

**Final draft**

**Practical Guidance on Gender Inclusion and  
Compliance to P&C 2018 and ISH 2019**

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**For the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil**

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## Colophon

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# Preface

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By RSPO

## Introduction

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Research<sup>1</sup> in the palm oil sector has shown that women have been marginalized, discriminated against, excluded and that 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 are among others unrecognized 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 smallholder.

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

Companies that do not recognize or value the role women play in supplying Fresh Fruit Bunches 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 recognize and integrate a more gender-equal view and practices in their operations. This key message is integrated into the RSPO P&C 2018.<sup>2</sup> Adhering to the gender criteria is part and parcel of the RSPO standard. Doing so will contribute to increased gender equality, 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 RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard 2019 and the responsibilities of the group manager and group members.

In this document, practical strategies are presented which can be used by RSPO members. 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.

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

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:

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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> In the process of developing new guidelines integrating a gender-equal view and practices this document 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*.

- Women are reached by and benefit from palm oil-related activities.
- Women are empowered, in the companies and in smallholder 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 document is composed of five parts.

#### **Part I What is women's economic empowerment and why is it important for RSPO?**

This part provides a short introduction explaining where women perform specific roles in the palm oil sector, these women are the focus of this gender guidance. Subsequently, the following questions are answered: What is meant by women's economic empowerment? How it can be achieved and why it is important for the business strategy of a company 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.

#### **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 (group management).

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

This part provides practical strategies to establish good relationships with the communities engaging with the company

#### **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. Also, a risk assessment tool is provided, which can be used to make internal processes of the company gender-sensitive.

# 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

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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 and 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 fertilizer, 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 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 as a 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 included 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).

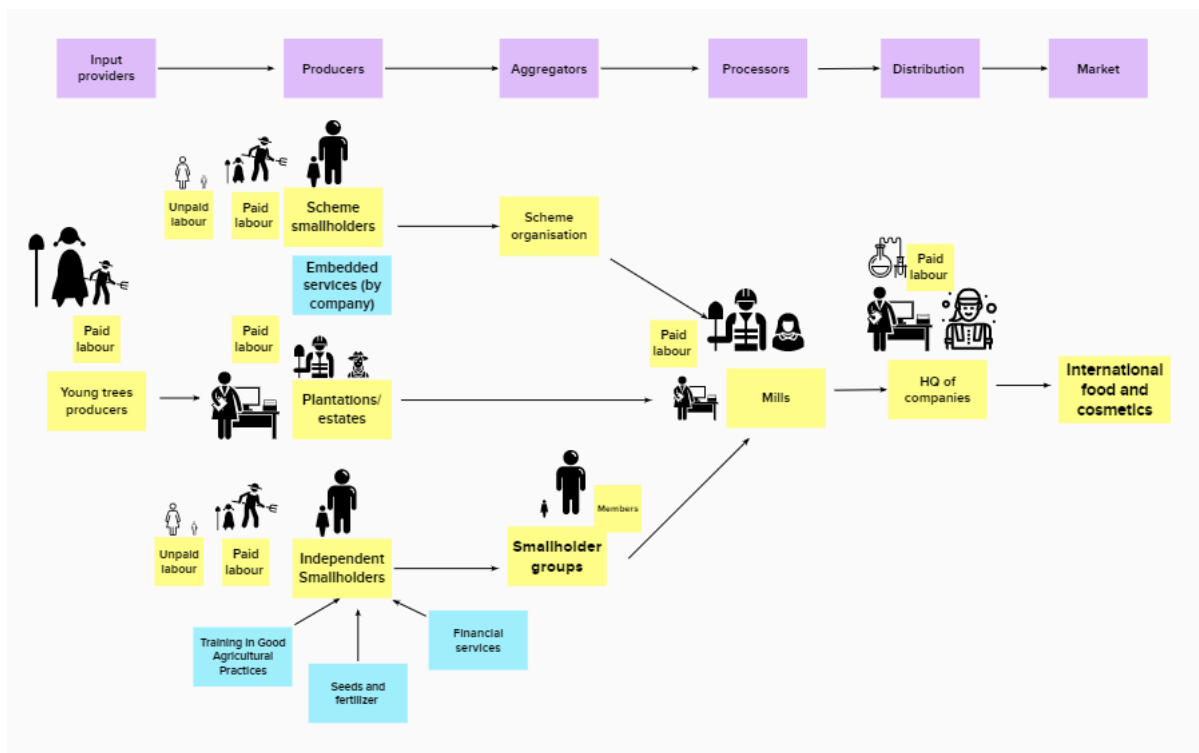


Figure 1 Example of a gender-sensitive palm oil sector map

## What is women's economic empowerment?

The concept of women's economic empowerment is used by several international institutions, especially by 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>

Access to productive resources includes access to assets such as land and equipment, as well as to, for example, 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, but also capabilities and self-confidence. Source: DCED (2014).

<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*.



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 1 and 2.



Figure 2 Access to productive resources

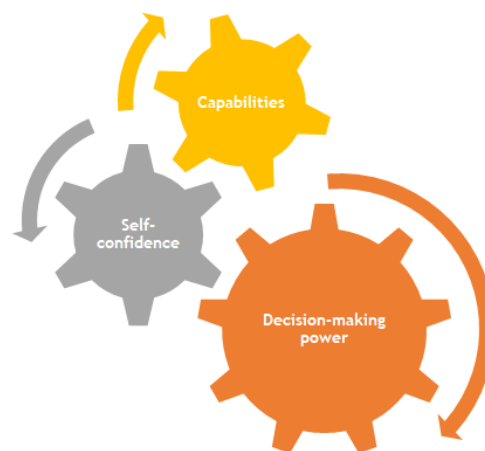


Figure 3 Power and agency

## 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, also 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 as well as men, at the household level and company level; 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*, that they will have the power to take 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, to strengthen their ability to make strategic life choices and to put those choices into action.

