rooms for men and women.

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<sup>16</sup> Reducing Absenteeism and Turnover of Female Workers in the Tuna Industry, Solomon Islands The experience of SolTuna, in partnership with IFC: the business case for addressing gender-based constraints of female employees on the Solomon Islands. Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus 2019 [Read here](#) the 2-pager

<sup>17</sup> FAO (2018). *How can we protect men, women and children from gender-based violence? Addressing GBV in the food security and agriculture sector.* [Read here](#).



- 3.3 Train all staff, workers, and key persons in communities on gender-based violence prevention and response.
- 3.4 Facilitate access of victims to counselling and health facilities.
- 3.5 Consider female supervisors overseeing female workers.

### How to carry out these key actions

- 3.1 Develop and install a zero-tolerance policy for gender-based violence (Indicator 6.5.1).
  - Develop a policy and protocols and procedures to address all forms of gender-based violence that may occur in the workplace or affect women workers, including effective and accessible internal complaints procedures (Criterion 6.5).
  - The policy is communicated to all levels in the workforce (Indicator 6.5.1).
  - Develop a zero-tolerance policy is a good start, but is often not enough to prevent, detect, and respond to incidents irrespective of whether they happen in the communities or at work.
  - Partner with an organisation with experience in addressing gender-based violence like sexual harassment at the workplace or when travelling to work, e.g. an NGO, a women's organisation or maybe a consultant, if the company does not have in-house experience in this field.
  - Ask the expert organisation for support in analysing what is the common understanding of gender-based violence and the identification of risks such as local culture and knowledge, attitude and behaviours, and harmful practices.
  - Formulate protective measures based on this analysis. Important elements are how supervisors and managers can promote the reporting of incidents and how discriminatory practices are sanctioned.
- 3.2 Install separate toilets and changing rooms for men and women (Criterion 3.6 and Indicator 6.2.4).
  - Many incidents can be prevented when facilities at work have dedicated spaces for men and women like separate toilet(s) and changing rooms.
  - The facilities must be well spread across the plantation. In the remote corners, women have more risks as there is no social control. The facilities must be kept clean daily.
  - It might be a suggestion to combine a breastfeeding facility with a changing room.
- 3.3 Train all staff, workers and key persons in communities on gender-based violence prevention and response (Indicator 6.1.5).
  - Communicate the zero-tolerance policy with all workers and staff of the company.
  - Assign a person to whom a victim of gender-based violence can go to file a complaint.
  - Assign and train a person to whom a victim of gender-based violence can go to file a complaint with the assurance that their complaint will be handled with strict confidentiality.
  - There is ample room to explain the zero-tolerance policy and how it will be implemented, including the reporting and sanctioning of incidents. Although some of these elements might already be part of the general health and safety training, it is advisable to pay extra attention to this element - or even dedicate a separate training to them.
  - Where possible link the company training to more community-based training and community campaigns with a focus on youth and couples. Explain that domestic violence is also sexual harassment.
- 3.4 Facilitate access of victims to counselling and health facilities (Criterion 6.5).
  - As stated above, sexual harassment and abuse harm the victims and these victims might need counselling or another type of medical treatment. They must get paid time off from work to seek medical attention or get access to counselling.
  - Assign a person within the company who can arrange for the counselling. Ideally, the company has an independent counsellor.
  - Check if the grievance mechanism also includes counselling as a possible follow-up.
- 3.5 Consider female supervisors overseeing female workers (Indicator 6.1.1).
  - As female workers are regularly harassed by supervisors who want to have sex with them, consider female supervisors for work that is dominantly done by female workers.

### **Gender-based violence policy - Bumitama**

Senior management of Bumitama indicates that unfortunately sexual harassment and domestic violence is a reality in plantations. Bumitama has therefore developed a policy on this topic in an attempt to raise awareness among their labour force and address cases reported. The company has disseminated information on harassment and domestic violence and an email address is made available where anonymous complaint(s) can be made of any case of sexual harassment. It is possible to use a computer in the human resources department or use a personal mobile phone to make a complaint. It is also possible to only ask questions to obtain information.

Bumitama works with local leaders to raise awareness on the issue. Within the company they are quite strict about the behaviour of their leaders (e.g. supervisors, managers), and inappropriate behaviour will lead to dismissal.

The company is of the opinion that they also play a mediating role when cases are reported. Sometimes with the help of a women's group, doctor, or psychologist.

Source: Interview with Lim Sian Choo from Bumitama

### **Results for the company**

#### ***Risk management***

A high prevalence of gender-based constraints will lower the willingness of female workers to work for the company.

#### ***Value creation***

Addressing gender-based violence contributes to increased productivity, as victims of gender-based violence feel emotionally depressed, and illness, injuries, and early pregnancies as a result of violence reduce work capacity and productivity.

#### ***Cost reduction***

Reduced costs related to absenteeism: As in strategy 1, businesses with policies to address gender-based violence retain female workers, boost their morale leading to lower absenteeism due to injuries, depression, etc.

#### ***Growth***

Reputation as a gender-responsive employer: Access to high(er) value sustainability markets. Ability to respond to increased demand in a cost-efficient, gender-sensitive way.

## Results for women

|             | Reach   | Benefit  | Empower   |
|-------------|---|--|---|
| Objectives  | Women learn that gender-based violence is unacceptable.   | Gender-based violence is combatted and victim receive help and counselling.  | Women feel safer at work and free from gender-based violence.   |
| Strategies  | <p>Develop a zero-tolerance policy on gender-based violence.</p> <p>Communicate the message that gender-based violence is not acceptable in the whole company.</p> <p>Put mechanisms in place to report gender-based violence incidences (assign a counsellor).</p> <p>Make counselling and health service available for gender-based violence victims.</p> | <p>Encourage and assist victims of gender-based violence to report incidences.</p> <p>Communicate about the availability of counselling and health facilities for gender-based violence victims.</p> | <p>Create a safe working environment where women can speak up about the unwanted behaviour of men (unwanted advances, jokes, physical contact, etc.).</p> <p>Organise training sessions on the gender-based violence policy for all staff, with special attention for men and supervisors/management.</p> |
| Measurement | Number or percentage of men and women reached by the message that gender-based violence is not acceptable.  | Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- incidents reported.</li> <li>- victims using health</li> <li>- counselling services given.</li> </ul>  | Examples of male support to campaign against gender-based violence.   |

### Female supervisors in the flower sector

The Kenyan flower sector employs many women who often earn less than their male colleagues. Women receive less training and have little chance of promotion. Besides that, they often need to deal with sexual harassment. Jack Kneppers, director/owner of the rose company Maridadi Flowers (42 Ha, 72 employees in Naivasha) has found a radical solution for the latter.

His company has only female managers in the departments where there is mixed work. He came up with this idea when he found out that his female employees were regularly harassed by executives wanting sexual favours in exchange for job security. The women are very happy with the new situation. Jack is happy too, as women work harder and the average quality of women's work is much higher than that of men. The company benefits from this.

Source: HIVOS 2013, World eerlijke bloemen - de reis van de roos  
 HIVOS 2013, World Fair flowers - the journey of the rose)

## Strategy 4. Equal job opportunities

### Indicator 6.1.3 Recruitment selection based on skills

#### What are the gender-based constraints?

At headquarter level in the palm oil industry, a high percentage of the workforce is female. Women work at all levels and are often well educated. This raises the overall percentages of female workers, especially in large firms.

#### Difficulties when recruiting female employees at plantation level

Cargill's experience is that as a company they are interested in hiring women to work in the plantations. However, when recruiting women, they seem not that interested in fieldwork. "They prefer a job in the finance or legal department, or in sustainability management. It is a lot harder to get them interested in estate operations as they consider the conditions for women in the field hard. Women do work on the estate but in administrative functions or the lab" Widiastuti said.

Source: Interview with Yunita Widiastuti, Cargill

At the plantation level in the palm oil sector, the percentage of female employees is much lower. Women are mostly hired as casual workers for jobs like spraying pesticides, applying fertiliser and collecting loose fruit. This way the company denies them employment rights such as leave, maternity benefits, etc., which makes their income unstable and does not create loyalty with the company.

Due to low education levels and at times scarcity of job opportunities, women dare not express interest in more skilled, higher-paid positions, or even mention an interest in non-traditional tasks for which on-the-job training is available.

As management positions are predominantly filled by men, there is less attention to promote career opportunities for women.

Providing equal job opportunities to women and men, based on their competencies to undertake a job, contributes to a more diverse workforce and a better-distributed income in communities and families. It can also highly contribute to changing social norms on gender and labour division in communities that may otherwise remain rather conservative and restrictive for women and men.

#### Key actions to address these gender-based constraints

- 4.1 Organise training and mentoring tailored to women that will help overcome barriers, e.g. literacy training.
- 4.2 Encourage women to apply for non-traditional jobs, such as machine handling or truck driving, or to combine work activities/jobs.
- 4.3 Encourage women to apply for leadership or (middle) management positions as a more gender-balanced middle and higher management supports the inclusion of women in the workforce.
- 4.4 Improve worker-management communication, especially on how to address gender constraints.

#### How to carry out these key actions

- 4.1 Organise training and mentoring tailored to women that will help overcome barriers, e.g. literacy training.
  - Develop a human resource policy protecting the right of women to work, including the following principles (Criterion 6.1):
    - Right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion.
    - Job security and all benefits and conditions of service.
    - Right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training, and recurrent training.

- Right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equal treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work.
- Provide access to adult literacy and financial literacy programmes that will help to overcome the low education levels of women (and men). Literacy programmes are known to help workers to understand instructions better, increase their ability to read signs, fill out forms, and keep records.
- An increased literacy level opens up other job opportunities like assisting record-keeping at the sourcing department for instance.
- Financial literacy modules should include understanding payslips, and how to calculate salary based on the number of days worked and the amount of overtime worked.
- Where possible modules on how to make a household budget to manage the household cash flow should be included. Local banks could be invited to the factory, so that workers can easily open their own account to receive their pay. In the case of female workers, this prevents the money from being taken by their husband or male relatives.

4.2 Encourage women to apply for non-traditional jobs, such as machine handling or truck driving, or combine activities to reach full-time employment:

- Provide on-the-job technical training, as this is easier for women to combine with family obligations and also because practical training fits their education levels better.
- This is certainly the case for non-traditional jobs, for instance truck driver.
- Consider offering women the combination of work like applying fertilisers and activities in the nursery.

4.3 Encourage women to apply for leadership or (middle) management positions, as a more gender-balanced middle and higher management supports the inclusion of women in the workforce:

- Large companies in the palm oil sector employ quite a number of women, especially at their national headquarters: women with university degrees in engineering, food technology, or financial management. In the main office of the plantations, many women are also employed in finance and administration, as well as in sustainability or safety management.
- Providing female leadership training is a good starting point to make female workers more equipped to participate in for instance the gender committee or as a worker representative in collective bargaining processes.
- For these types of training sessions, it is often necessary to find a good training partner/service provider, or include specific modules in existing in-house training sessions.

#### **Recruiting women – the experiences of Bumitama**

It is Bumitama’s intention to have a more gender-balanced labour force, but it is not easy to recruit women with a university degree for positions in the plantation. “We always try to recruit female university students from the forestry department as their training entails the specifics of the oil palm. The fresh graduates are assigned as trainees to different departments of the company. However, recruiting women is difficult. Women are not attracted to the palm oil industry. Currently, only 20-30% of the trainees are women. Apparently, women prefer city jobs.”

