1. Why are gender-differentiated approaches important in commercial value chains?

**Women’s role in agricultural supply chains**

It is estimated that rural women produce around 60-80% of food crops in developing countries. Reliable statistics that distinguish between women’s contribution to commercial production compared to subsistence production are not readily available. However, as markets and the demand for agricultural commodities are rapidly changing, women are increasingly supplying national and international markets with traditional and high-value produce. Women participate in agricultural value chains through the production and sale of cash crops to off-takers, and through employment as workers on commercial estates. They also play active roles as traders and processors.

**Barriers to effective participation by women in supply chains**

While global value chains can provide women with opportunities for work and income from which they were often previously excluded, women and men do not have equal opportunities to engage in and benefit from agricultural value chain activities. Women’s roles as laborers and producers are still largely hidden in the agricultural value chain. Unequal distribution of resources and gains within farming families often reinforces existing gender inequalities, which affects the sustainable development of smallholder-dominated agricultural supply chains.
Gender inequalities can be found at different levels:

• Household level – a large part of agricultural production among smallholders is conducted within the context of the household. Gendered divisions of labor, time allocation and decision making within the household influence levels of participation and gains between men and women, and affect agricultural value chain outcomes.

• Value chain level – access to key productive assets and services – including land, labor, financial services, water, rural infrastructure, technology, and other inputs – is different for men and women. For instance, the distribution of land ownership is heavily skewed, with men formally owning roughly 70-90% of farmland in many Latin American countries and similar patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa.

• Management level – there are gender-related power disparities in management, whereby men receive and take on management roles in value chain activities and women tend to participate as employees.

**Impacts of gender inequality in agriculture**
Where gender dynamics are not considered in smallholder business models, it can result in:

• Women’s lack of statutory rights over land and weak authority over family labor, compared to their husband and male siblings, resulting in off-takers often contracting men in order to secure access to land and labor for a guaranteed crop supply. Women also lack claims to irrigation water and infrastructure, which further disadvantages them.

• Women providing significant amounts of labor but not having access to training, information and knowledge around good agricultural practices.

• Women being unpaid for the labor they contribute, and not accessing income from cash crop sales.

• Women being offered agro-industrial work that is low grade, insecure and poorly remunerated.

• Reinforcement of existing inequalities in women’s participation in household decision making, which affects women’s status in the household and income expenditure patterns.

These constraints limit agricultural productivity and efficiency within the sector, as well as undermining development, as there is a direct link between gender equity and poverty reduction. Income earned and controlled by women often has a higher development impact because such income is more likely to be associated with improved child nutrition, and increased spending on children’s education, health care, etc. This “multiplier effect” boosts social and economic outcomes for entire communities.
2. IN SMALLHOLDER VALUE CHAINS, WHERE CAN GENDER DIFFERENTIATED APPROACHES BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL FOR AGROBUSINESSES AND WOMEN SMALLHOLDERS?

Land ownership/control

Legal discrimination and social norms restrict women’s abilities to use and own land equally to men. As land markets emerge, commercialization and privatization can exacerbate existing gender inequalities in land access.

Access to land for women and other disadvantaged groups can be facilitated, for example, by helping producer associations and small businesses negotiate land access from the community or from local government. In Tanzania, the USAID-funded Smallholders Horticultural Outgrowers Project helped connect a women’s group with a local farmer to grow and sell high-value vegetables, including baby corn and green beans. The women leased land from the farmer and received technical assistance from the project.

In-grower schemes provide a way for women to start agricultural production without land or start-up capital. For instance, danishknowhow, a Denmark-based agribusiness developer, has developed ingrower schemes in Mozambique and Uganda. The scheme procure land, machinery, fertilizers and any other infrastructure needed, then partitions the land and assigns each plot to a selected farmer. Each plot runs as a private-owned business venture, with centralized service delivery from the project, which provides technical knowledge and communal services like irrigation systems, feeds, fertilizers, tools and seedlings, as well as acting as a buyer to secure a premium price. 50% of the profit goes to the female entrepreneur, while 50% goes back to the project.

Employment

Due to land access constraints, women tend to benefit more from employment in large-scale estate production and agro-industrial processing than from outgrower schemes. For instance, in Senegal, 90% of the agro-industrial employees in the French bean sector and 60% in the cherry tomato sector are female.