The framework is for general use in the development context but also applicable for companies. Table 1 summarizes 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

<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.

			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>Design services (e.g. training and input supply) considering gendered needs, preferences and constraints to ensure that women benefit from the service</p> <p>Ensure the support from husbands as well as community leaders</p>	<p>Enhance women’s decision-making power in households and communities, applying a couples’ approach</p> <p>Address key areas of gender inequality (or disempowerment of women, e.g. gender-based violence) by sensitizing men and women</p>
Measurement	<p>Number/proportion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- of female smallholders</li> <li>- of female employees in different types of jobs (also permanent jobs, technical jobs and management positions)</li> </ul> <p>Women using a service e.g. getting a (larger) loan or attending Good Agricultural Practices training</p>	<p>Sex-disaggregated data for outcomes such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- productivity</li> <li>- income</li> <li>- assets</li> <li>- nutrition</li> <li>- time use, etc.</li> </ul> <p>as a result of their activities in the palm oil sector</p>	<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 outcomes associated with disempowerment, e.g.</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 recognizes that there are business arguments for companies to actively promote women's economic empowerment. This is supported by International Finance Corporation (IFC)<sup>7</sup> and several other international organisations<sup>8</sup> which support 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 employing workers, that result from implementing gender-aware policies and practices. 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 3).<sup>10</sup> These four areas will be used when describing the business argument for applying the different strategies in this guide.

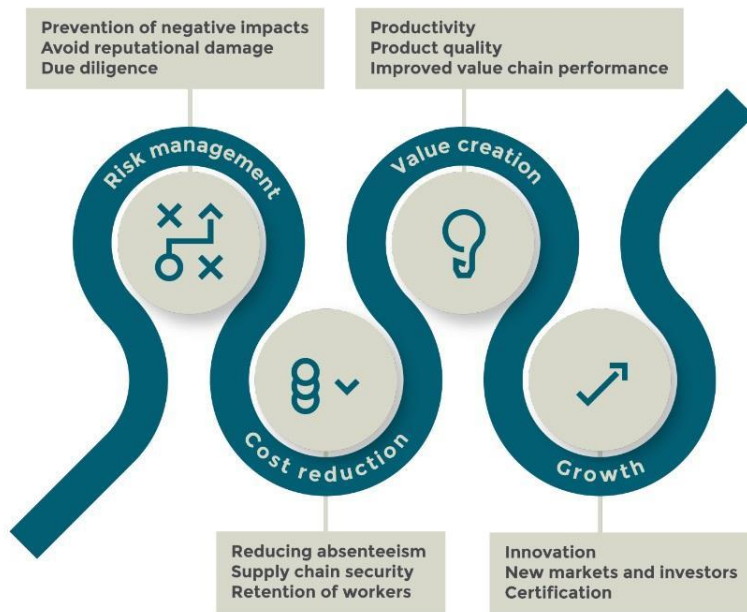
<sup>7</sup> IFC/World Bank Group (2016). *Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains*.

<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.

## The business case for women's empowerment



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Figure 4 The business case for women's empowerment

## Part II The Company as an Employer

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

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

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

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

Management and particularly the human resource department play a crucial role in a company's performance and compliance with legal obligations. This includes compliance with the RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) 2018.

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, occupational health and safety)
- Operational risk management (ensuring women are well-equipped for their work and use protective gear, ensuring women are safe on vast plantations and are not harassed)
- Reputational risk management (avoid exploitation of women workers, harassment at the workplace)

Addressing these issues avoids 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.

#### **Why is gender important 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 responsible for ensuring that also the scheme smallholders comply with the RSPO principles. Therefore in this chapter, the strategies indicated also apply to the (female) workers of scheme smallholders.

#### **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 fertilizers, spraying pesticides and collecting loose fruit and men being responsible for harvesting, pruning, and truck driving. 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 which accompany the permanent contracts which men more often have. This makes that women have very little possibilities of upward mobility within the company.

Women form a smaller proportion of the plantation labour force also 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 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 which 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.

### **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. Higher social compliance is valued in many client markets which increases access to these markets.

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 IFC report 'Investing in women along agribusiness value chains' (2016) illustrates the business case for investing in female employees for larger-scale agribusiness employers. Illustrated with cases this IFC report shows 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 high-quality markets. Companies thereby improve their business gains while ultimately supporting inclusive growth for women workers in agribusiness.<sup>11</sup>

The Oxfam publication '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 their caregiving and household responsibilities, and that 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>12</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.

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<sup>11</sup> IFC (2016). *Investing in Women Along Agribusiness Value Chains*.

<sup>12</sup> Unilever and Oxfam (2019). *Business Briefing on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work*.

- 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

## Strategy 1. Gender-equality in the workplace

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

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

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

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

Most employees in the palm oil sector are men. They work in the plantations and the 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 fertilizing, 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, 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 fertilizer 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 is lower or the work that she hasn't completed is added on 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. reducing, even more, their already small wage. Spraying pesticide brings reproductive health risks, such as miscarriages, preterm deliveries, low birth weights and birth defects, but also application of fertilizers 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 keeping them busy, a vegetable garden, a plot of rice or small business. Women 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 the women workers and their needs. Gender committees do support management in analysing and suggesting ways to address gender needs, but 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 (Indicator 6.1.6)

- Anchor gender equality in the human resource management policy of the company.
- Give more women permanent contracts, seasonal or permanent, including the associated benefits.
- Consider hiring couples, but give husband and wife both a contract to avoid that a woman 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 which is already low.
- Pay equal salaries for men and women for equivalent jobs.