In the plantation, the following management levels can be distinguished: supervisor, assistant manager, and general manager. Supervisors manage the workers in the execution of their jobs. Bumitama changed its approach and is now recruiting amongst the workers and train them up. The trainees are trained for six months in Bumitama’s centre and they are being paid. The training programme includes about 100 people a year. After finishing the training, Bumitama discusses their preference regarding placements and if possible match this in a posting. Bumitama also encourages women to apply for supervisory positions. “We think this bottom-up approach is more promising than searching for university graduates. Bumitama now has an experimental group that is trained this way. And it looks well. If they stay, there are promotion possibilities within the company”.

Source: Interview with Lim Sian Choo

#### 4.4 Improve worker-management communication especially on how to address gender constraints.

- To strengthen communication between the management and workforce on gender, all those involved must be trained in gender awareness.
- More specifically, the gender committee should understand how certain constraints might be addressed. When they understand possible strategies, they will be able to consult with male and female workers and community leaders, and advise management on specific needs. They will also be better equipped to monitor recruitment and mentoring policies and support the promotion of women in other non-traditional positions.

### Results for the company

#### Cost reduction

Retaining the right people and maintaining a high-quality workforce means fewer recruitment costs and having the ability to fill vacancies in-house.

#### Value creation

Maintain access to high-value markets due to a strong social performance record. Increased loyalty of workers and higher motivation to work overtime when necessary.

#### Growth

Ability to respond to increased demand in a cost-efficient, gender-sensitive way.

### Results for women

|             | Reach   | Benefit   | Empower   |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Objectives  | Have a balanced male/female workforce.  | Women benefit equally from work as men.   | Women are valued as an employee.  |
| Strategies  | Actively recruit women.<br>Recruit and train women for non-stereotypical jobs.<br>Set quota for women in supervisory and management jobs. | Design and organise specific training for career development of women:<br><br>Develop transparent pathways for promotion and remuneration systems.<br><br>Put in place coaching and mentoring programmes for women. | Train and support supervisors and management to create a favourable conditions for women, also in non-stereotypical positions.<br><br>Involve women/gender committees in important decisions in the company to show that their opinions are valued.<br><br>Identify male gender champions to sensitise men on how they can empower women to raise their voice and claim their rights. |
| Measurement | Percentage or numbers of male and female employees.   | Income earned by men and women.   | Percentage or number of men and women in management positions and jobs previously known as 'jobs for men'.  |



### Strategies to address gender-based constraints of female smallholders

**Principle 1 Optimise productivity, efficiency, positive impacts and resilience**

**Principle 2 Ensure legality, respect for land rights and community well-being**

**Principle 3 Respect human rights, including workers' rights and conditions**

#### **The importance of gender-sensitive smallholder groups/organisations**

Smallholders are increasingly important players in the palm oil industry. In Indonesia, around 40% of the oil palm was managed by independent smallholders or participants in tied smallholder schemes and they contribute 40% to the overall supply.<sup>18</sup> The household is critical in understanding the operation of smallholder production systems. Land, labour, and other resources are managed within the household. Women play an important role in the family-based farms of smallholders. However, their activities are not always acknowledged. Farm activities of women smallholder farmers are oftentimes considered to be part of their domestic chores. As a consequence, their contributions remain informal.

This chapter describes several gender-based constraints at smallholder level and indicates strategies and actions that independent smallholders, individually or as a group, can undertake to overcome these constraints. It also describes what the companies can do to smallholder groups delivering their FFB.

#### **What hinders engagement with female smallholders?**

##### ***Women are not perceived as important players in the palm oil sector***

Palm oil is perceived as a man's crop in many countries, just like other cash crops. Subsistence crops are perceived as women's crops. On top of that, palm oil is perceived as physically and financially risky and therefore masculine. According to interviews with women and men in smallholder households, men possess the strength needed for harvesting and greater knowledge and expertise on harvesting techniques and optimal use of fertilisers. Women, by comparison, play a more limited and often defined role, mostly as helpers or assistants rather than as contracted labourers or smallholders managing oil palm plots. Women's work in oil palm agriculture is mainly confined to working in the nursery, fertilising, planting, and collecting loose fruits.

##### ***Gender programmes are perceived to only benefit women***

It is a common misconception that gender programmes in agriculture target women only or are discriminatory against men. Successful gender programmes aim at closing the gap between women and men, so both can benefit. In other sectors, such as coffee and cocoa, substantial experience has been built up providing evidence that gender programmes are beneficial for both women and men. Based on gender/household diagnostics, farmer families can better recognise the value that each family member brings to the household and increase the understanding of the smallholder farms as a family business. This can lead to improved cooperation between household members, strengthening family farming and agribusiness supply chains at the same time.

##### ***Women's right to land use is not always recognised***

Another factor that hinders the engagement of women in smallholder farming is the lack of recognition in some countries of the right of women to the use of land. Recognising this right would automatically imply the need to involve them in land use planning and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes. If companies involve women in land acquisition processes, women can gain influence and

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<sup>18</sup> CIFOR, Li, T. (2015). *Social Impacts of Oil Palm in Indonesia: A Gendered Perspective from West Kalimantan*. Bogor, Indonesia, p. 2.

obtain visibility as a stakeholder and economic actor. Once involved in decision-making around land acquisition, women are in a better position to claim and increase their benefits. FPIC processes will only be effective if consent is defined not only at community level but also within communities, for men and women.

### ***The business case for a gender-sensitive business strategy is not seen by companies and groups***

There is still a lack of awareness of the business case of engaging with women smallholders and women in smallholder families. Some larger companies, such as Unilever, value women as empowered sustainability-minded partners in their supply chains and route to the market because *it is the right thing to do*. But Unilever also sees the business arguments in doing so. According to Unilever, women are the fastest-growing type of consumers. Worldwide, they buy 70% of processed food, including palm oil. As palm oil is used as an ingredient in 50% of the packed products and most of the processed food, it is in Unilever and growers' economic interest to improve women's positions and communicate this to female consumers.

In other sectors across the continents, such as tea, cocoa, and coffee, which are equally characterised by large-scale plantation models and smallholders, some experiences and best practices of the engaging smallholder women have been collected and analysed, which may also be useful for the palm oil sector. IFC's publication *Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains*<sup>19</sup> illustrates the business case for including women in a variety of agribusinesses across the world. From the publication, it becomes clear that the business opportunities for the private sector are too valuable to be missed.

### **Strategies**

In this gender guidance, the following strategies are described:

1. Engage women in smallholder groups/organisations as members and leaders.
2. Equal access of women to group and/or company services.

### **Strategy 1. Engage women in smallholder groups/organisations**

**Criterion 1.1 Smallholders establish a legal entity that has the organisational capacity to comply with the RSPO ISH Standard 2019**

**Criterion 3.6 There is no discrimination, harassment or abuse on the farm**

#### **What are the gender-based constraints?**

Traditional values and historical economic structures create unequal barriers to women's participation in smallholder groups/organisations. It is a common practice that groups register all farms in the names of the household head, typically a man. This results in men dominating the smallholder organisation and having access to the services and other benefits provided. This practice contributes to the perception of palm oil production being a 'man's crop' and the spouses having little to say about the production and sales of the crop; and neither about what to do with the generated income, even though they also have a role in palm oil production. This limits the possibilities of women to benefit from production and reduces the motivation of women to play a productive role in palm oil production. Even female heads of households in some places tend to look for a male family member (son or brother) to represent her in the smallholder organisation. If smallholder groups/organisations would adjust contracting criteria, this could lead to equal opportunities for men and women. This would also contribute to increased supply to the company buying the products.

Most smallholder groups/organisations are dominated by male members, who are generally considered to be the representative of their family household. Women do not participate in meetings and if they do they are often too shy to speak up. So they do not take part in decision-making processes. Even female heads of household being a member of a smallholder group sometimes send a male relative (son or

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<sup>19</sup> IFC (2016) idem

brother) to represent them. This results in many cases in women have little or no access to the services provided by the company.

Smallholder groups/organisations seldom have female leaders. Particularly in more conservative areas, it is often socially and culturally not acceptable to include women in mixed farmer organisations. This results in male-dominated smallholder groups/organisations. In these cases, strengthening women-only organisations can be a stepping stone for developing female leadership qualities. Women-only or women-led groups can also avoid the appropriation of benefits by men, which is not uncommon in mixed groups with men-dominated leadership. The women organisation can be part of the larger smallholder organisation.

### Key actions to address these gender-based constraints

- 1.1 Include women in smallholder groups/organisations.
- 1.2 Create awareness of the gender-based constraints for women to actively participate in smallholder groups/organisations as members.
- 1.3 Formulate strategies to promote the active participation of women in smallholder groups/organisations as members.
- 1.4 Promote leadership development of women in women-only groups.

### How to carry out these key actions

- 1.1 Include women in smallholder groups/organisations:
  - Involve all parties, including women in decision-making processes and understand the contract and provide evidence of this. (Indicator 5.1.4)
  - Create awareness on the important role of women in palm oil production.
  - Promote the membership of women in the smallholder organisation.  
Choose the most appropriate options for your situation:
    - Actively invite female heads of households to become part of the smallholder group.
    - As long as she has control over the produce, he/she can become a member, regardless of whether he/she has the ownership title over the land itself.
    - Register both spouses of a household as members of the smallholder organisation.
    - Encourage men to give a share of their land to their wives, so that they can join the group in their own right.
    - Register women in groups.

#### Create awareness on the role of women in the smallholder farm

Companies such as chocolate producer Mondelez International partnered with IFC to identify the roles that women and men play in the cocoa sector and evaluated their contribution at various stages of the cocoa production process.

Household diagnostics can allow companies to evaluate gaps and define opportunities for women and men engaged in the agricultural production process and adjust companies' gender programmes accordingly.

Based on those diagnostics, farmer families can better recognise the value that each family member brings to the household and increase the understanding of the smallholder farms as a family business. This can lead to improved cooperation between household members, strengthening farming families and agribusiness supply chains at the same time.

- 1.2 Create awareness of the gender-based constraints for women to actively participate in smallholder groups/organisations as a member and leader:
  - Organise a discussion with members of smallholder groups/organisations (male and female) using the following guideline to assess several factors that lead to the fact that women benefit less from smallholder groups/organisations than men.

## Guideline for discussion

- What are the criteria for membership in the organisations?
- What are the benefits for members?
- How many members are men? How many members are women?
- How high are membership fees (registration and maintenance)?
- What are the schedules, frequency, and location of meetings?
- Do you believe that being a man or a woman helps someone to become a leader?
- What is the number and sex of the organisation's officers?
- What are the qualifications needed to become an organisation's leader?
- What resources (financial, time, other) are required to be an organisation's leader?
- What are the roles and positions of women within the mixed organisation?
- How are the power relations within the organisation?
- Investigate potential barriers to women's entry and continued membership in the organisations.
- Investigate barriers for women to benefit from the services of the smallholder organisations.
- What are the capacities of female leaders to influence decision-making about sector services and value chain development?
- Investigate potential barriers to women's leadership positions within the organisations.

1.3 Formulate strategies to promote the active participation of women in smallholder groups/organisations as members:

- Use the following guideline for discussion about constraints and solutions concerning women's access to and position in smallholder groups/organisations.