Women’s low earnings are linked to employment in low-skilled tasks, so advancement for female wage-earners employed in gender-segregated, low-skilled, low-paying positions will require women to have access to opportunities to be trained in higher-skilled tasks. For others, the ability to become and stay employed depends on company policies that enable them to meet both work and family responsibilities.

Training and input supply

Poorly targeted training and input provision can lead to inefficiencies and under-development of the supply chain. For instance, women form the majority of the world’s estimated 25 million coffee farmers and do much of the production activities, yet men tend to benefit more from training in sustainable coffee practices, inputs, income and other benefits derived from coffee sales.

A coffee project in Northern Sumatra found that including both men and women in training programs significantly increased productivity. To encourage women’s participation, IFC and PT Indo CaCo employed female trainers and volunteers, engaged female union and farmer association leaders, and adjusted the training schedule to accommodate women’s needs. They also developed gender-specific training materials and introduced a simple financial management tool to help women farmers, who are often in charge of managing the household income, to document and analyze household and farm expenditures.

Finance

Assets and collateral are important for entrepreneurs to obtain credit for start-up and growth. Rural financial programs have been largely designed and implemented with a male head of household as the intended client, while women’s lack of immovable assets and collateral disadvantages them in credit markets. In Uganda, women own 38% of all registered enterprises but access only 9% of formal finance. In Kenya, despite owning 48% of micro and small enterprises, women access only 7% of credit.

One way that companies address the high costs and risks of increasing access to finance is to partner with financial institutions, or to join broader platforms that bring multiple stakeholders together to experiment with various value-chain financing mechanisms and to share lessons learned. For example, The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) partnered with IFC and Access Bank in Nigeria, whereby IFC provided a $50 million line of credit for on-lending and a $22 million risk-sharing facility to Access Bank. The latter is part of a $100 million, three-year joint initiative with TCCC to expand access to finance for women entrepreneurs in Africa and other emerging markets. IFC is also providing business skills training for borrowers.
Financial independence and household decision-making power

Women’s status relative to men’s tends to dictate their control over resources, time and broader household decision making. As such, increasing women’s incomes only impacts positively on household welfare when women have control and decision-making power over the income they earn.

Providing access to a savings account or a loan in a woman’s name is an important step in giving low-income women power and independence. For example, Café Femenino was established in northern Peru at the request of women farmers who wanted to benefit directly from their high-quality coffee production. Peruvian female coffee growers are often uneducated and isolated and remained largely hidden in their roles as laborers and producers in the value chain. To create a market for the women-grown coffee, Café Femenino branded the coffee that the women grew and established regulations that laid out requirements for roasters who want to sell the coffee. A premium is paid directly to the women for the coffee they produce.

As a result, a viable market has been created where women farmers receive fair financial compensation and own the title to their land. With money in their hands and a shift in their roles from laborers to land managers, these women have felt an increase in confidence and power within their households.

Aggregation

Farmer organizations tend to be male-dominated and oriented, and few women are members and/or leaders because participation in decision making often requires ownership of land or assets.

Equitable participation and membership by both men and women can lead to increased productivity (see box). Strengthening and supporting women’s associations to engage with agribusinesses can also bring about success for women as commercial farmers. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, India, the organization of over eight million women into self-help groups around community procurement centers enabled dispersed commodities to be aggregated and sold, with a cumulative turnover of over $120 million in four years, creating jobs for over 10,000 villagers in supply chain management. The income gain on some commodities exceeded 200%. Women became active managers and traders in rural markets, and hugely increased their economic and socio-political leverage in households and communities.

Gender equality in coffee coops increases productivity

The Bukonzo Joint Cooperative Society in West Uganda used to produce poor quality coffee, and several farmers sold their coffee to individual traders instead of the cooperative. Men considered coffee to be a real “man’s crop” even though the women managed the farms in terms of picking, drying, hulling and sorting. As the men received the payment from the Cooperative and spent the profit according to their own needs, the women would keep coffee for themselves, often picked when still unripe, and sell it directly to traders to have some earnings of their own.