#### **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. Before, 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 have more often a contract than 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 insurances 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 the 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 adds to their agency and self-esteem.

### 1.2 Improve the working conditions of women in the plantations (Criteria and indicators 6.7 - 6.7.3 - 6.7.4)

- Ensure that payment is reasonable and targets/quotas feasible, make this part of the negotiations on contracts, both with permanent and casual workers.
- Organize women in groups so that they are not alone in the plantation, but that women are working together and teaming up.
- 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 women spraying is available and used.
- Ensure regular health checks (blood test etc.) to control the health situation, communicate the results of the test so that women their health situation (this is not always done).

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

- Promote the participation of women in workers committees, trade unions and/or gender committees to make their voices heard and ensure that they are stronger represented in all communication between 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.



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### **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 the 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.

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### **Gender committee Cargill- Indonesia**

The Cargill Gender Committee is set up for all female employees with representatives from the mill and plantations. They hold monthly meetings and deal with topics like finances 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 organizes 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 culture is still strong in the villages. In their experience, it is easier to discuss joint decision-making around the education of the children than everything related to the agricultural work as women prefer to leave that to the men. (Source: interview 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	The voice of women is heard in communication between management and worker
Strategies	Develop different types of arrangements to replace casual labour and piece-rate arrangements for women  The human resources department checks if women get paid less than men for similar work. If so, contracts are adjusted	Women benefit from higher payment from permanent jobs  Additional benefits like inclusion in social security and sometimes also pension schemes  Improved working conditions, health and safety in the plantation	Promote and support women to become members of workers committees, trade unions and gender committees and participate in collective bargaining agreements
Measurement	#/% M/F in seasonal and permanent jobs	#/% M/W benefitting from social security and other benefits	#/% M/W in the different structures

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

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### 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 this is done on top of their regular household chores. Generally, men leave this 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 work 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 sensitize 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 (Criteria and indicator 6.5 – 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.
  - 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 also men 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.

“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 said. “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. [Read this blog](#) Source: [www.eco-business.com](http://www.eco-business.com) /GAR

## 2.2 Offer alternative employment for pregnant and breastfeeding women (Criteria and indicator 6.1.4 - 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 fertilizer 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 fertilizers as this lowers the health risk considerably.

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

- Support employees (also casual workers) with care responsibilities by providing daycare, schools and health services. Make services available without deducted the costs from the salary (which sometimes happens)
- Provide spaces for breastfeeding or pumping breastfeeding.
- 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 sensitize 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 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	Analyse how working hours could be made more flexible Identify alternative jobs for pregnant and breastfeeding women Set up an affordable arrangement for child care and parental leave	Women are not forced to choose to do care tasks instead of working Less stress and concern about the welfare of their small children Older children (often girls) can stay at schools	Involve caregivers effectively in design and decision-making so that they can voice their concerns and shape plans that reflect their needs and interests Sensitize men on the redistribution of unpaid care work in the family
Measurement	Flexible work arrangements Support for caregivers	#/% of M/W making use of the arrangements Appreciation of the arrangements	Examples of caregiver feeling recognized Tasks redistributed in the families of the workers

## Strategy 3. Addressing gender-based violence

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### Criteria 6.5 There is no harassment or abuse in the workplace

### Criteria 3.6 An occupational health and safety plan is documented, communicated and implemented

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

According to FAO<sup>13</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 more usually the target. This is the result from 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 reduce work capacity, productivity and livelihood assets. Many victims and survivors of gender-based violence are stigmatized 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 the 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
- 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)
  - Developing a zero-tolerance policy is a good start, but is often not enough to prevent, detect and respond to incidents irrespective if 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

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<sup>13</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.](#)

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 (Criteria and indicator 3.6 - 6.2.4)

- Many incidents can be prevented when facilities at work have dedicated spaces for men and women like a 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 with a complaint.
- Train all staff, workers and key persons in communities to ensure that everybody understands what gender-based violence is, where it comes from and how it can be prevented.
- Here 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 & safety training, it is advised 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 (Criteria 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.

### 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**

Sexual harassment and domestic violence is a reality in plantations, like anywhere. Bumitama has a quite advanced policy on this topic. The company has disseminated information on it and an email address is made available to make an anonymous complaint 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.

The company has a role in mediating. Sometimes with the help of a women’s group with a doctor or with a psychologist. Awareness is also important. Bumitama works with local leaders. They are quite strict about the behaviour of their leaders, inappropriate behaviour leads to dismissal.

Source: Interview with ms 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 not normal	Zero-tolerance policy in place	Encourage victims to report and empower victims
Strategies	Develop a zero-tolerance policy on gender-based violence  Put mechanisms in place to report incidences  Communicate the message of the policy in the whole company	Women feel safer at work	Encourage women to report incidences  Support victims of gender-based violence  Organise training sessions on the policy for all staff, with special attention for men and supervisors and management
Measurement	# of men and women reached		# consultations with women workers by the company for policy and practice development  # of incidents reported



## Strategy 4. Equal job opportunities

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### 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.

#### Recruitment of female employees at the plantation level

Companies are interested in hiring women to work in the plantations. However, in general, women are not interested in fieldwork. They prefer a job at the financial 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.

Source: interview with Ms 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 fertilizer 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.

The combination of low education levels and at times scarcity of job opportunities makes that women do not dare to 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 to 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. include literacy training
- 4.2 Stimulate women to apply for non-traditional jobs such as machine handling or truck driving or to combine work activities/jobs
- 4.3 Stimulate 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. include literacy training
  - Provide access to adult literacy and financial literacy programmes that will help to overcome the low education levels of women (and men). Literacy programs are known to help workers

to understand instructions better, increase their ability to read signs or fill out forms and to 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 the payslips; how to calculate the salary based on the number of days worked and especially on 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 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 Stimulate women to apply for non-traditional jobs such as machine handling or truck driving or to 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 like for instance becoming a truck driver.
- Consider offering women combinations of work like applying fertilizers with activities in the nursery.