## Solutions for the three often observed gender-based constraints – guideline for discussion

1. Women are often constrained in accessing (services of) smallholder groups/organisations.

- Encourage membership of spouses and other family members.
- Build awareness that producing is a family business and that smallholder groups/organisations should focus on family members with their own perspectives and needs.
- Build awareness that if the family is a member of the organisation, all members of the family should benefit from the services (e.g. the training provided).
- Encourage change of the rules of the organisation(s) to promote family members to attend meetings, training, and access benefits.
- Stress the business arguments of integrating women as full members of the smallholder organisation.

2. If women are allowed to be members, they are often constrained in participation.

- Ensure that information about new organisations is announced using communication channels used by both men and women.
- Encourage entry and membership fees at a level and on a payment schedule that both men and women can manage.
- Ensure that meetings are held at times and in venues that facilitate women's participation.

3. If women participate as members, they do not access leadership positions.

- Provide training on organisations governance that establishes gender-equitable principles of leadership and decision-making (quotas).
- Investigate potential barriers to women's leadership positions within the organisations.
- Adjust the time and place of meetings and address other constraints mentioned.

#### 1.4 Promote leadership development of women in women-only groups.

- Strengthen women-only groups, if possible use already existing groups. In more conservative areas, women-only organisations are more suitable to address gender-based constraints. Within such groups, women can voice their needs and opinions and develop leadership skills and confidence. Using existing, sometimes informal, groups and networks can be more successful than initiating them from scratch.
- Invest in women's leadership development and transparent governance. These enable women to take up new roles in value chains as trainers, intermediaries, and leaders. Oxfam International<sup>20</sup> provides rigorous new evidence, from quantitative and qualitative research carried out in Ethiopia, Mali, and Tanzania, on the economic and empowerment benefits of women's participation in collective action groups across different agricultural farming systems and markets. Gender-responsive leadership and transparent group governance are critical to ensure the equitable distribution of benefits, whether in mixed or women-only groups.
- Ensuring the buy-in of men is always important, even when strengthening women's farmer organisations. Relations between mixed male-dominated groups and (informal) women-dominated groups can contribute to an increase in the participation of women in formal, mixed smallholder groups/organisations. The following four strategies have proven to be very effective:
  1. Engaging men and male leaders to create an enabling environment for increasing women's group participation.
  2. Addressing the issue of membership rules of the male-dominated organisations that directly or, more often, indirectly discriminate against women or certain categories of women.
  3. Establishing informal groups linked to formal groups, to increase women's participation in the formal groups while supporting their capacity development.
  4. Finally, considering the roles of men and women, and how gender relations can be renegotiated at household, group, and community levels. Applying a household methodology as described in Part IV (Strategy 3) of this Gender Guidance can be an important strategy for increasing women's participation in formal smallholder organisations.

#### Results for the smallholder group and company

##### **Risk reduction**

Increased and more stable production and delivery to the group decreases the risk of non-compliance with sales agreements or commercial targets set within the group.

##### **Cost reduction**

Relationships of the company with the smallholder households are smoothed as women develop skills to be an active member and raise their voice as members and leaders to express their needs and defend their interests and the interests of their families.

##### **Value creation**

Quality of the production: More sustainably produced high-quality FFB, because good agricultural practices are implemented by both male and female farmers. Additionally, both husbands and wives, as members of a smallholder group, have equal access to inputs and services, thus increasing yields.

##### **Growth**

Access to large and high-value markets: Smallholder groups/organisations performing well on gender equality and human rights are likely to have access to high-standard and high-value markets of sustainable products, long-term commercial relationships, and a more stable business model.

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<sup>20</sup> Oxfam International, S. Baden (2013). *Women's Collective Action: Unlocking the Potential of Agricultural Markets*, p. 12.

## Results for women

|             | Reach   | Benefit   | Empower   |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Objectives  | A balanced male/female membership and leadership of the smallholder group/organisation.   | Men and women benefit equally from the smallholder group/organisation.  | Women are recognised as members and valued as leaders of the organisation of smallholders in their own right.   |
| Strategies  | <p>Actively recruit female farmers as members of the smallholder group/organisation.</p> <p>Promote the inclusion of other household members (e.g. spouses).</p> <p>Support women to identify their needs and interests related to palm oil production support services.</p> <p>Train them to raise their voices and express their needs and interests.</p> | <p>Ensure female smallholders benefit from the services provided by the farmer group/organisation.</p> <p>Services are provided at times and locations convenient for women.</p> <p>Spouses can benefit from the services.</p> <p>Build the capacity of leaders to address the specific needs of women.</p> <p>Put in place a leadership development programme for female leaders.</p> <p>Mentoring and coaching of female leaders.</p> | <p>Create buy-in of men for the participation of women in the smallholder group as members and leaders.</p> <p>Organise discussions to sensitise men to take away barriers for women to become active members and leaders of the organisation.</p> <p>Create awareness on perceptions around leadership expectations and stereotypes that limit women's visibility as possible leaders.</p> |
| Measurement | <p>Percentage or number of men and women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- farmers</li> <li>- leaders</li> <li>- participants in training</li> </ul>   | <p>Percentage or number of men and women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- farmers benefitting from the services of the smallholder organisation or group.</li> <li>- leadership development programme.</li> </ul>   | <p>Examples of the process (e.g. discussions held, awareness campaigns organised).</p> <p>Examples of experiences of successful female leaders and their experiences.</p> <p>Examples of supportive men.</p>  |



## Strategy 2. Equal access of women to the services of the group/organisation

### Strategy 2. Equal access of women to the services of the group/organisation

#### Criterion 1.2 Smallholders can effectively manage their farm

#### Criterion 1.3 Smallholders implement good agricultural practices (GAP) on their farms

#### Criterion 3.5 Working conditions and facilities are safe and meet minimum legal requirements

#### What are the gender-based constraints?

Not recognising the important role of women in palm oil production restricts the access of women to the services of the company (like Good Agricultural Production (GAP) training, inputs, and technology) and affects their productivity. Low productivity of smallholders negatively affects the profitability of the company buying its product. So there are business arguments to ensure equal access of women to company services and training.

Companies providing GAP training lack staff with the capacities and competencies to design and deliver this training in such a way that it is accessible for women. There are a few female GAP trainers and organisations that have structures, cultures, policies and procedures with clear measures to address gender inequality. As a result, women mostly receive second-hand information from informal networks rather than from expert providers. Women's uptake of improved practices, technologies and business skills remains lower than that of their male counterparts. Last but not least, GAP training providers must recognise that female farmers are a diverse group, and a variety of strategies may be required to reach them and to address their distinct needs.

At the level of individuals, women's low level of education is a key barrier to specialised training. Household and caregiving responsibilities also hinder women to participate in training or demonstrations, especially if these learning opportunities are provided far from home, or by a male professional. Also, the lack of participation of women in smallholder groups/organisations reduces the chance of women to communicate with technical service providers. Women suffer from a triple workload. They have to take care of their family and related household chores. They do agricultural work, often both for home consumption and for the market. They also have community-related tasks. This makes women overloaded and time-constrained. So they often lack time to participate in training. On the other hand, if a work reducing technology is developed, this is in most cases for men.

Smallholders need inputs like seeds/seedlings (young trees), fertilisers, and pesticides. These are not always available or not available on time, and too expensive. For women, it is even more difficult to have access to these inputs. All these inputs are costly and (micro)credit is often lacking. A particular problem for women is the fact that they do not have the collateral needed for a loan. These problems are especially severe for female smallholders.

Women have a disproportionate exposure to health risks linked to pesticide and chemical use, as spraying falls under women's domain of responsibility. Though formal safety procedures forbid pregnant women and breastfeeding women to spray pesticides, these rules are not always followed up. There is a lack of awareness that women need protective clothing when spraying and a lack of availability of the clothing.

Improved tools and technology could be beneficial for women as it reduces their workload. Technology does not only refer to machinery but also improved hand tools or protective gear. Technology can be used for productive work related to palm oil production, but also for reproductive work (e.g reducing the time to fetch water or fuelwood). This reduction of work burden is likely to increase the motivation of women to work. This is beneficial for the smallholder family as it increases family income. The company buying the products will also benefit as women/the family become more productive.

#### Key actions to address these constraints

- 2.1 Develop a gender policy for the smallholder group/organisation.
- 2.2 Make Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training accessible for women.
- 2.3 Ensure that agricultural inputs are available for women.
- 2.4 Promote technologies to reduce the workload of women.

## How to carry out these key actions

### 2.1 Develop a gender policy for the smallholder group/organisation.

- Develop a gender policy showing that women are considered to have access to services in their own right.
- Establish a gender committee to address issues of concern of women, as well as opportunities and improvements for women.

### 2.2 Make Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training accessible for women (Criterion 1.3).

- Consults all interested smallholders, including women, to assess their needs for support to improve their livelihoods and their interest in RSPO certification. (Indicator 5.2.1)
- Increase the number of female GAP trainers (e.g. extension agents).
- Apply a family-oriented approach, invite the whole family to the GAP training.
- Develop services to address the needs and interests of female clients.
- Set quotas for women's participation in training sessions.
- Raise the awareness of men and the community as a whole about the important role of women as farmers.
- Ensure that women farmers, including female family members of male smallholder farmers, are directly invited and encouraged to attend GAP training and extension sessions. Choose the appropriate communication channels.
- Provide the services in such a way that women can participate (time, location, type of training). (Indicator 3.7.1)
- Make sure that training and extension methods are appropriate for women.
- Recruit a mix of female and male extension staff wherever possible, because experience shows that female trainers and extension workers are usually more effective than men at reaching and training women farmers.
- Select women as lead-farmers in farmer-to-farmer approaches.

### 2.3 Ensure that agricultural inputs are available for women.

- High-quality inputs (seeds/seedlings, fertilisers/pesticides) are to be provided by the smallholder group/organisation (or by the company/mill), equally to male and female smallholders.
- Ensure that these inputs are available at the right time (the beginning of the season) also for women.
- Sensitise and train farmers on the safe use of pesticides in line with RSPO guidance:
  - Ensure that protective clothing is available/accessible and being used.
  - Emphasise that pregnant and breastfeeding women should never spray pesticides to avoid health issues affecting them or their babies. (Indicator 7.2.11)
  - Instead, they should request assistance from male workers or even professional sprayers.
  - The company could consider supporting the establishment of groups of (young) men providing professional spraying services as a business.
- Ensure that the inputs are affordable, and/or available on credit, also for women.
  - The company/mill can provide inputs on credit to supply smallholders, with the contract serving as a guarantee.
  - The smallholder group/organisation can also make a deal with a microfinance institution or input dealer to provide input loans, while the contract with the company (or mill) serves as a guarantee.
  - Both services (inputs and credit) should be given equally to men and women.
  - Encourage and support the development of credit and saving groups.
  - If the saving capacity of these groups is limited, cooperate with a microfinance institution (MFI) to develop a loan product based on the social collateral of these groups.

### 2.4 Promote technologies to reduce the workload of women.

- Develop technology to address the needs and interests of women.
  - Organise focus group discussions with women to assess their workload and to identify the most painful tasks and possibilities to alleviate them.
  - Consider alleviation of productive and reproductive tasks, as they are interlinked parts of the workloads of women.

- Make this technology affordably available for women.
  - Consider developing loan products for the new technology.
  - Small tools could be given as a grant.
  - For larger machinery, leasing might be an option.