Significant changes were then made to ensure that men and women now share more of the work on the farm, have joint land ownership and joint decision making around income expenditure. As a result, productivity levels have improved, quality has increased significantly, and there is far less side-selling than before.
Diversification

When women are trained on the production of crops additional to a main cash crop, this can lead to increased incomes and higher resilience. Where the training focuses on a staple food crop, it can lead to improved food security for the household, and when there is surplus production, the excess can be commercialized in order to increase household income.

Labor-intensive work

The lack of local infrastructure greatly increases the burden borne by women and girls, who spend long hours each day collecting firewood and water. As a result, many African women face a double workday, making them chronically time-poor.

Gender-biased legislation

Many formal laws and institutional practices outside of the home erect barriers against women. Customary and statutory laws, as well as institutional policies, often formalize existing beliefs and practices, some of which are discriminatory, but laws can also be used to establish more egalitarian practices. In agriculture, the following legal rights are significant:

- **Legal rights to land** – many countries now have legal frameworks that afford both men and women equal access to land and property. However, there are often cultural barriers to women owning land, which means the policies are rarely implemented in practice. Customary and statutory law often treats land access differently; for example, in Botswana, land laws have not been harmonized with marriage law to facilitate women’s landownership.

- **Employment laws** – these often determine where and when men and women are eligible for work. For instance, in the Philippines, laws prohibit women from night work, as they are restricted from industrial undertakings that occur between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am.

- **Legal rights to services** – institutional policies define who has access to services. For example, producer associations, which require landownership as the basis for membership, may restrict women who have user rights to land, but not ownership over it, from becoming full and active members. This may also impede access to inputs, market information, training services, etc.

- **Legal rights to credit** – women’s lack of access to land and property restricts access to credit where these assets are needed as collateral. Where bank options consider men “heads of household”, a married woman may be required to obtain her husband’s signature to access finance and credit options.

3. WHAT ARE THE LIMITS TO WHAT BUSINESSES CAN ACHIEVE?
Cultural norms

Although the labor market is often perceived as a neutral space in which buyers and sellers interact, hiring practices, labor contracts, managerial directives, systems of job evaluations, professional and business networks, and pay determination structures are all influenced by cultural norms around gender. Belief systems that shape ideas about appropriate roles and responsibilities for men and women include:

- **Beliefs about men and women as economic actors** – in many societies, people assume that only men are the farmers or that only men are the clients of service providers. Assumptions about women’s lack of competence as farmers also undermine an understanding of the responsibilities women take on.

- **Beliefs about men and women as association members** – men, in their roles as household heads, are assumed to be primary decision makers for all the enterprises of farming families, even where women meet project criteria for inclusion.

- **Beliefs about appropriate work** – the “feminization of tasks” shapes the allocation of labor and creates distortions and inefficiencies in the labor market, such as the congregation of women into unskilled positions.

- **Beliefs about legal rights** – discriminatory beliefs about women can lead to differential treatment by regulatory officials. Gender-based intimidation can be a major issue in the interaction between women and civil servants.

Time lag in changing entrenched attitudes

Gender roles are constantly changing, but cultural inertia means that change is slow and incremental for values, beliefs, and social norms. While legislation can be changed overnight, entrenched beliefs around gender limit the effectiveness of the legal system, as the enforcement of laws depends on their acceptance and legitimacy in society and on the expectations of many actors.
4. WHAT IMPACT CAN THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN SMALLHOLDERS HAVE ON DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES AND PROFITABILITY?

Impact of gender-differentiated strategies on women smallholders’ economic empowerment

There are no data readily available yet on the impact of commercial gender-differentiated strategies on development outcomes for women smallholder farmers. The Gender Innovation Lab, hosted by the World Bank, is starting to carry out impact evaluations on specific agricultural interventions — for instance, by measuring the effect of women carrying out men’s current roles in cashew processing on household dynamics and outcomes in Côte d’Ivoire.

This section offers some suggestions on what needs to be included in an impact assessment, and highlights some of the tools available that could support companies to start measuring the impacts.

The different levels of impact

A results chain is a visual hypothesis about how the activities of a program are expected to lead to outputs, outcomes, and eventually development impact. The figure below lays out a results framework, which shows the different levels of impact.