#### 4.3 Stimulate 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 some women, especially at their national headquarters; women with university degrees in engineering, food technology or financial management. Also in the main office of the plantations, many women are employed, in finance and administration but also 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 type of training sessions, it is often needed to find a good training partner/service provider or include specific modules in already existing in-house training sessions.
- The following step could be that women are stimulated to apply for supervisory positions.

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

It is difficult to find women with a university degree for positions in the plantation. We always try to recruit female university students from the forestry department, for instance, as this training entails the specifics of the oil palm. The fresh graduates are assigned, as trainees, to different departments of the company. Recruiting women however is difficult. Palm oil is not the kind of industry women are attracted to. Currently, only 20 to 30% of the trainees are women.

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. They are recruited amongst the workers and trained. The trainees are trained during 6 months in Bumitama's centre. In this period they are paid. The training program 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 ms Lim Sian Choo

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

- To strengthen the communication between management and the workforce on gender all 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 better able to consult with male and female workers and with 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 than the traditional positions.

#### Results for the company

##### Value creation

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

##### Cost reduction

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

##### 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	Design or organize specific training and mentoring programs	Women have career opportunities
Measurement	#/% of male and female employees	Income earned by women	#/% men and women in management positions and jobs previously known as 'jobs for men'

## Part III Working with Independent Smallholders

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

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**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**

Smallholders are increasingly important players in the palm oil economy. In Indonesia, for example, around 40% of the oil palm was managed by independent smallholders or participants in tied smallholder schemes they contribute 40% to the overall supply.<sup>14</sup> The household is critical to 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. Their activities are, however, 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 and as a group can undertake to overcome these constraints. It also describes linkages to what the companies can do to which the smallholders' group delivers its FFB's.

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

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

Palm oil is in many countries perceived as a men's crop, as other cash crops are. Subsistence crops are perceived as women's crops. On top of this, 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 fertilizers. 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, fertilizing, planting and collecting loose fruits.

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

It is a common misconception that gender programs in agriculture target women only or are discriminatory against men. Successful gender programs aim at closing the gap between women and men, so both can benefit. In other sectors, like the coffee and the cocoa sector, substantial experience has been built up providing evidence that gender programs are beneficial for both women and men. Based on gender/household diagnostics, farmer families can better recognize 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.

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<sup>14</sup> CIFOR, Li, T. (2015). *Social Impacts of Oil Palm in Indonesia: A Gendered Perspective from West Kalimantan*. Bogor, Indonesia, p. 2.

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

Another factor hindering 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 and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) processes. If companies would involve women in land acquisition processes, women gain influence and obtain visibility as a stakeholder and economic actor to be taken into account. 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 the 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, for example, 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 in 50% of the packed products and most processed food, palm oil is used as an ingredient, it is in Unilever's and hence also growers' economic interest to improve women's positions and to communicate this to female consumers.

In other sectors across the continents, such as those of tea, cocoa and coffee, equally characterised by large scale plantation models and smallholders, quite 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>15</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 organisations as members and leaders
2. Equal access of women to group and/or company services

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<sup>15</sup> IFC (2016) idem

## Strategy 1. Engage women in smallholder organisations as members and leaders

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

**Criteria 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 organisations or groups. It is common practice that groups register all farms in the names of the household head, typically a man. This results in men dominating in 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 'men's crop' and the spouses having little to say about the production and sales of the crop; 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 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 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 brother) to represent them. This results in many cases in women have little or no access to the services provided by the company.

Smallholder 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 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
- 1.2 Create awareness of the gender-based constraints for women to actively participate in smallholder groups and organisations as members and leaders
- 1.3 Formulate strategies to promote the active participation of women in smallholder groups and organisations as members and leaders
- 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
  - Create awareness on the important role of women in palm oil production
  - Promote the membership and leadership 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 also 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 programs accordingly.

Based on those diagnostics, farmer families can better recognize 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.

Source: IFC/World Bank Group, 2016

#### 1.2 Create awareness of the gender-based constraints for women to actively participate in smallholder groups and organisations as members and leaders

- Organize a discussion with members of smallholder organisations (male and female) using the following guideline to assess several factors that lead to the fact that women benefit less from smallholder 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?
- What are female leaders'/groups' capacities to influence decision-making about sector services and value chain development?
- Investigate potential barriers to women's entry and continued membership into organisations
- Investigate barriers for women to benefit from the services of the smallholder organisation
- Investigate potential barriers to women's leadership positions within organisations

#### 1.3 Formulate strategies to promote the active participation of women in smallholder groups and organisations as members and leaders

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

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

1. Women are often constrained in accessing (services of) smallholder organisations
  - Encourage membership of spouses and other family members
  - Build awareness that producing is a family business and that smallholder 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 organisations

#### 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>16</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.
- Ensure the buy-in and support of men  
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 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.

<sup>16</sup> Oxfam International, S. Baden (2013). *Women's Collective Action: Unlocking the Potential of Agricultural Markets*, p. 12.



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 (as strategy 3) of this guide can be an important strategy for increasing women's participation in formal smallholder organisation.

### 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**

Smoothed relationship of the company with the smallholder households as women develop skills to be an active member and raise their voice as members and leaders to defend the interests of the family.