## Results for the smallholder group and company

### **Risk management**

Avoiding health problems for men and women and their unborn children due to the irresponsible use of pesticides also avoids image risk for the company, which would occur in the case of health damage due to pesticide use.

If the painful work of women is reduced, by introducing technology (machinery or improved hand tools), the working conditions of women will improve, which will contribute to the socially responsible image of the group and the company they deliver to.

### **Cost reduction**

If women are the co-owner of agricultural production, the production is based on joint decision-making on investment and expenditures, women are more motivated to produce for the business resulting in households selling more products to the business.

If households are more committed to selling to the business, the 'loyalty rates' are high. This lowers the costs of relation-building with other/new suppliers.

### **Value creation**

Increase of sustainably produced high-quality products because good agricultural practices are implemented by both male and female farmers.

Women are often very conscious of applying what they have learned in training. In other sectors, it is observed that men often question technical recommendations and hardly change their practice. While women are more open to new knowledge and adopt innovations faster.

With improved technology work can be done faster, increasing efficiency and productivity. Women might also be more motivated to do the work. Sometimes men even take over the work previously done by women when mechanised, thus reducing the workload of women. Even technology reducing reproductive tasks of women, e.g. for fetching water, might indirectly contribute to higher productivity in productive tasks, as it makes tasks easier, less time-consuming, and it frees time for women.

### **Growth**

Access to markets of certified products: Women as quality managers of the household. In other sectors, there is proof that women usually give more attention to the quality of the products than their male counterparts. They demonstrate responsibility and organisation to meet certification standards. However, the prevalent gender culture often makes their work less visible and less valorised.

## Results for women

|             | Reach  | Benefit   | Empower  |
|-------------|--|---|--|
| Objectives  | Women attend Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training and have access to inputs and technology.  | Women benefit from increased and improved production, and increased income and reduced workload.  | Women are recognised as a smallholder and can take strategic decisions on agricultural production.   |
| Strategies  | <p>Set quota for women's attendance in training.</p> <p>Invite women (also spouses) to attend training.</p> <p>Address gender barriers to participate in training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carefully select time, place, language.</li> <li>- Organise the training nearby living locations.</li> <li>- Use female trainers speaking the local language.</li> <li>- Limit overnight stays.</li> <li>- Provide babysitting when needed.</li> </ul> <p>Choose appropriate training content and methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design training modules with women's needs and aspirations in mind.</li> <li>- Apply participatory methodologies.</li> </ul> <p>Provide inputs to women.</p> <p>Provide access to women to tools and technology.</p> | <p>Evaluate the application of the new knowledge, inputs and technology, if need to develop strategies to address bottlenecks for application of GAP, inputs and technology.</p> <p>Improve the strategy or add others.</p> <p>Provide additional support for women, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical field-based training.</li> <li>- Select women as Model Farmers.</li> <li>- Apply information technology (IT) to help women access new information and knowledge.</li> <li>- Make inputs easily accessible (nearby, smaller quantities, lower price).</li> <li>- Establish saving and credit groups and/or create linkages with MFIs to make credit available for the inputs or technology.</li> <li>- Develop tools and technology based on the needs of women, to reduce the workload in agriculture and household chores.</li> <li>- Add tactics from the Reach and Empower columns.</li> </ul> | <p>Awareness-raising in communities about the important role of women as farmers</p> <p>Promote the family farm as a business in which men and women play complementary roles. Sensitize couples towards shared ownership and shared decision making</p> <p>Promote that assets, e.g. oil palm trees, are (also) registered in the woman's name.</p> <p>Communicate that women can be GAP trainers and Key Farmers.</p> <p>Use a variety of media and face to face events for communication campaigns and events.</p> <p>Share examples of 'happy' families.</p> |
| Measurement | <p>Percentage or number of men and women who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participate in GAP training.</li> <li>- access inputs and technology.</li> </ul>  | <p>Percentage or number of men and women who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- apply new techniques after training.</li> <li>- increase productivity.</li> <li>- increase income.</li> <li>- use technology/tools/ machinery for productive work.</li> <li>- use technology to reduce tasks related to household chores (e.g. fetching water).</li> </ul>   | <p>Percentage or number of men and women who are Key Farmers.</p> <p>Examples of women having increased skills and self-confidence to train others.</p>  |

### Strategies to address the needs and interests of women in communities

#### Why is it important?

A company, be it an estate or a mill, operates in an environment. Businesses can promote gender equality in their operations by the way they engage with the local communities they operate in. This engagement can take the form of managing their negative impacts on the communities, such as environmental damage, population displacement, and the use of natural resources.

Companies develop community programmes to distribute their positive impacts more equally among women and men in the communities through employment, contracting, and also charitable contributions and (social) investments. This part provides tips on how to let the wider community (men and women, boys and girls) benefit from a company.

#### The business case for gender-sensitive community relations is not seen by companies

The importance of good relations with communities is often overlooked by companies. This is even more so for the role that women play in communities. The negative impacts of the company for women are overlooked. Activities outside the core business of the company, being palm oil production, are not seen as the company's responsibility.

The missed opportunities for a constructive relationship with communities are overlooked. An increased developmental impact can improve a company's image and avoid litigation and disruption to the company's operations. It can also stimulate a more sustainable production process by developing a more inclusive recruitment pool within the community and building loyalty within surrounding communities.

An increased developmental impact can improve the companies' image and stimulate a more socially sustainable production. This should be done by taking into account the needs and interest of women. This will not only benefit these women but also their families. This can be done by:

- assessing potential social impacts on surrounding communities of a plantation, including an analysis of potential effects on livelihoods, and differential effects on women versus men (Criterion 3.4) and addressing negative impacts.
- social programmes advancing community livelihoods and gender equality (Criterion 3.4).

#### Strategies

The following strategies are described in this part:

1. Involvement of women in Community Land Use Planning, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes.
2. Organising gender-sensitive community initiatives.
3. Equal decision-making of men and women in the household.
4. Reduction of unpaid care and domestic work.
5. Small business development.

## Strategy 1. Involvement of women in Community Land Use Planning and FPIC processes

### Criterion 4.4 Use of the land for oil palm does not diminish the legal, customary or user rights of other users without their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

#### What are the gender-based constraints?

Women's ownership of land, in general, remains relatively low in many regions of the world, as both customary and private property regimes tend to favour that land titles are in the name of the man as head of the household. If women make use of land, this is often not formalised. Women also make use of common lands and forests to collect medicinal plants, nuts, etc.

Control over land is often a precondition for membership of a smallholder group or scheme, and thus the access to inputs and services, as well as a secured market. Consequently, a lack of formal ownership of land can have significant implications on women's participation in agricultural value chains.

Participatory Community Land Use Planning and FPIC processes could be a solution in these situations, but attention should be paid if these approaches are applied in a gender-sensitive manner.

Any plantation company, or any variation of a collaborative model, is familiar with Participatory Community Land Use Planning. Many palm oil producing countries have weak tenure systems and governance. In these countries, the majority of the land is common land or customary land (as opposed to formal land rights supported by titles). In the case of new planting, expansion of the plantation or change of land use, participatory community land-use planning is important to ensure communities have a voice in decision-making on the landscape they live in and the future destination and use of their lands or common land. However, women in many instances do not participate in the meetings and the needs and interests of women might therefore not be sufficiently taken into account.

FPIC is meant to ensure that landowners' genuine Free, Prior and Informed Consent has been obtained before land acquisition by the company engaged in the palm oil supply chain. For the FPIC process to be effective, a more granular definition of consent is needed – not only the one at the community level but also within communities themselves. If FPIC narrowly focuses on the relation company - community, the differences within communities, especially the gender dimensions of FPIC are commonly left out. Meaning, if FPIC is applied in a gender-neutral way, the individual (female) layer is often overlooked.

#### Key actions to address these constraints

- 1.1. Participatory Community Land Use Planning involving women.
- 1.2 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes including women.

#### How to carry out these key actions

- 1.1. Participatory Community Land Use Planning involving women.

Women need special attention to land use planning because their knowledge and experience are often neglected when it comes to planning and decision-making on development processes. It is suggested to apply the following guidelines:

- Formulate explicit gender objectives.
- Make sure that women are explicitly invited to participate and express their needs and interests (if necessary, consult them in separate groups).
- Invite single women and women forming part of a household.
- Inform women about the importance of representing their interests.
- Sensitise women and men, as cultural attitudes may not accept the presence and participation of women in the public sphere and their involvement in decision-making processes.
- Take time, workload, and mobility constraints of women into account when organising meetings and provide material in a language appropriate for women.
- Build awareness and capabilities of staff of the implementing agency, and ensure gender balance in staffing.



- Make sure women are present in all stages of the process:
  - The sensitisation.
  - The preparatory group meetings.
  - Socio-economic data collection on their needs and interests.
  - The analysis.
  - The dissemination meetings and possible decision-making meetings.

#### 1.2. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes including women

- Engage both women and men in the process. This is needed for a true depiction of women's practical needs on the land, offering more relevant and accurate consultation outcomes. (Indicator 4.4.2)
- Present realistic and viable alternatives to former land users, also the ones with customary rights. FPIC processes should take into account diversity, inequalities, and differences in perspectives within the community.
- Promote broad-based participation from all stakeholders.
- Provide potential smallholder participants in plantation partnerships with a clear and coherent explanation regarding their rights, obligations, and benefits.
- Provide them with well-documented realistic information regarding their expected earnings from the land.
- Ensure a mutually agreed procedure for calculating and distributing fair and gender-equal compensation (monetary or otherwise) is established and implemented, monitored and evaluated in a participatory way, and corrective actions are taken as a result of this evaluation. (Indicator 4.6.2)
- Ensure that evidence is available that equal opportunities are provided to both men and women to hold land titles for smallholdings. (Indicator 4.6.3)

#### **Example: Participatory Land Use Planning in the palm oil sector**

Only recently, a modest but increasing number of plantation companies have started co-creating and testing alternative business models around social goods in Indonesia. Innovative business models have the potential to be gender and smallholder inclusive. They combine (vertical) value chain development with a (horizontal) landscape approach, incorporating all relevant landscape functions such as agricultural land, forest, water, habitat.

As part of the landscape approach, gender-sensitive, participatory land use planning exercises are held in the communities, providing women in palm oil dominated communities with the choice to use their land for cash crops or food crops, or both. Also, community-led gender action learning sessions on Individual life and livelihood planning changing the power relationship with service providers, private sector stakeholders, and government bodies are foreseen. This will address adverse social/cultural norms and gender stereotyping.

The co-creation and implementation of the inclusive business models is often done in partnership with NGOs, local government, knowledge institutions, and with the support of stakeholders from the downstream supply chain. After piloting, the new business models are supposed to go to scale and transform the company's business operations, and eventually the sector as a whole, and cause change on substantial social problems in the contexts of the operations.

#### **Results for the company**

##### ***Risk management***

Preventing costs for remedy in case conflicts arise.

### Cost reduction

Engaging both women and men in the process can relay a true depiction of women’s practical needs on the land, offering more relevant and accurate consultation outcomes in the benefit of the livelihoods of families in the communities leading to social-economic stability, which is ultimately saving costs related to high turnover of staff, absenteeism due to the need to earn an additional income, and the unreliability of the workforce. Examples are:

- Proposing management solutions for resources that are critical for sustainable livelihoods.
- Proposing alternative land-use practices and income sources to reduce pressure on biodiversity.
- Identifying priorities for the development needs of communities.