Most agribusiness companies’ initiatives seek systemic change at the level of output, where programs tend to focus on how service providers can better serve women. For example, enhancing the gender responsiveness of service providers and participation of women in the services provided.

Focusing on impacts that extend beyond increases in women’s participation or incomes during the life of a project, and that indicate real changes in the lives of poor men and women, is a challenge as they are likely to occur over the following three to five years or more. An additional challenge is the complexity of assessing change at outcome and impact level; this is discussed in the next section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of measurement</th>
<th>Economic advancement indicators</th>
<th>Power and agency indicators</th>
<th>Frequency of monitoring/evaluation</th>
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| Impact indicators (ultimate goal: poverty reduction and enhanced empowerment) | • Increased profit  
• Improved livelihood                                                 | • Increased control over household resources  
• Increased financial independence                                     | Medium to long term (>5 years)                                             |
| Outcome indicators (behavioral change: improved access, agency and growth) | • New skills, changes in business practice  
• Access to new markets                                               | • Increased self-efficacy, ability to make decisions  
• Increased bargaining power                                          | Medium term – every 2-3 years                                          |
| Output indicators (gender-responsive system level change: goods and services) | • Women’s participation in activities                                 | • Women’s participation in activities                                     | Short to medium term – ideally more than once a year or annually         |
| Input indicators (intervention - material, financial, human) | • Service delivery                                                        | • Service delivery                                                        | Short term – ideally every 3 months or annually                          |

Source: The authors of this note combined information from Markel (2014) and Golla et al (2011)

A key objective of companies working to improve women’s position in value chains is to secure women’s economic empowerment (see box). While there is significant evidence that women’s economic empowerment has positive multiplier effects on nutrition, health, and education, there is currently a widely held assumption that higher agricultural yields will automatically lead to increased profitability, which in turn will deliver economic empowerment outcomes. The reality on the ground in any given community of smallholder farmers is complicated, and gender inequality manifests itself through a complex web of forces that are socially, culturally and historically entrenched in societies and relationships. Bypassing this complexity to focus solely on positive outcomes for women farmers in yield and financial terms will not necessarily equate to achieve of empowerment outcomes. To successfully empower women economically, programs may have to work on both agency and access (see box for definitions). The figure above provides some sample indicators of each element.

Tools to measure empowerment

There are several tools available which have been created by the development sector and may be of assistance to the private sector to start to measure and evaluate women’s economic empowerment beyond increases in yield and income. Note that some tools can be difficult to implement at project level and are not always practical.

For instance, IFPRI and USAID have jointly developed a Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to assist with monitoring progress and assessing impact of agriculture projects. The index measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector to increase understanding of the connections between women’s empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. It measures the roles and extent of women’s engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains:

- decisions about agricultural production
- access to, and decision-making power over, productive resources
- control over use of income
- leadership in the community
- use of time

It also measures women’s empowerment relative to men’s within their households.

Technoserve used an adapted version of the WEAI to assess whether their program to train rural women coffee farmers in Guatemala led to the empowerment of the women. The results showed that out of 138 women interviewed, the group with technical assistance were more empowered as measured by the Index (71%) when compared to the group of women who were not part of the program (45%).

What is women’s economic empowerment?

There is no standard definition of women’s economic empowerment and the term is often used loosely.

A sample definition is: A woman is economically empowered when she has both: a) access to resources: the options to advance economically; and b) agency and structure: the power to make and act on economic decisions.

“Agency” refers to the capacity to make choices, develop her skills, manage her workload, etc. “Structure” refers to the rules, customs, habits and traditions that either constrain or enable women in their engagement in agriculture.

Thinking through women’s economic empowerment in terms of improving individual agency and the structure that impacts on the opportunities available to women, is necessary in order to understand how to bring about change in the agriculture sector.
Evidence of how gender equality benefits companies

In recent years, businesses have been increasingly aware that empowering women yields a high return on investment, which has resulted in dozens of programs to support women’s economic empowerment.