#### **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 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.

### Results for women

	Reach	Benefit	Empower
Objectives	A balanced male/ female membership of the smallholder group	Men and women benefit equally from the smallholder group	Women are members and leaders of the organisation of smallholders in their own right
Strategies	<p>Actively recruit female farmers as members of the smallholder group</p> <p>Promote the inclusion of spouses</p> <p>Organize discussions on the constraints and solutions on women's position in the smallholder organisation</p> <p>Develop strategies to overcome these constraints</p> <p>Train women to become active members and leaders</p>	<p>Ensure female smallholders benefit from producing FFB, a high-value cash crop and increase their income</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>Recognize the important role of women in palm oil farming</p> <p>Create buy-in of men for the participation of women in the smallholder group as members and leaders</p> <p>Sensitize men to take away barriers for women to become active members and leaders of the organisation</p> <p>Promote that women raise their voices and express their needs and interests</p>

Measurement	#/% Male/female members and leaders in the smallholder group  # female leaders trained	Income earned by women smallholders e.g. by measuring the financial value of the amount procured by the company from men and women	# of female leaders in the smallholder organisation  Needs addressed/ results for women
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## Strategy 2. Equal access of women to group and/or company services

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**Criteria 1.2 Smallholders have the capacity to effectively manage their farm**

**Criteria 1.3 Smallholders implement good agricultural practices (GAP) on their farms**

**Criteria 3.5 Working conditions and facilities are safe and meet minimum legal requirements**

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

Not recognizing 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 few female GAP trainers and organisations have structures, cultures, policies and procedures that lack 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 recognize 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 specialized 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 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), fertilizer 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 special 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.

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. But also the company buying the products will benefit as women/the family become more productive.

### Key actions to address these constraints

- 2.1 Make Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training accessible for women
- 2.2 Ensure that agricultural inputs are available for women if need be on credit
- 2.3 Promote technologies to reduce the workload of women

### How to carry out these key actions

- 2.1 Make Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training accessible for women (Criteria 1.3)
  - Develop company policies and strategies showing that women are considered to be entitled to have access to services in their own right.
  - 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.
  - A helpful tool in this process is to use a gender organisational scan to identify the gaps in the capacities of the organisation
  - 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).
  - 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.
- 2.2 Ensure that agricultural inputs are available for women if need be on credit
  - High-quality inputs (seeds/seedlings, fertilizers/pesticides) are to be provided by the company, equally to male and female smallholders.
  - Ensure that these inputs are available at the right time (the beginning of the season) also for women.
  - Sensitize and train farmers on the safe use of pesticides inline with RSPO guidance:
    - Ensure that protective clothing, ensure the 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; 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 company 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 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.

### 2.3 Promote technologies to reduce the workload of women

- Develop technology to address the needs and interests of women
  - Organize 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 as well as 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**

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

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

Women are more motivated to do their share of productive work and it increases the loyalty of smallholders to the company/mill they are selling to.

#### **Value creation**

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

Increased quality: Women are often very conscious in 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. Thus the limited decision-making of women in the family business limits the adoption of new technology.

Increased productivity: 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 valorized.

## Results for women

	Reach	Benefit	Empower
Objectives	Women attend GAP training and have access to inputs and technology	Women benefit from increased and improved production and increased income	Women are recognized as a smallholder and can take strategic decisions on agricultural production
Strategies	<p>Set targets for women's attendance in training</p> <p>Invite women to attend training</p> <p>Provide inputs to women</p> <p>Accommodate training so that women can easily attend: timing and duration, child care arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Design training modules with women's needs and possibilities in mind</p> <p>Evaluate the application of the new knowledge and technology, if need be develop strategies to address bottlenecks for application of GAP, inputs and technology</p> <p>Ensure that new technology/tools/ machinery are applied and have concrete benefits for women</p>	<p>Awareness-raising in communities about the important role of women as farmers</p> <p>Address gender norms in households regarding ownership and decision-making, sensitize men (couples) towards shared ownership</p> <p>Communicate that women can be GAP trainers and Key Farmers</p> <p>Promote that assets, e.g. palm trees, are (also) registered in the woman's name</p>
Measurement	% M/W participation in GAP training, accessing inputs and technology	<p>% M/W who apply new techniques after training</p> <p>% M/W who increase productivity</p> <p>% M/V increase in income</p> <p>% of women and men who use technology/tools/ machinery for productive work</p> <p>Technology to reduce tasks related to household chores (e.g. fetching water)</p>	<p>#/% M/F GAP trainers</p> <p>#/% M/F Key Farmers</p> <p>Increased skills and self-confidence of women to train others</p>

## Part IV Companies and Communities

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

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#### *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 use of natural resources.

Companies can also distribute their positive impacts more equally among women and men in their communities through employment, contracting, charitable contributions, and investments. This part provides tips on how to let the wider community 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, the case for the importance of the role that women play in the 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.

#### *Strategies*

The following strategies are described in this part:

1. Involvement of women in Community Land Use Planning and Free and Prior Informed Consent processes (FPIC)
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 Free and Prior Informed Consent processes

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

#### 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 Free and Prior Informed Consent 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.

Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) is meant to ensure that landowners' genuine Free and Prior 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 and Prior Informed Consent processes including women (FPIC)



## 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 to express their needs and interests (if need be consult them in separate groups).
- Invite single women as well as women forming part of a household.
- Inform women about the importance of representing their interests.
- Sensitize women as well as 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 organizing 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 sensitization;
  - The preparatory group meetings;
  - Socio-economic data collection on their needs and interests;
  - The analysis;
  - The dissemination meetings and the possible decision-making meetings.

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

- Engage both women and men in the process is needed for a true depiction of women's practical needs on the land, offering more relevant and accurate consultation outcomes.
- 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.