Women can provide a company with a deeper awareness of the following insights, relevant to successful FPIC implementation:

- Enhancing the knowledge of agricultural practices, medicinal knowledge, and healing practices.
- Improving infrastructure and designing social services to meet the needs of indigenous communities.

### Results for women

|             | Reach  | Benefit   | Empower  |
|-------------|--|---|--|
| Objectives  | Women are involved in Participatory Land Use Planning and FPIC processes.  | Land use rights for women to satisfy their needs.   | Women have a voice in decision-making related to land use processes.   |
| Strategies  | <p>Women are invited for all stages of Participatory Land Use Planning, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent processes.</p> <p>Invite women (and women’s groups) to participate in decision-making processes (including stakeholder forums, dialogues, etc.).</p> <p>Raise awareness among women of their rights to be involved in FPIC processes.</p> | <p>Women’s needs for land use (for productive and reproductive use) are integrated into the land-use planning.</p> <p>The consent of women on Land Use Planning and FPIC is actively pursued.</p> | <p>Sensitising men on the importance of involving women in FPIC and land use planning processes.</p> <p>Awareness-raising of company - and government staff and community leaders on the roles and rights of women regarding land use.</p> |
| Measurement | Male-female ratio of participants in stages of the process.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amount of land use secured for women.</li> <li>- For what purposes/needs of women are assured (examples)</li> </ul>                                      | Examples of decisions taken based on the input of women.   |

## Strategy 2. Organising gender-sensitive community initiatives

**Criterion 4.3 The unit of certification contribute to local sustainable development as agreed by local communities (RSPO standard 2018), e.g. gender equality programmes**

### What are the gender-based constraints?

Companies increasingly realise that building constructive relations with the communities in the vicinity of the company is important. However, this is not always done in a gender-sensitive manner. This is a pity as community initiatives can promote gender equality by the way the company engages with local communities. Community engagement often takes the form of companies managing their negative impacts on the communities, such as environmental damage, population displacement, and the use of natural resources; or by creating positive social-economic impacts, such as building schools and health facilities. It would be good if these initiatives were carried out in such a way that positive impacts are equally distributed among women and men through employment, contracting, and also charitable contributions and investments. This tool provides tips on how to let the wider community benefit from the business.

### Key actions in household methodologies

- 2.1 Select community initiatives keeping in mind gender-based constraints of women.
- 2.2 Measure impact.
- 2.3 Communicate the results achieved.

### How to carry out these key actions

- 2.1 Select community initiatives keeping in mind gender-based constraints of women.

Table 1 (below) provides a range of examples of community initiatives and activities that companies can engage in as part of an organisation-wide gender approach and community engagement strategy<sup>21</sup>. The checklist can also be used for a lobby to encourage the management to address gender equality in the relations between a company and the community.

Strategies 3, 4 and 5 of this part of the gender guidance elaborate three more focused strategies, which can be applied in the context of community initiatives. They relate to decision-making and workload sharing in the household (Strategies 3 and 4) and the development of small business (Strategy 5).

#### 2.2 Measure impact

- Formulate activity-specific indicators in line with the Reach – Benefit – Empower framework (see also Results for women below).
- Develop a system to collect gender-disaggregated data.
- Collect data regularly.

#### 4.3 Report

- Report on the results achieved
- Use measurements as formulated according to the Reach-Benefit-Empower framework

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<sup>21</sup> Based on the AgriProFocus 2014 Gender in value chain toolkit, Tool 4.3c Business and the community, a tool based on Oxfam International (2012) *Gender equality, it's your business. Briefings for Business No 7. International Edition.*

**Table 1. Gender-sensitive community initiatives**

**Women's empowerment:**

- Ensure that women have representation in governance and decision-making bodies such as committees that engage with the local community and that make decisions on community investment projects.
- Consult with the companies internal women's network, e.g. the gender committee (if one exists) to gather 'intelligence' from female employees on gender issues in the community and approaches to resolve them.
- Set up a process in which women in the community are consulted to ensure that their voices are heard (in some cases it may be useful to consult with women separately).
- Consult with women during the scoping process of community projects and ensure their representation in helping to identify and select community initiatives funded by the company, as well as in decision-making and governance structures, so they can participate in determining how funds get spent, on which communities, and on which types of initiatives.
- Support the establishment of an (external) women's community consultative council, if deemed useful.

**Community initiatives:**

- Connect the diversity officer/gender specialist of the company (if one exists) with the staff that design and implement community initiatives. This person may be able to bring a unique gender perspective to the community programmes.
- Find out if there are any existing public sector-supported initiatives with a gender focus that might be of interest to the company. Consider whether such initiatives might be worth leveraging in a tripartite (private sector, community, and government) arrangement.
- Ensure that any partnerships (whether public or private) fit with the companies values on gender.
- Work closely with local governments and communities on policies and practices that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Consider employee volunteering as a mechanism to help better understand and address gender issues in the local community.
- Support the provision of educational information about domestic violence to the local community.

**Building women's capacity:**

- To enable women's effective participation in local community programmes throughout the design and implementation stages, identify women's learning needs in the community and help ensure that these needs are addressed.
- Provide career information and training programmes designed by the company for the local community that are accessible by and targeted to both women and men.
- Consider establishing programmes to encourage women to enter non-traditional fields related to the company.

**Social impact assessment**

- Ensure that gender-differentiated impacts on local communities are taken into account during an environmental and social impact assessment process and that gender-disaggregated data are included in the baseline information obtained.

## Results for the company

### *Risk reduction*

Avoiding litigation and disruption to operations of the company and improved connectivity to the community and community development.

### *Costs reduction*

Developing a more inclusive recruitment pool within the community.

### *Value creation*

Building loyalty with local producers and communities, increasing supplier loyalty of (independent) smallholders and workers.

### *Growth*

Management and reporting on sustainability issues, including gender, are typically considered the domain of large organisations but are increasingly being embraced by SMEs within the global supply chain. They are important for companies who want to become part of the international sustainable value chains.

## Results for women

|             | Reach  | Benefit  | Empower   |
|-------------|--|--|---|
| Objectives  | Community initiatives, including donations and grants, address gender equality in the community.   | Contribute to the well-being of women and men in the affected communities.   | Community initiatives contribute to giving women a voice in communities.  |
| Strategies  | <p>Develop a company policy on community initiatives stating a clear commitment to contribute to gender equality.</p> <p>Determine criteria for community engagement investment activities.</p> <p>Put in place implementation mechanisms.</p> | <p>Active consultation of local women in devising community engagement and investment programmes.</p> <p>Adjust strategies if needed or add new ones given the objective to contribute to gender equality.</p> | <p>Support community initiatives with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- issues of disempowerment of women.</li> <li>- issues related to decision-making at the household level.</li> <li>- the position of women in community structures.</li> <li>- reproductive health-related issues.</li> <li>- addressing domestic violence.</li> </ul> |
| Measurement | How many men and women have been engaged in the Land Use Planning and FPIC processes?  | The size (in money) of the investment programme targeting women.   | <p>Examples of positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender impact</li> <li>- Gender-related community impacts</li> </ul>   |

## Strategy 3. Equal decision-making of men and women in the household

### What are the gender-based constraints?

Households in many parts of the world are not cohesive units with shared needs, resources, benefits, and goals. In reality, women and men in the same household often pursue separate livelihoods, while women have much less access to productive resources, and less power and agency to decide over the use of these resources and the use of the benefits deriving from it. Meanwhile, they are overburdened with productive, reproductive, and community tasks. Men, on the other hand, feel the burden of their responsibility as head of the household. Many efforts to support women's empowerment focus on strengthening women's economic opportunities and decision-making capacities in groups or organisations. However, the same women often remain disempowered at the household level. They lack a voice in determining household priorities and spending patterns, and in addressing their own healthcare needs. This situation hinders the motivation of household members to contribute to the household as a joint business.

### Household methodologies to address these constraints

Household methodologies (HHMs) are participatory methodologies that enable family members to work together to improve relations and decision-making, and to achieve more equitable workloads. Their purpose is to strengthen the overall well-being of the household and all its members. There are several different HHMs, which vary in terms of type, cost, and duration of the activities to deal with intrahousehold dynamics to address gender-based constraints.

The core of the HHMs is a methodology for household visioning and planning for action. Details of the tools to be used in this process are publicly available. Household approaches are developed for use by companies and development organisations.

A well-known example of a household methodology is the Gender Action Learning System (GALS).<sup>22</sup> By utilising different tools and approaches, Figure 5 shows one of them: the Vision Journey. In this exercise, all household members are encouraged to create a household vision, assess their current economic and social situation, participate in joint livelihood planning, and share the benefits that arise from working towards common goals.

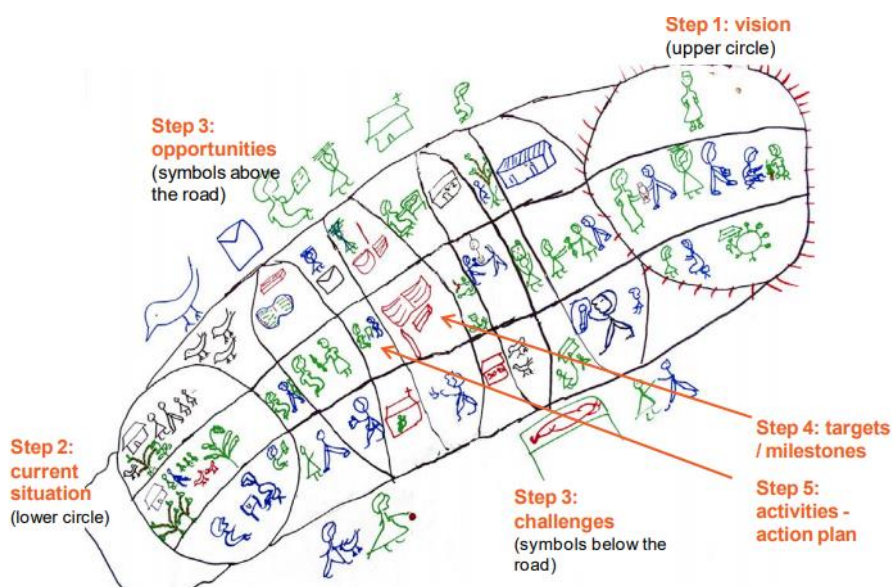


Figure 5 Journey towards a vision for a happy family (GALS tool)  
Made by a female farmer from Uganda, in: Mayoux, 2014

Another example is the developed by the Hanns R.

Household Approach  
Neumann Stiftung

<sup>22</sup> OxfamNovib (2014). *Gender Action Learning System. Practical guide for transforming gender and unequal power relations in value chains.*



(HRNS)<sup>23</sup> in the coffee value chain in Uganda. The approach leads to increased production and productivity of coffee value chains due to pooled labour, proper budgeting and utilisation of family revenue, and hence increased adoption of improved technologies and re-investment in the businesses.

### Key actions in household methodologies

- 3.1. Select a household methodology.
- 3.2. Decide on the way you want to roll out the approach.
- 3.3. Select an implementing agency and build its capacities.
- 3.4. Apply a business-like approach from the start.
- 3.5. Develop a pool of community Field Workers and Change Agents/Model Couples.
- 3.6. Ensure the support of men.