Addressing gender-based constraints in employment and productivity can increase competitiveness. When more than half of a country’s potential labor force is not used efficiently, competitiveness with other countries is negatively affected. In Thailand, Cargill Sun Valley implemented family-friendly, gender-sensitive policies targeted to its largely woman-dominated workforce, resulting in reduced absenteeism and labor turnover, and improved productivity. Evidence from Kenya and elsewhere suggests that women and men can be equally productive when given equal access to inputs, training, and other factors of production.

Research commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation shows that by increasing women’s participation in smallholder sourcing and support programs, many international food companies can improve crop productivity and quality, grow the smallholder supply base, and improve access to high-value markets.

SAB Miller is working on a gender-differentiated strategy in local direct sourcing. In Uganda, the company has created a new supply chain for sorghum, in which women farmers have been prioritized in terms of training and taking on leadership roles in cooperatives. The company is looking to replicate this approach in different sourcing models, such as buying from processors or traders.

The company is also looking to expand on their sustainable development strategy work and take a more holistic approach to women through the development of a business strategy. This would include women as suppliers, as well as women as employees, and how brands appeal to women as consumers. Different functions in the company have been asked what their interests are around women, and positioned them as commercial opportunities in order to gain traction internally.

An example of a strong business case for gender-differentiated strategies: The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC)

There is a clear business case for the private sector to actively engage low-income women in their value chains as producers, processors, employees, distributors or consumers. Such business can be profitable and can contribute to a company’s overall objectives, and at the same time help to meet the needs and serve the interests of women in the base of the pyramid.

However, the term “business case” means different things to different people. In fact, the business case can have many dimensions, not all of which are equal in the corporate context.

The most direct dimension of the business case is financial return on investment over an acceptable period of time and risk profile. Other dimensions can include long-term growth or market positioning, improved corporate reputation and brand image, risk mitigation, increased employee motivation and productivity, and the development of better stakeholder relationships (see box).

With the business imperative in mind, TCCC made a commitment to invest in expanding economic opportunity for women entrepreneurs throughout the company’s global value chain. The 5by20 initiative will help economically empower five million women entrepreneurs by the year 2020, through:

- **Core business operations** – for instance, the Micro Distribution Center (MDC) model is important in developing countries and emerging markets to distribute product to small-scale retail outlets in congested urban environments. In Tanzania, 95% of sales volumes are distributed through 170 MDCs, 65% of which are owned and/or managed by women.

- **Cross-sector partnerships** – for example, TCCC and its bottling partners do not purchase directly from smallholder farmers, so partners such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and TechnoServe have supplied agricultural best practices services.

- **Strategic social investment** – such as an experiential training curriculum for micro distributors.
Beyond increasing incomes:
A business case for addressing structural barriers to economic empowerment for women

Many of the programs developed by companies expand women’s employment opportunities, training and access to finance. However, women’s economic empowerment relies not only on the ability to succeed economically but also on having the power to act on economic decisions.

A recent report by Dalberg (2014) provides a business case for how programs can deliver greater benefits, both for the women they wish to empower and for the companies themselves. Implementing an integrated approach in partnership with the women’s rights community could address the underlying structural and social barriers to women’s economic advancement that corporate programs rarely reach.

Such an approach delivers the broader conditions necessary for women to thrive and succeed (safety, freedom of movement, health, agency, etc.) through programs that address control over reproductive health and family formation, violence, having a voice in society, and policy influence.

The 5by20 has developed programs that operate at each of the five different stages of the value chain: producers, distributors, retailers, recyclers and artisans.

An example of a program that targets female producers is Project Nurture in Kenya and Uganda. The program is a four-year, $11.5 million partnership between The Coca-Cola Company, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and TechnoServe. It intends to double the fruit incomes of more than 50,000 smallholder farmers in Kenya and Uganda by 2014, by building inclusive mango and passion fruit value chains. Recognizing that women make up nearly 75% of the agricultural labor force in those countries, Project Nurture targets at least 30% female participation. Approximately 30% of participating farmers are currently women, equating to 15,000 out of 51,000 in total.

A key finding of the 5by20 initiative is that balancing different dimensions of success is a challenge. To date, TCCC’s global supplier diversity goals have been set in terms of procurement dollars spent, while the 5by20 goals focus on the number of women reached. With suppliers, higher spend is not necessarily associated with higher reach, as the relationship is often the reverse: it is more cost-effective to concentrate procurement spending among a smaller number of larger suppliers that can offer the lower prices associated with economies of scale. Targeting both actual and potential suppliers may offer a way to achieve both spending and reach goals.