### 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 also 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 more

downstream of the value chain. After piloting, the new business models are supposed to go to scale and transform the company's business operations, 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 turn-over 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;
- Improvement of infrastructure, 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	Women are invited for all stages of Participatory Land Use Planning and Free and Prior Informed Consent processes	Ensure that women needs for land use are taken into account (for products as well as reproductive use)	Sensitizing men on the importance of involving women in these processes  The opinion of women is taken into account
Measurement	M/W ration of participants in stages of the process	Amount of land use secured for women for what purposes/ needs of women (examples)	Examples of decisions taken based on the input of women

## Strategy 2 Organising gender-sensitive community initiatives

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### Criteria 4.3 The unit of certification contribute to local sustainable development as agreed by local communities (RSPO standard 2018)

#### 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, but 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 Report

#### How to carry out these key actions<sup>17</sup>

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. 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 gender guidance elaborate three more focused strategies, which can be applied in the context of community initiatives.

#### 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>17</sup> This strategy is based on the AgriProFocus 2014 Gender in value chain toolkit, Tool 4.3c Business and the community. The tool is based on Oxfam International (2012) *Gender equality, it's your business. Briefings for Business No 7. International Edition*.

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**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 organisation's internal women’s network (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 organisation 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 official of the organisation (if one exists) with the staff that design and implement community initiatives. The diversity official may be able to bring a unique gender perspective to the community programs.
- Find out if there are any existing public sector-supported initiatives with a gender focus that might be of interest to the organisation. 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 organisation’s 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 programs 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 programs designed for the local community that are accessible by and targeted to both women and men.
- Consider establishing programs to encourage women to enter non-traditional fields related to the organisation.

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.

### *Costs reduction*

Developing a more inclusive recruitment pool within the community.

### *Value creation*

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

### *Growth*

Management and reporting of sustainability issues, including gender, are typically considered the domain of large organisations but are increasingly being embraced by SMEs within the global supply chain.

## 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	Management approach to determining community engagement/investment activities, including policy and criteria	Active consultation of local women in devising community engagement/investment programs	Community initiatives address issues of disempowerment of women related to decision-making at the household level and position in community structures  Reproductive health-related issues and domestic violence are addressed
Measurement	Total number (a monetary value) of community engagement/ investment programs targeting women	Total number of direct beneficiaries of community engagement/ investment programs, broken down by gender	Gender impact assessments  Gender-related community impacts

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

### What are the gender-based constraints?

In short, 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 tools to be used in this process are publicly available. Household approaches are developed for use by companies as well as development organisations.

A well-known example of a household methodology is the Gender Action Learning System (GALS).<sup>18</sup> By utilizing different tools and approaches (see the figure of one of them: the Challenge Action Tree) 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.

Another example is the Household Approach developed in Uganda by the Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS)<sup>19</sup>. The approach leads to increased production and productivity of coffee value chains

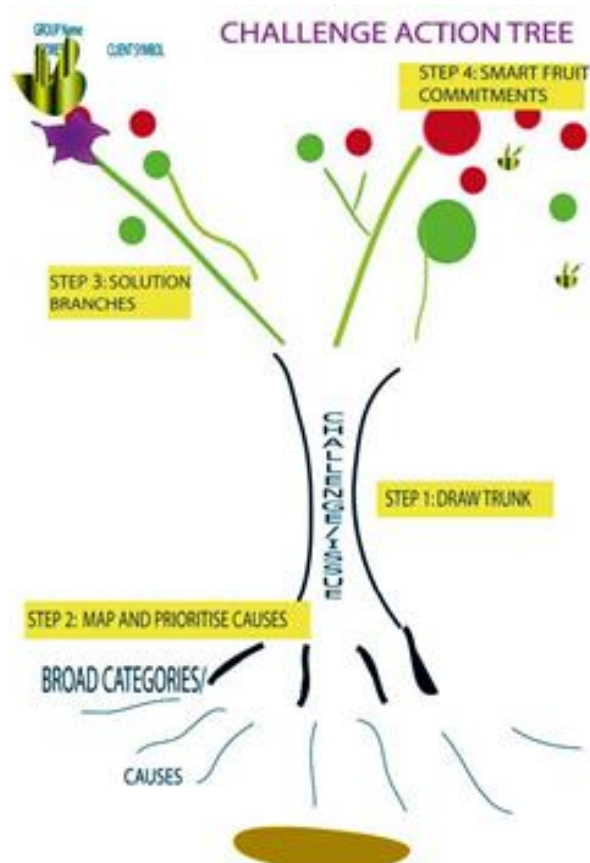


Figure 5 Challenge action tree (GALS tool)

<sup>18</sup> OxfamNovib (2019). *Gender Action Learning System. Practical guide for transforming gender and unequal power relations in value chains.*

<sup>19</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/>

due to pooled labour, proper budgeting and utilization 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
  - Realize 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 support of men in general and of community leaders in particular, to guarantee that the approach is accepted in the communities.

## Results for the company

### Value creation

Increased productivity and better quality: Women feel co-owner of oil palm production, the production is based on joined decision-making on investment as well as expenditure. Members of the household work together 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 the men's crop 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 aware that their family is a joint business	Improved well-being of women	Joint decision-making in the household
Strategies	Select men and women as Change Agents/ Model Couples to play a key role in this approach  Ensure roll out of the approach in villages reaching rural families/ households at scale	Increase in household income produced by men and women together	Awareness-raising on women's role in palm oil production  Joined decision-making of husband and wife on the palm oil production  Joint decision-making on the expenditures
Measurement	# of Change Agents/ Model Couples  # of villages reached	Figures showing increase in the agricultural product sold per family  Increase in family income  Improved livelihoods and schooling of children	Examples of joint household planning  Reduction of disempowerment of women in households



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

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### Criteria 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 timesaving equipment (like washing machines) and a lack of affordable alternative care services (like childcare) create a significant unpaid care workload for women.<sup>20</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 summarizes 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 Recognize

4.2 Reduce

4.3 Redistribute

4.4 Represent

#### How to carry out these actions?<sup>21</sup>

4.1 Recognize

- Recognize that unpaid care work is mainly done by women, acknowledge it as work - a type of production that creates value - and recognize 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 labourers 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 timesaving 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.