### How to carry out these key actions

- 3.1. Select a household methodology (e.g. GALS or the HRNS Household Approach).
  - Ensure that it integrates gender awareness-raising with business planning and promotes the family as a business concept.
  - The methodology should include financial planning, which is not purely profit and expansion-driven, but also pays attention to savings and risk analysis and risk reduction.
- 3.2. Decide on the way you want to roll out the approach.
  - Realise that a household approach is an approach to be rolled out in rural communities.
  - All approaches have in common that Change Agents or Model Couples have to be trained to disseminate the approach in their villages.
  - Some methodologies are more elaborate and demand more time from the Change Agents/Model Couples and the people in their communities than others. This comes with a cost.
  - Select a model in line with the financial and human resources of the programme or organisation at stake.
- 3.3. Select an implementing agency and build its capacities.
  - The company probably needs to partner with an NGO or a service provider for this.
  - Maybe this partner also needs capacity building from a programme or a standard-setting organisation.
- 3.4. Apply a business-like approach from the start.
  - If the approach is to become sustainable, a business model should be developed for the training of the Change Agents/Model Couples.
  - This offers the most opportunities for scaling up and reaching households at scale. Also, the necessary training sessions have to be paid for. Decide who will cover the related costs.
- 3.5. Develop a pool of community field workers and Change Agents/Model Couples.
- 3.6. Ensure the support of men.
  - Ensure the support of men in general and community leaders in particular, to guarantee that the approach is accepted by the communities.

### Results for the company

#### Value creation

Increased productivity and better quality: Women are co-owner of oil palm production. The production is based on joint decision-making on investment and expenditure. Members of the household work together

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<sup>23</sup> HRNS is a foundation created by the Neumann Gruppe, a family business, market leader in the coffee sector worldwide, <https://www.hrnstiftung.org/a-scientifically-sound-gender-approach/>

and the improved adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) by husband and wife results in higher yields and better quality.

Increased supplier loyalty: Palm oil becomes a family crop instead of a man’s crop like it used to be. This results in more households selling Fresh Fruit Bunches (FBB), increasing supply and better ‘loyalty rates’.

### Growth

Access to the high-value ethical market: Stronger linkages with buyers and consumers. Consumers of products with palm oil ingredients in Europe and the USA appreciate that their products are produced fairly, benefitting both men and women. This strengthens the linkage with end consumers.

### Results for women

|             | Reach  | Benefit   | Empower   |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| Objectives  | Couples are aware that their family is a joint business.   | Improved the well-being of women.   | Joint decision-making in the household and work-sharing.  |
| Strategies  | Select men and women as Change Agents/Model Couples to play a key role in the household approach.<br>Train couples on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- joint family budgeting and planning.</li> <li>- workload sharing.</li> <li>- joint decision-making on the use of revenue.</li> </ul> | Follow up on the implementation of the learning from the training.<br>Put in place a programme to assist motivated couples.<br>Organise exchange of experiences amongst couples.  | Identify and share stories of successful jointly operated family businesses.  |
| Measurement | Number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- female Change Agents.</li> <li>- Model Couples (husband and wife).</li> <li>- villages reached.</li> <li>- couples in villages reached.</li> </ul>   | Figures showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase in the agricultural product sold per family.</li> <li>- increase in family income.</li> <li>- improved livelihoods.</li> <li>- schooling of children.</li> </ul> | Examples of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- joint household planning.</li> <li>- reduction of disempowerment of women in households.</li> </ul> |

### Example: The family as a business - The experiences of Kyagalanyi in Uganda

Women in rural Uganda provide the lion’s share of the workload put into coffee farming. From tending coffee gardens to picking, drying, and sorting coffee beans, they account for up to 70% of the total labour. Additionally, they are often solely responsible for running the household and taking care of the family. However, they are rarely given the same access to opportunities and resources as men. More often than not, men own, manage, and control their family’s land, financial assets, and income. As a result, it is common for women to sell unripe coffee at low prices to local middlemen to pay for basic household needs. Besides, women often cannot engage in capacity-building activities, resulting in lower production and inferior quality of the coffee.

In 2013, Kyagalanyi started to build gender equality values and skills of the company. The company developed strategies to ensure that women would also benefit from the farmer support programme. Management encouraged the field staff to change their focus from registered members to the households. This resulted in both husbands and wives being trained during farm visits and increasing

percentages of women attending group training. Having more female staff also attracted more female members.

To improve collaboration and decision-making at household level, in mid-2017, Kyagalanyi started implementing a full gender programme in its certified value chains. The company has set up 70 gender clusters, aligned to their existing farmer groups, resulting in 1,400 households currently benefiting from the programme applying the Household Approach developed by HRNS. Each cluster is headed by a change agent, who organises sessions for couples, aiming at increasing financial transparency, collaboration and decision-making at the household level. As an important side-effect of this increased collaboration, part of the coffee income is now used to send children to (a better) school.

To improve the financial management of households, the 70 gender clusters were trained to set-up saving groups (VSLAs). This helps families to save money while being able to take out loans. Besides that, a board game that mimics the coffee season was developed. It is played with four couples and shows them the importance of joint decision-making, record-keeping, and good management of their coffee farms.

Source: Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus/UTZ, 2019<sup>24</sup>

## Strategy 4. Reduction of unpaid care and domestic work

### Criterion 6.5 Guidance - access to child care (see also Part II, Strategy 2)

#### What are the gender-based constraints?

In both rich and poor countries women - and often girls - provide an unequal and excessive amount of unpaid care. The responsibility for providing unpaid care work falls disproportionately on women and girls – and this is a problem. Globally, women on average provide more than three times the unpaid care work done by men, rising to more than five times in poor rural areas. In rural areas, this unequal division of labour is combined with a lack of basic infrastructure (like electricity and water). Also, a lack of time-saving equipment (like washing machines) and a lack of affordable alternative care services (like childcare) create a significant unpaid care workload for women.<sup>25</sup> In rural areas, a lot of work needed for agriculture is perceived as household chores, e.g. fetching water (even if it is for the cattle or irrigation), searching firewood, and cooking for labourers.

#### Key actions to address these constraints

The 4 R framework is an easy framework that summarises the key steps to be taken by the government, civil society organisations, and businesses to redress the balance and relieve women from the heavy share of unpaid care work.

- 4.1 Recognise
- 4.2 Reduce
- 4.3 Redistribute
- 4.4 Represent

#### How to carry out these actions?<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Coffee that 'Comes with a Story' The experience of Kyagalanyi, in partnership with UTZ – The business case for the household approach in Uganda, Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus, 2019 [Read here](#) the 2-pager.

<sup>25</sup> Unilever and Oxfam (2019). *Business Briefing on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Why unpaid care by women and girls matters to business, and how companies can address it*, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Oxfam (2019), idem.

#### 4.1 Recognise

- Recognise that unpaid care work is mainly done by women, and acknowledge it as work - a type of production that creates value - and recognise it as such in relevant policies.
- Unpaid domestic care work at the level of smallholder families is mostly related to care for children, cooking for the family, and fetching water.
- Analyse the activities resulting in the most severe time constraints.

#### 4.2 Reduce

- Reduce the total number of hours that need to be spent on unpaid care tasks by improving access to affordable time-saving devices and care and support infrastructures, such as water, electricity, and public transport.
- Without good access to water, women face additional challenges in carrying out many tasks such as laundry, house cleaning, and cooking. Take action to improve access to water points.
- Fetching firewood is a time-consuming aspect of cooking. Actions could focus on improved food stoves or other fuel.
- Caring for children hinders women in doing work in the field. Related actions are childcare facilities provided by the company.
- Discuss if setting up laundry facilities is an option.

#### 4.3 Redistribute

- Redistribute unpaid care work within the household so that the total amount of unpaid care work is more fairly shared among family members.
- Shift some of the costs, responsibility, and opportunity associated with unpaid care work to the state and the private sector (for example through state and employer-sponsored child care services and parental leave).
- Create awareness on the unfair distribution of unpaid care work and the related stereotyping.
- Sensitise men and women to redistribute tasks within the family.
- Stress that when men don't shoulder their fair share of unpaid care work, they can miss out on positive and life-affirming experiences, such as the lifelong bonds that can come from spending time with children as they grow.
- Unequal responsibility for unpaid care work is both a missed opportunity for men and boys and a major obstacle on the path to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.

#### 4.4 Represent

- Involve caregivers, often women, in problem analysis related to caregiving and domestic work tasks and the identification and planning for solutions.
- Involve caregivers effectively in design and decision-making so that they can voice their concerns and shape policies, budgets, and plans that reflect their needs and interests.

### Results for the company

#### *Value creation*

If unpaid care work in the household is shared between husband and wife, it is easier for women to do paid work in the company. Also, girls (daughters) have more possibilities to go to school.

#### *Growth*

With this strategy at the household level, the company show that gender equality and women empowerment is taken seriously, thus creating opportunities in social sustainability markets.

### Results for women

|             | Reach   | Benefit   | Empower  |
|-------------|---|---|--|
| Objectives  | The unpaid care workload of women is made visible.                    | Reduced workload of women and improved well-being.  | More equal sharing of unpaid care between husband and wife.  |
| Strategies  | Identify the needs and interest of women to reduce their work burden. | Put in place actions or technologies for reducing the unpaid care workload of women.            | Sensitise families on the gender division of work and time use of men and women and the need to balance the unpaid care workload by distributing tasks between husband and wife. |
| Measurement | Number or percentage of women and men reached per measure.            | Amount of time-saving as a result of the introduction of technology or redistribution of tasks. | Examples of redistribution and reduction of unpaid care tasks of women.  |

## Strategy 5. Small business development

### Criterion 4.3 The unit of certification contribute to local sustainable development as agreed by local communities

#### What are the gender-based constraints?

Communities in palm oil producing areas rely on salaries earned as wage labourer on a palm oil estate or from the sales of Fresh Fruit Bunches sold to a company or mill. Most families, however, also have other sources of income, a plot of rice, a vegetable garden, or a shop. For a variety of reasons (women considering the work in the plantation too harsh, men being employed full-time, or men being in charge of the oil palm trees), women are often the ones in charge of these other sources of income. For this reason, support to women in the establishment of a small business is often highly appreciated. Gender-based constraints for women in establishing a small business is generally twofold - they lack the required business skills and they lack the funds needed for investments. This strategy will address both constraints.

The lack of business development services for women has often been attributed to their lack of interest: Women are not interested in technical and business training. Service providers rarely try to understand the causes of why women are not accessing their services. They do not realise the differences in men and women's perceptions about the type and quality of services offered. They do not see the importance of a differentiated evaluation of services as the basis for the design of products and services with gender equity and a women-empowering approach.

Access to financial services is also a challenge for women who want to start or improve their business. Female entrepreneurs often have a less favourable profile with investors. The businesses of women are often small and women do not have adequate collateral. Financial institutions may even require higher collateral from female entrepreneurs. Some banks may also require women to have a male co-signer to open accounts. Female entrepreneurs often have less access to basic banking services such as checking and saving accounts. They have less access to loans and therefore prefer to finance their enterprise with their savings, loans from family and friends, or microloans instead of credit from financial institutions. To address these gender-based constraints, intervention strategies will have to address both the supplier side, the (micro) financial institution and the client, and the female entrepreneur.

#### Key actions to address these gender-based constraints

- 5.1 Assist women in the identification of a business activity.
- 5.2 Assist them in the identification of the business development services available to them and evaluate these services.
- 5.3 Facilitate the linking of women with organisations that are able to provide the required business development services.
- 5.4 Identify the financial services needed and link women to (micro) financial institutions.
- 5.5 Promote network development of female entrepreneurs.