TCCC’s business system is highly decentralized, and operations are driven by 20 regional business units and nearly 250 bottling partners around the world. Despite this, the hurdles that exist for women entrepreneurs to participate in and grow their businesses, provide a strong enough business imperative for the company to commit to addressing these hurdles at every stage in the value chain.

The expected financial returns on investment are the primary driver for investment of resources and capabilities, as well as making programs easier to sustain, scale up, and replicate in other parts of the world. However, the 5by20 programs all have strong non-financial dimensions to the business case. These include enhancing corporate reputation, developing key stakeholder relationships, reducing environmental impact, and strengthening communities – which generally strengthen the operating environment for TCCC and its bottling partners. Taking the whole business case into account is important.
5. WHAT TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS CAN COMPANIES ESTABLISH, AND HOW CAN THEY DESIGN A GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED SOURCING STRATEGY?

The case for partnerships

Partnerships help to catalyze a new way of doing business if a company lacks knowledge of the strategic or operating context or the target population, or if the company needs capabilities on a temporary basis. Where there is a financial business case, the company might choose to pay its partner on a fee-for-service basis, for instance to develop an experiential training program.

Where there is not a business case, or the business case is still emerging, it makes sense to find partners that can share cost and risk. One example of such a partnership is with an NGO. The Ethical Tea Partnership worked with IDH in 2012 to design and deliver social issues training to 65 Kenya Tea Development Agency processing factories, privately owned tea estates, and smallholder farmers, as well as private factories in Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. The training addressed harassment and discrimination, and has had a positive impact both in the workplace and across surrounding communities. A key result of the training has been the setting up of gender committees to support the development of relevant policies, and resolve issues relating to discrimination and gender issues within the workplace.

The public sector is currently less engaged on gender issues. Even though there is an economic case for bringing women more effectively into value chains, this has not yet been fully recognized by developing country governments. One example of where the public sector is involved with gender issues is TCCC’s primary partner in the Philippines, which is the public-sector training agency: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). TESDA is providing its own financial resources to manage a program that targets small-scale female retailers over 10 years.

Companies can also benefit from sharing experiences with other companies. A recent meeting in London brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in the coffee value chain, including associations, traders, roasters, producers and NGOs. The aim was to discuss maximizing yield, minimizing volatility, and optimizing social impact through gender integration.

How to design a gender-differentiated sourcing strategy

Value chains are embedded within sociocultural contexts. The gender aspects of agricultural value chain projects are especially complex because market-oriented agriculture among smallholders relies on farming households and family labor.
Gender analysis – this is the first step toward understanding the gender issues that are relevant to value chain operations. Multiple tools exist to carry out a gender analysis along the value chain. For example, USAID’s Integrating Gender Issues into Agricultural Value Chains (INGIA-VC) approach outlines seven steps towards gender-equitable agricultural value chain programming:

1. Understand men’s and women’s roles and relations. Conduct gender assessments and gender analyses to collect accurate information for designing and operating value chain activities. Make adjustments as conditions change.

2. Foster equitable participation. Project-sponsored activities should insist that men, women, and youth are invited to participate.

3. Address the special needs of women where appropriate. Take into consideration women’s constraints at home and in the workplace where they differ from those of men. Identify practices that may cause conflicts between work and home, such as times or locations of meetings. Support creative benefits, such as flexible work hours, daycare, health benefits, subsidized transport, literacy and numeracy classes.

4. Support women’s economic advancement. Empower women as lead entrepreneurs. They can set an example for other women, contribute to upgrading, and lead the way toward systemic change in agricultural value chains.

5. Promote gender-equitable market-driven solutions. The private sector can be a catalyst in promoting gender equality. Gender-equitable and competitive value-chain practitioners facilitate understanding of how gender issues in value chain development are “smart business” and support the development of solutions that create equal opportunities for both men and women.

6. Design equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms. Ensure that men and women are adequately rewarded for their contributions to the value chain.