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<sup>20</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>21</sup> Oxfam (2019), idem.

- 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.
- Sensitize 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

Increased productivity and better quality: Women feel co-owner of oil palm production, the production is based on joined decision-making on investment as well as expenditure. Members of the household work together 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 the men's crop it used to be. This results in more households selling Fresh Fruit Bunches (FBB) increasing supply and better 'loyalty rates'. Women are more motivated due to workload sharing with their husbands and the reduction of unpaid care work.

#### 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	Recognise the unpaid care workload of women	Improved well-being of women	More equal sharing of unpaid care between husband and wife
Strategies	Identify the needs and interest of women to reduce their work burden  Sensitize men on the importance of sharing unpaid care work	Put in place actions or technologies for reducing the unpaid care workload of women  Women experience a reduction in the hours spent on unpaid care work  Unpaid care work of women is less	Sensitize the family on the need to balance the unpaid care workload by distributing tasks between husband and wife  Joint decision-making on sharing unpaid care workload

		hard	
Measurement	# of women and men reached	Amount of timesaving 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

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### Criteria 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. If they don't have these other sources of income it is often mentioned as a worry. 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 palm oil 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 is often attributed to their lack of interest: "Women are not interested in technical and business training" and so on. Rarely, service providers try to understand the causes of why women are not accessing their services. They do not realize 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, 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
- 5.3 Facilitate the linking of women with organisations 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 5 P's of Marketing: Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and People. For inspiration, see the mini-market survey tool of AgriProFocus.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</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.

- Assist women in making a simple business plan. They will need it to get funding. 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>23</sup> and costing and pricing.<sup>24</sup>
- For this assistance also an external party can 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.

- Organise discussions with women. Combine discussions in sub-groups with plenary discussions. After the introduction, the discussion starts in sub-groups using flipcharts.<sup>25</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 able to provide the required business development services

- Based on these discussions the company facilitates linking the women to a potential service provider, this can be an NGO or 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 subsidized. Assist the service provider in developing a service that can be provided with no or little subsidy also in the long run. Subsidizing 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>26</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>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). idem, Tool 4.4d Input management in the production cycle.

<sup>24</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). idem, Tool 4.4e Costing and pricing.

<sup>25</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). idem, Tool 4.4 Business development service providers.

<sup>26</sup> AgriProFocus (2014). Idem, Tool 4.5a Knowing the financial system and how it might fail women.

<sup>27</sup> Women’s World Banking (2017) *Opportunity for Women. Growth for Business.* [Watch the video.](#)

- 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 sensitization of men.
- Promote social interaction and network activities amongst female entrepreneurs and the formation of associations of female entrepreneurs.

### Results for the company

#### 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 develop entrepreneurial and management capacities  Women take part in a network of entrepreneurs  Time, mobility and childcare constraints are discussed in the household leading to workload sharing and joint decision-making in the household
Strategies	Link women to financial and business development services	Women apply the knowledge in their business	Coaching and mentoring of female entrepreneurs by more experienced entrepreneurs  Facilitate the network development of female entrepreneurs. Also, link female entrepreneurs to male entrepreneurs  Facilitate discussion with men and leaders in the community on the importance of women being entrepreneurs
Measurement	#/% of M/F clients of financial and business development services  Financial products developed and used by women  Size of loans	#/% M/F business started or improved  Income generated  Profiles descriptions of successful entrepreneurs	Examples of:  Coaching and mentoring relations  # of women entrepreneurs in networks  Discussions in the community on women as entrepreneurs

## Part V Internal Processes and Capacities

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### 1. Quick gender scan

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#### 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 department. It aims to assess the gender responsiveness of the RSPO member. E.g:

- Plantation companies
- Mills
- Smallholder organisations/groups
- Labour providing companies

#### Which information is collected?

- Assessment of the capacities of the RSPO member to meet the needs of both male and female employees and smallholders and to fulfil RSPO gender P&C.
- 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 women 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 gender scan individually, preferably followed by a focus group discussion

Step 2 Joint scores are given to the five domains and the spider graph is made

Step 3 Areas of improvement are discussed and agreed upon

Step 4 Strategic planning and corrective action

#### Step 1 Complete the gender scan individually, preferably followed by a focus group discussion

This tool provides five sets/domains of three statements. The scan can be completed individually. Based on the individual completed forms a group discussion is held. At the end of this tool, the scan with the questions is being provided. The maximum score per domain is fifteen.

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, program officer, HR person, etc.)

The focus group discussion starts with explaining the objectives of the discussion around the statements. There are five criteria/domains; after answering the related questions, the interviewee(s) assess their performance on that area and give a score. The table below summarizes the five areas and describes the ideal situation for the given field.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
1. The company is aware of the importance of gender for its business strategy	5			
2. Labour conditions of female employees are addressed	9			
3. Company services are also delivered to female smallholders	4			
4. The company has a gender policy and internal gender capacity	4			
5. Mechanisms in place for monitoring the gender strategy of the business	4			

**Step 2 Joint scores are given to the five domains and the spider graph is made**

Referring to the scores obtained in step 1, the above table is completed and the spider graph is made. Respondents analyse scores for each dimension/area. This allows to take stock of the situation with a view of possible improvements. There may be more than one area/dimension requiring improvement.