### How to carry out these key actions

- 5.1 Assist women in the identification of a business activity.
  - Support women in doing a mini marketing study based on the 5P's of Marketing: Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and People. For inspiration, see the mini-market survey tool of AgriProFocus.<sup>27</sup>
  - Assist women in making the (simple) business plan required for funding. A completed Business Model Canvas can be the basis for this business plan. Free templates of the Business Model Canvas can be found on the web.
  - Assist women also in getting started. For example, related to input management in the production cycle<sup>28</sup>, costing, and pricing.<sup>29</sup>
  - For this assistance, an external party can also be identified, see 5.2 and 5.3.
- 5.2 Assist women in the identification of the business development services available to them and evaluate these services.
  - Organise discussions with women. Combine discussions in subgroups with plenary discussions. After the introduction, the discussion starts in subgroups using flipcharts.<sup>30</sup>
  - Ask each subgroup to make a collective drawing on a flipchart responding to the question: 'Which services do you receive to start or improve your business? Who is providing this service?'
  - Write down on another flipchart: 'What other services do you need to improve the performance of your business in the value chain?'
  - In the plenary session, the group decides on one or two important services to evaluate. Each group is asked to respond on a flipchart to the following questions for each of the services analysed:
    - Who receives the service? (Number of men and women, wives, sons, and daughters, families that live close to the road, etc.)
    - How is the service delivered? (time, place, conditions, etc.)
    - How much does the service cost?
    - Are you satisfied with the service?
    - What are the suggestions for improving the service?
  - Groups present the results to the plenary session. The facilitator helps to make a synthesis of the most important reflections and recommendations for service improvement from a gender perspective.
- 5.3 Facilitate the linking of women with organisations that are able to provide the required business development services
  - Based on these discussions, the company facilitates linking the women to a potential service provider, who can be an NGO or a private business.
  - Organise the practical and financial arrangements with the most suitable organisation.
  - To ensure that the service will be sustainably provided, the service should not be fully subsidised. Assist the service provider in developing a service that can be provided with no or little subsidy

<sup>27</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). *Gender in value chains. A practical toolkit to integrate a gender perspective in agricultural value chain development*, Tool 4.4c A mini-market study.

<sup>28</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). *idem*, Tool 4.4d Input management in the production cycle.

<sup>29</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). *idem*, Tool 4.4e Costing and pricing.

<sup>30</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). *idem*, Tool 4.4 Business development service providers.



also in the long run. Subsidising the development and start-up of the service provider is a suitable task for the company.

#### 5.4 Identify the financial services needed and link women to (micro) financial institutions

- For sustainable change, it is advised to cooperate with financial service providers<sup>31</sup> or NGOs:
- Convince the banks of the business model of providing special services to women.
- Assist banks in the development of financial products for women entrepreneurs.
- Base the development of financial products on expressed needs and interests of women.<sup>32</sup>
- Actions at the side of the clients, the female entrepreneurs:
- Invest in increasing self-confidence and business education of women entrepreneurs.
- Cooperate with civil society organisations, e.g. on joint decision-making of men and women at the household level.

#### 5.5 Promote network development of female entrepreneurs

- Take provisions to address specific gender-based constraints, related to time, mobility and child care, and address the sensitisation of men.
- Promote social interaction and network activities amongst female entrepreneurs and the formation of associations of female entrepreneurs.

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<sup>31</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). Idem, Tool 4.5a Knowing the financial system and how it might fail women.

<sup>32</sup> Women's World Banking (2017) *Opportunity for Women. Growth for Business*. Watch the video.

## Results for women

|             | Reach  | Benefit   | Empower   |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| Objectives  | Financial services and business development services are available for women.  | Women have the business knowledge and financial means to start or improve their business.   | Women's entrepreneurial and management capacities are recognised.   |
| Strategies  | Link women to financial and business development services.   | Women apply the knowledge in their business.<br>Women have access to loans.<br>Coaching and mentoring of female entrepreneurs by more experienced entrepreneurs.  | Facilitate discussion with men and leaders in the community on the importance of women being entrepreneurs.<br>Facilitate the network development of female entrepreneurs. Also, link female entrepreneurs to male entrepreneurs. |
| Measurement | Percentage or number of men and women being clients of:<br>- financial services.<br>- business development services.<br>Financial products developed and used by women.<br>Size of loans of men and women. | Number or percentage of men and women who have started or:<br>- improved a business.<br>- income generated.<br>Coaching and mentoring relations between experienced and less experienced entrepreneurs. | Profiles descriptions of successful entrepreneurs.<br>Female entrepreneurs in women-only or mixed networks.<br>Positive image of women as entrepreneurs in the community.   |

## PART V INTERNAL PROCESSES AND CAPACITIES

### Why is it important?

This chapter is based on the premise that for the successful implementation of this Gender Guidance, a company needs to have gender-responsive processes and capacities in place. This part provides two tools that can help to develop this.

### The tools

1. Gender risk assessment
2. A quick gender scan

### 1. Gender risk assessment

#### Why is it important?

For the successful implementation of this gender guidance, a gender-sensitive organisation is indispensable. It is good to start with a gender risk assessment. This will provide some suggestions on how to ensure that the internal organisation of the company is capable of putting in place the contents of this gender guidance. The quick gender scan would be the next step.

#### How to use this risk assessment?

For every question in the potential risks column answered with a NO, look at the suggested actions and make a plan to implement them.

| Potential risks   | Suggested actions  |
|---|--|
| Is a gender policy in place?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a gender policy.</li><li>• Communicate the policy with the staff of the company and with the public.</li><li>• Make a public policy statement on gender equality and women's economic empowerment.</li></ul>   |
| Are gender strategies and action plans made?                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop strategies to address gender-based constraints of female employees, women smallholders, and women in communities.</li><li>• Define how the company will reach, benefit, and empower women at all these levels.</li></ul>                                   |
| Is there an equal gender representation at HQ and management level? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice what you preach!</li><li>• Consider affirmative actions to facilitate the recruitment and retention of female staff to improve the position of women in the company.</li></ul>  |
| Is there budget available for gender activities?                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guarantee budget to undertake gender-related strategies at different levels in the company, with employees, smallholders, and in communities.</li></ul>  |
| Is gender expertise available in the company?                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure gender expertise is available in the company.</li><li>• If needed, hire external expertise or cooperate with NGOs or consulting firms.</li><li>• Participate in gender networks.</li><li>• Exchange experiences with other palm oil companies.</li></ul> |

| Potential risks                  | Suggested actions   |
|----------------------------------|---|
|                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign gender focal points for specific strategies, e.g. the development of gender committees. Train them and equip them with tools and examples.</li> </ul>   |
| Are gender results measured?     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect sex-disaggregated data.</li> <li>Collect data on how the company reaches, benefits, and empowers women.</li> </ul>   |
| Are gender results communicated? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share experiences on good practices and stories of changes in the lives of women.</li> <li>Publish them (in articles, case studies, etc.) on the company's website or elsewhere and use them for media and awareness-raising campaigns.</li> </ul> |

## 2. Quick gender scan

### Who uses this gender scan?

This scan is a self-assessment tool for RSPO members. The gender scan can be facilitated by a gender specialist or relevant company staff, e.g. from the human resources or sustainability department or group managers for smallholders. It aims to assess the gender responsiveness of the RSPO member. For example:

- Plantation companies
- Mills
- Smallholder groups/organisations
- Labour service providers

### Which information is collected?

- Assessment of the capacities of the RSPO member to meet the needs of both male and female employees, smallholders, and communities and to fulfil the gender aspects of RSPO P&C and ISH Standard.
- Evaluation of the policies and mechanisms put in place by the RSPO member to implement the gender-sensitive business strategy necessary to meet the gender criteria of RSPO.

### Why use this gender scan?

- Going through this checklist will create awareness on women's roles, specific needs and challenges, and the importance of addressing them.

### What do you gain from using it?

- It is in the interest of the company to address gender-based constraints experienced by female workers, women in smallholder families, and women in communities.
- Addressing these constraints is a requirement of the RSPO standard, but is also in the business interest of the member.

### How to use this gender scan?

Step 1: Complete the quick gender scan and give scores for the six domains.

Step 2: Based on the joint scores for the six domains a spider graph is created.

Step 3: Analysis of the scores and strategic planning.

Step 4: Areas of improvement are discussed and agreed upon.

### Step 1: Complete the gender scan and give scores for the six domains.

The focus group discussion starts with explaining the objectives of the session, followed by the explanation of the scan. This scan consists of six domains on which the company or smallholder groups are assessed. For each domain, three statements are given. The maximum score per domain is 15, five points for each statement. One reflects strong disagreement, while five reflects strong agreement with the statement.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Maybe | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3     | 4     | 5              |

The scan is completed based on a group discussion resulting in a joint assessment. The table below shows the six domains of the scan and the (imaginary) score of one group session.

| Quick Gender Scan  | Score 2020 | Score 2021 | Score 2022 | Score 2023 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>1. The company is aware of the importance of gender equality for its business strategy</b>  |            |            |            |            |
| 1.1 Addressing the needs and interests of female employees is profitable for the company   | 3          |            |            |            |
| 1.2 Ensuring equal access to services for female smallholders is profitable for the company  | 1          |            |            |            |
| 1.3 The company has to take gender relations into account in its relations with communities  | 2          |            |            |            |
| Total 1  | 6          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>2. Labour conditions of female employees are addressed</b>  |            |            |            |            |
| 2.1 Female employees are consulted to ensure that labour conditions are in line with their special needs and interests. Women take part in the communication between the management and the employee structure (e.g. via workers' group, gender committee, etc.) | 3          |            |            |            |
| 2.2 Labour conditions of female employees are adjusted to their special needs and interests (e.g. related to fair remuneration, working conditions, safety, flexibility of work, avoidance of sexual harassment etc.)  | 3          |            |            |            |
| 2.3 Women have equal access to training and career development, and also technical and managerial jobs that are usually considered typically for men   | 1          |            |            |            |
| Total 2  | 7          | 0          | 0          | 0          |

| Quick Gender Scan   | Score 2020 | Score 2021 | Score 2022 | Score 2023 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>3. Company services are provided to female smallholders and both husband and wife of smallholder households.</b>   |            |            |            |            |
| 3.1 The company communicates with female smallholders on how to adjust the services to their needs and interests (time, place, who deliver the service, etc.) | 1          |            |            |            |
| 3.2 Company services are also available for the spouses of male smallholders  | 1          |            |            |            |
| 3.3 Client satisfaction surveys for services are conducted separately for men and women   | 1          |            |            |            |
| Total 3   | 3          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>4. The company aims at contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment with its community initiatives</b>  |            |            |            |            |
| 4.1 Women are included in land use planning and FPIC processes and actively involved in decision-making   | 2          |            |            |            |
| 4.2 Community initiatives benefit women by - e.g. better health services, schooling, drinking water, business development support                             | 1          |            |            |            |
| 4.3 Women are empowered by community initiatives - e.g. reduced gender-based violence and increased awareness on reproductive rights                          | 1          |            |            |            |
| Total 4   | 4          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>5. The company has a gender policy and internal gender capacity</b>  |            |            |            |            |
| 5.1 Gender equality is a strategic goal for the company. This is reflected in its gender policy, gender targets and the communication of the company          | 1          |            |            |            |
| 5.2 The human resources department can implement this policy  | 1          |            |            |            |
| 5.3 Women are equally represented at different levels in the company, including managerial levels   | 2          |            |            |            |
| Total 5   | 4          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>6. Mechanisms are in place for monitoring the gender strategy of the business</b>  |            |            |            |            |
| 6.1 The company knows the number and percentage of male and female employees and female smallholders  | 2          |            |            |            |



| Quick Gender Scan  | Score 2020 | Score 2021 | Score 2022 | Score 2023 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 6.2 The company keeps track of men and women in different categories of jobs, including managerial and technical jobs, and permanent and seasonal jobs | 2          |            |            |            |
| 6.3 Data on the participation of men and women in training and meetings, and absenteeism and turnover of staff are collected for men and women         | 1          |            |            |            |
| Total 6  | 5          | 0          | 0          | 0          |

| The ideal situation per domain   | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| 1. The company is aware of the importance of gender for its business strategy.                               | 6    |      |      |      |
| 2. Labour conditions of female employees are addressed.  | 7    |      |      |      |
| 3. Company services are provided to female smallholders and both husband and wife of smallholder households. | 3    |      |      |      |
| 4. The company contributes to gender equality with its community initiatives.                                | 4    |      |      |      |
| 5. The company has a gender policy and internal gender capacity.   | 4    |      |      |      |
| 6. Mechanisms are in place for monitoring the gender strategy of the business.                               | 5    |      |      |      |