7. Include men in defining the “problem” and the solution. Include both men and women in identifying the gender issues that constrain their abilities to raise productivity and income and to expand their enterprises. Enlist men and women’s support in establishing equitable producer association governance and defining equitable criteria for hiring, promotion, and compensation within firms.

The Clinton Development Initiative carried out its first gender assessment in Malawi in September 2015, focusing on decision making among women farmers in groups: what decisions women are responsible for, how knowledge is transferred to women, and how female leaders are perceived in communities. Particular challenges were identified on the decision-making power of women postproduction, with men tending to take control of crop marketing, and on low levels of literacy among women, compared with men, which have an impact on training design.

Gender mainstreaming – this is more successful when implemented from the start of a project, when a gender specialist is part of the project design team, and when gender mainstreaming objectives are made explicit in establishing contracts with local partners.

Infrastructure to carry out gender analysis – the growing demand for sustainably produced products has led to the development of voluntary standards to improve issues such as transparency and environmental concerns. These standards are not typically gender-sensitive but they provide the infrastructure to introduce gender-sensitive strategies through their traceability systems. Mechanisms to certify products, documentation, data management systems or regular farmer meetings can all serve as entry points for addressing gender inequalities.
About the business

Cargill is an American privately held global corporation, which trades, purchases and distributes grain and other agricultural commodities. Cargill also operates a large financial services arm, which manages financial risks in the commodity markets for the company. Cargill has been active in Zambia since 2006, with a focus on small-scale cotton production in the Eastern Province.

Cargill Zambia works with 70,000 smallholder farmers buying their maize, cotton and soybeans, and supplying them with crop inputs, market price information, and access to local and global markets. The company also serves a large commercial farming base, which supplies the company with maize, soybeans, and wheat.

Cargill participates in the Competitive African Cotton Initiative (COMPACI) and Cotton Made in Africa (CMIA) program, both of which aim to improve agricultural practices and increase yields for cotton farmers. In Zambia, the company has established a network of over 1,600 cotton farmer training schools, which support the thousands of smallholder farmers under the program.

The gender-differentiation strategy

Initially, the farmer training schools were predominantly attended by men, while it was observed that women carried out most of the agricultural work. The company concluded that targets to increase productivity and expand the sourcing base would only be met if women farmers also had access to training and inputs. As a result, the company engaged male farmers, who own the land and other assets, to support direct training of women farmers through the establishment of 1,000 Cargill Cotton Women’s Clubs. They adapt extension care and training to 32,000 women and help them to overcome the cultural and social barriers that many female farmers face.

The Clubs comprise around 35 women farmers under contract with Cargill, who own or rent land for cotton production, facilitate access to inputs for cotton and other crops (maize and soybean), encourage members to take a leadership role, and charge a membership fee which is used to support members. In 2009, only 12% of Cargill Zambia farmers who registered to receive training and input support were female; by 2015, this increased to 39%.
Benefits of women’s clubs

For Cargill Zambia:
• Larger and stronger sourcing base
• Better access to markets that are sensitive to sustainability issues
• Better food security in Eastern Zambia

For women farmers:
• Increased access to training, inputs and markets, including sustainable markets
• Increased household income and expenditure on nutrition and education
• Increased decision making by women within the household as a result of access to independent income streams
• Greater visibility of women in the community through club membership and exposure to other opportunities (e.g. pest management) as well as non-agricultural activities (e.g. care of orphans)
• In some cases, access to grants to support other agricultural work
• In some cases, the opportunity for women to graduate out of the clubs to become entrepreneurs and/or employers themselves. For instance, households with assets such as draught power can be provided as services to other farmers. In addition, financial literacy training enables women to explore other income-generating opportunities

Challenges
• The most significant issue is limited access to land by women farmers, with the majority relying on rented fields. Land rights are currently under review by government and it is expected that access by women will change in the future
• Labor is a constraint to productivity, as there is little access to draught power
• Literacy levels are low, which limit opportunities for growth
• Male extension officers form the majority of trainers. Although measures are in place to help ensure that this does not dissuade female participation in training.

Recommendations
• Targeting women directly provides an opportunity for quick and high return on investment because of their long-term perspective and commitment to improving household food security
• The gender differentiated approach offers a good channel to drive positive change, increase productivity and grow loyalty.
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