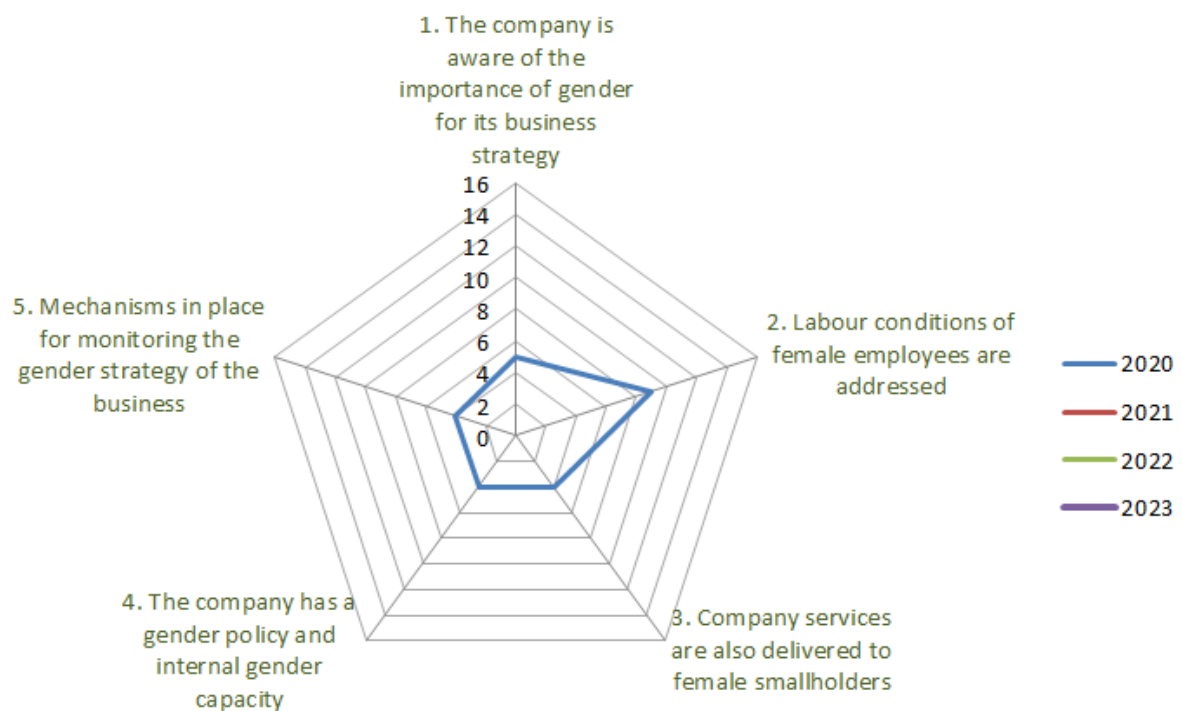


Figure 6 Spider graph taken from the Excel sheet (example)



### Step 3 Areas of improvement are discussed and agreed upon

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 document in formulating actions.

Five 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 I of this guide provides several very practical strategies to improve the labour conditions of female employees
3. Company services are also delivered to female smallholders	Part II of this guide describes strategies to include women on a (more) equal footing in smallholder schemes and groups of smallholders
4. The company has a gender policy and internal gender capacity	Especially part II refers to actions to be taken at the management level of the company involving the HR department and the gender committee. Part V provides suggestions for gender risk management
5. Mechanisms 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&S) and at the level of the business strategy. Part V gives suggestions on communicating the gender strategy of the company and the results achieved.

### Step 4 Strategic planning and corrective action

Identify areas for improvement and implementation of corrective action. Try to prioritize. Ideally, the results from several group discussions are compiled in one joint company gender action plan.

Areas needing improvement	Proposed actions	Timeframe	Means	Responsible person(s)

Date:

Name of the company:

Number of participants/ respondents: Women \_\_\_\_\_ Men \_\_\_\_\_

Position held by participants in the organization: Women \_\_\_\_\_ Men \_\_\_\_\_

Quick Gender Scan	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Maybe	Agree	Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>1. The company is aware of the importance of gender for its business strategy</b>						
1.1 Addressing the needs and interests of female employees is profitable for the company		2				
1.2 Ensuring equal access to services for female smallholders is profitable for the company		2				
1.3 The company has to take gender relations into account in its relations with communities	1					
<b>Total 1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
<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 management and workers structures (e.g. via workers groups, gender committee, etc.)				4		
2.2 Labour conditions of female employees are adjusted to their special needs and interests (e.g. related to working conditions, safety, the flexibility of work, avoidance of sexual harassment etc.)			3			
2.3 Women have equal access to training and career development, also in technical and managerial jobs that are usually considered typically for men		2				
<b>Total 2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. Company are provided to both husband and wife of smallholder households.</b>						
3.1 The company communicates with female smallholders on how to adjust services to their needs and interests (time, place, who delivers the service etc.)		2				
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					
<b>Total 3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. The company has a gender policy and internal gender capacity</b>						
4.1 Gender equality is a strategic goal for the company. This is reflected in a gender policy, gender targets and the communication of the company	1					
4.2 The human resources department can implement this policy		2				
4.3 Women are equally represented at different levels in the company, also at managerial jobs	1					
<b>Total 4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Mechanisms in place for monitoring the gender strategy of the business</b>						
5.1 The company knows the number and percentage of male and female employees and female smallholders	1					
5.2 The company keeps track of men and women in different categories of jobs, including managerial and technical jobs, and permanent and seasonal jobs	1					
5.3 Data on the participation of men and women in training and meetings and absenteeism and turn-over of staff is collected for men and women		2				
<b>Total 5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

## 2. 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 the Quick Gender Scan, as described in Part V, 1. The here presented risk assessment provides some suggestions on how to ensure that the internal organisation of the company is capable of putting in place this gender guidance.

### 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 outside world.</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 the 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> <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>

## 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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