**Step 2: Based on the joint scores for the six domains a spider graph is created.**

Based on the above table, a spider graph is created, see figure 6. The spider graph visualises the scores and shows strong and weak domains. This exercise can be repeated over several years. Follow this link to get access to the excel sheet. The spider graph can also simply be made by hand on a flipchart.

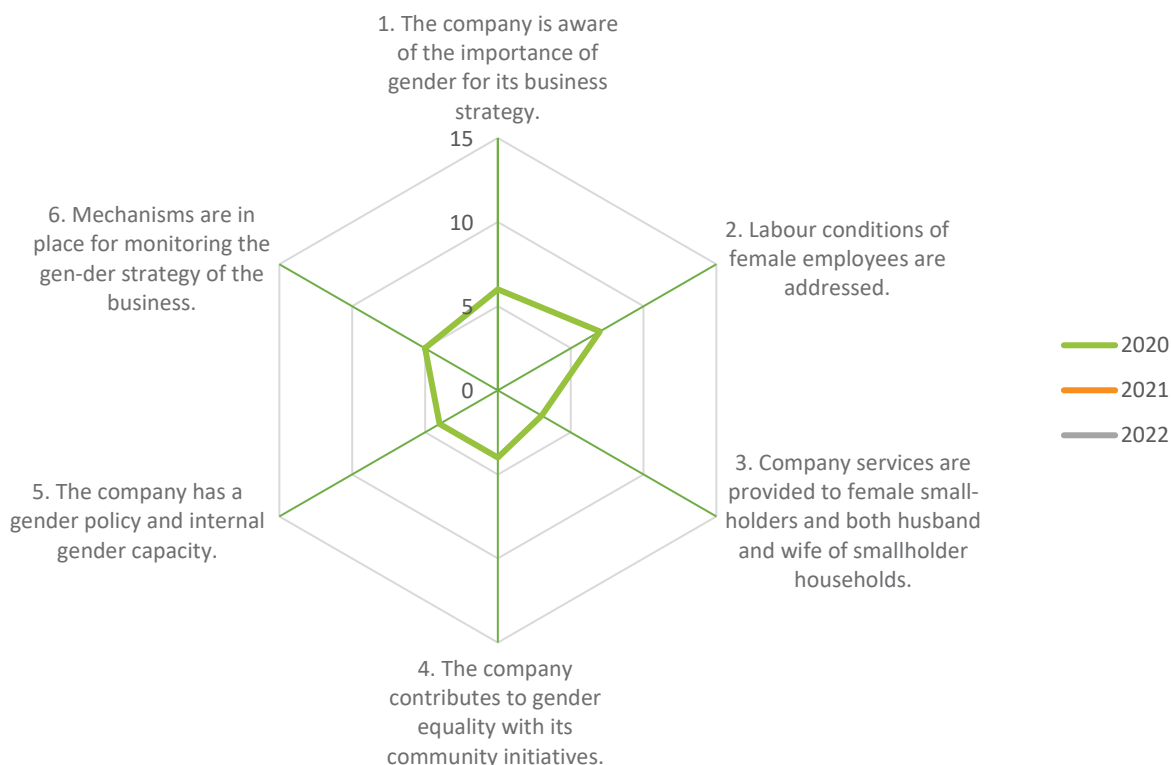


Figure 6 Spider graph taken from the Excel sheet (example)

**Step 3: Analysis of the scores and strategic planning.**

Respondents analyse scores for each domain. This allows taking stock of the situation with a view of possible improvements. There may be more than one domain requiring improvement.

| Areas that need improvement | Proposed actions | Time Frame | Resources | Responsible person(s) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
|                             |                  |            |           |                       |
|                             |                  |            |           |                       |
|                             |                  |            |           |                       |

**Step 4: Areas of improvement are discussed and agreed upon.**

Ideally, several group discussions are held with different company-related groups of people: male and female workers, male and female smallholders, higher-level staff (president, manager, programme officer, HR person, etc.).

Interviewers have a conversation with higher-level company staff to identify gaps and areas of improvement. If there are divergent opinions, include the range of scores.

The higher-level company staff analyse the spider web graph and identify which area has the lowest score. The following questions are raised:

1. What explains such a low score in this area?
2. What has been tried to address this challenge/weakness?
3. What were the results?
4. What is the motivation to address this challenge?
5. What can be suggested to improve this area?

The following table gives suggestions on how to use this gender guidance in formulating actions.

| Six domains  | Suggestions for the use of this Gender Guidance  |
|--|--|
| 1. The company is aware of the importance of gender for its business strategy.                               | Each strategy in this guide explains what is the business case for applying the strategy.  |
| 2. Labour conditions of female employees are addressed.  | Part II of this guide provides several very practical strategies to improve the labour conditions of female employees.   |
| 3. Company services are provided to female smallholders and both husband and wife of smallholder households. | Part III of this guide describes strategies to include women on a (more) equal footing in smallholder groups.  |
| 4. The company aims at contributing to gender equality with its community initiatives.                       | Part IV of this guide describes five strategies that can inspire companies.  |
| 5. The company has a gender policy and internal gender capacity.   | Part II, in particular, refers to actions to be taken at the management level of the company involving the HR department and the gender committee.<br>Part V provides this gender quick scan and suggestions for gender risk management.   |
| 6. Mechanisms are in place for monitoring the gender strategy of the business.                               | All strategies described in this guide include a suggestion for monitoring the results of the strategy both at the level of women (linked to the relevant RSPO P&C) and at the level of the business strategy.<br>Part V gives suggestions on communicating the gender strategy of the company and the results achieved. |

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### Women in the palm oil sectors on video

‘What is it like being a woman working in palm oil? And how one company is working towards gender equality’. In an industry dominated by men, what can a palm oil company do to ensure gender equality? Watch the video. Source: Cargill on [www.eco-business.com](http://www.eco-business.com) 2019.

‘Gender and palm oil: Working together as a couple’. Yuliana Putri Leha, 23, has worked gathering oil palm fruits together with her husband, Singapul, since 2014 in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Yuliana works on a casual basis but says she’s unsure if she could find alternative work if she tried. Watch the video. Source: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) 2017.

‘Gender and palm oil: A day in the life of a female palm oil worker’. Hear from Magdalena Pandan, a 35-year-old oil palm plantation worker in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, who rises before dawn every day to carry out her duties towards her job, her family and her croplands. Watch the video. Source: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) 2017.

*Science in the field*. Hear from CIFOR scientist Bimbika Sijapati Basnett on her team’s research into issues related to gender and women in the expansion of the oil palm industry in Indonesia. Watch this video. Source: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) 2017.

### Blogs on women in the palm oil sector

‘On the ground in Indonesia with a Cargill safety advisor and her understudy’. Alicia and Meta check that the workers are wearing their personal protective equipment and that it is in good condition. Ever-alert Meta and Alicia live and breathe their safety roles at Harapan, a more than 32,000-hectare plantation employing more than 5,800 workers. Read the story. Source: Cargill 2017.

‘Creating a safer, healthier workplace’. Environment, Health, Fire & Safety Inspector Eka Syamsiah Hidayah Nasution, 26 years old, Jakarta (GAR): “Even one incident is one too many. I want to minimise the risks further, even eliminate them.” This is Eka’s philosophy as the Environment, Health, Fire & Safety Inspector for Golden Agri-Resources (GAR). Read the story. Source: GAR 2017.

‘Engineering a sustainable future’. Novianti Mandasari, Environmental Engineer, 25 years old, Riau (GAR): “Almost 70 per cent of oil palm fresh fruit bunches become waste once crude palm oil (CPO) is extracted. We are referring to waste such as fibres and shells, as well as liquid effluent. So a big part of my job is to reuse, reduce, recycle, and manage this “waste” responsibly—I play an important role in producing palm oil sustainably.’ Read her story and watch the video. Source: GAR 2017.

‘Gender equality in palm oil: Where are we at today?’. Golden Agri-Resources (GAR) is exploring where we can play a part in creating a more gender-balanced industry. Read this blog. Source: GAR 2017.

### The business cases for gender in other sectors

*Reducing Absenteeism and Turnover of Female Workers in the Tuna Industry, Solomon islands*. Two-pager on the experience of SolTuna, in partnership with IFC: the business case for addressing gender-based constraints of female employees on the Solomon Islands. Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus 2019. [Read here](#).

*Socially responsible fruit growing South Africa*. Two-pager on the experience of Afrifresh, in partnership with IFC: the business case for better work for women on fresh fruit farms in South Africa. Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus 2019. [Read here](#).

*More and better milk. The partnership of FrieslandCampina and 2SCALE in Nigeria*. Two-pager on the business case for recognizing female Fulani as dairy producers and the importance of establishing water points. Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus, 2019. [Read here](#).

*Coffee that 'Comes with a Story. The experience of Kyagalanyi, in partnership with Rain Forest Alliance.* Two-pager on the business case for the household approach in Uganda, Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus, 2019. [Read here.](#)

*Women: Champions in Meeting Certification Standards.* Asociación Aldea Global Jinotega's experience, in partnership with UTZ (now Rainforest Alliance). Two-pager on the business case for mainstreaming gender in the coffee sector in Nicaragua, Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus, 2019. [Read here.](#)

*Chocolate from where the cocoa beans grow.* Two-pager on the experience of the company POD Chocolate and the NGO Kalimajari with women's empowerment in cocoa on Bali, Indonesia in partnership with UTZ (now Rainforest Alliance), Fair & Sustainable/AgriProFocus, 2019. [Read here.](#)

Women's World Banking, 2017 *Opportunity for Women. Growth for Business.* [Watch the video.](#)

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HRNS is a foundation created by the Neumann Gruppe, a family business, market leader in the coffee sector worldwide, <https://www.hrnstiftung.org/a-scientifically-sound-gender-approach/>

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Oxfam Novib (2019). *Gender Action Learning System. Practical guide for transforming gender and unequal power relations in value chains*.



RSPO is an international non-profit organisation formed in 2004 with the objective to promote the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

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