

Improving Opportunities for Women in Smallholder-based Supply Chains

Business case and practical guidance for international food companies



Prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

By Man-Kwun Chan, with advisory input from Stephanie Barrientos

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Photos courtesy of Barnabas Baggs, 2010, unless otherwise indicated.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 About This Guide

1.1.1 Why This Guide Has Been Written

Women are less likely to benefit from companies' smallholder sourcing and support programs than men, as the following trends and statistics show:

- **Fewer women are members of company contract farming schemes than men.** For example, a study of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector in Kenya showed that fewer than 10 percent of smallholder contracts were with women farmers;¹ and a separate study of French bean contract farming schemes in Senegal showed that there were no female-headed households involved at all.²
- **Many companies source from established producer groups, yet women are typically underrepresented in both the membership and governance of these groups.** For example, studies have shown that women comprise only 29 percent of membership and 9 percent of management in agricultural cooperatives in Kenya;³ and in Ethiopia, only 2 percent of women (as opposed to 13 percent of men) are members of agricultural cooperatives, and men are five times more likely than women to hold a leadership position within a cooperative.⁴
- **On male-owned farms, female family members do much of the work, yet receive little of the income from crop sales and have little say in how that income is spent.** For example, one study of sugar farming contracts in Africa found that women held less than half (43 percent) of the contracts yet provided the majority of the labor on 60 to 70 percent of the contracted plots.⁵ A recent literature review found not only that this trend is widespread in African contract farming schemes, but that men frequently spend the income they earn from contract farming on personal rather than family needs.⁶
- **Women are much less likely than men to benefit from technical training and extension programs.** For example, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that women receive only 5 percent of extension services worldwide;⁷ and one global food company that trains thousands of farmers every year estimated that in most of their training programs, less than 20 percent of the farmers they train are women.⁸
- **Sustainability certification schemes are less likely to benefit women than men.** Women are typically underrepresented even in Fairtrade⁹ supply chains. For example, women's membership in the Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise (Uganda) and Karagwe District Cooperative Union (Tanzania), two Fairtrade-certified coffee cooperatives, currently stands at only 12 percent and 18 percent respectively.¹⁰



Women members of Kuapa Kokoo in Ghana. Unlike most producer cooperatives, women are well represented in Kuapa Kokoo's governance structures.

Clearly, there are social and moral reasons for seeking to redress these imbalances. However, several leading global food companies have started to recognize that improving opportunities for women in smallholder-based supply chains would not only help achieve social responsibility aims; it could also deliver commercial benefits by improving productivity, quality, and future viability of key smallholder crops.

Most of these companies have only just started to explore the issues, and are seeking practical guidance about how to address the constraints that women producers face. Moreover, the vast majority of food companies remain to be convinced about the importance of addressing gender issues in their smallholder supply chains at all. In response to this situation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned a study to further explore the business case for food companies to support women in smallholder-based supply chains, and to identify and develop good practice guidance about how companies can best deliver this support.

This guide presents the results of this study in a practical, action-focused format. It sets out the business case for action; provides practical guidance about what food companies can do to encourage greater participation of, and support for, women in their smallholder-based supply chains; and presents over 40 good practice examples and seven in-depth case studies to illustrate and support this guidance.

1.1.2 Aims of the Guide

The aims of this guide are to:

- **Raise awareness** of the important role played by women in smallholder-based supply chains, of the constraints they face, and of the potential commercial benefits to be gained from removing these constraints.
- **Convince** food companies to modify their existing smallholder sourcing and support programs so as to allow improved participation of women producers.
- **Support** food companies to make the necessary changes by providing practical guidance and good practice examples.

1.1.3 Who the Guide Is Written For

What Types Of Company

This guide is written for all international food companies that have smallholder producers in their supply chains and that actively engage with these smallholders either through direct sourcing arrangements or through other types of smallholder support programs such as training programs, sustainability certification schemes, and community development projects.

Some sections of this guide (for example Section 3) are relevant primarily to situations where companies are sourcing directly from smallholders. However, most sections of this guide are relevant to all companies and supply chains, including those companies that source smallholder products only indirectly, via intermediaries. For further information about each section and its relevance to different types of companies, see Section 1.2.

Who Within The Company

This guide is written for all those within the company who are involved in smallholder sourcing or support programs. This includes:

- **Corporate social responsibility (CSR) directors and managers.**
- **Ethical sourcing or ethical trade managers** (those who hold responsibility for managing social and environmental issues within the supply chain).

CSR directors, CSR managers, and ethical sourcing managers are likely to be the first within a company to read this guide. They can then forward it, along with the Executive Summary, to the following additional audiences:

- **Smallholder sourcing managers or buyers, including outgrower managers**
- **Technical directors and managers** (those who are responsible for ensuring that technical and quality standards in relevant supply chains are met)
- **Other relevant managers who are involved in smallholder sourcing or support activities**

1.1.4 How the Guide Was Produced

The contents of this guide are based on findings from research conducted by the author between July 2009 and March 2010. The study included:

- Internet research conducted on approximately 30 global food companies and their existing programs and activities to support smallholders in Africa. (*July-August 2009*)
- A review of existing international development literature on the constraints faced by women smallholders and effective methods for addressing these constraints. Over 60 references were reviewed overall. (*July-August 2009*)
- Telephone and face-to-face interviews with U.K.-based and U.S.-based representatives of 11 international food companies to learn more about their current smallholder support activities, specific initiatives to support women smallholders, and the business case for supporting these activities. (*July – September 2009*)
- Field visits to Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to identify the lessons and achievements from seven projects that have adopted innovative measures to support women farmers. This included interviews with in-country field-level company representatives, staff from eight partner organizations, and over 80 women and 25 men in 20 smallholder communities. (*December 2009 – January 2010*)



The author interviewing women outgrowers who supply tea to Eastern Produce Kenya Limited (Nandi Hills, Kenya).

To help ensure that the guidance reflected best practice and was relevant and useful to targeted food companies, drafts of the guide were reviewed by representatives from nine international food companies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and 10 other international development organizations. However, although the reviewers' advice and inputs significantly influenced and strengthened the final output, the author retains full responsibility for the content of the document, and any views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the foundation or of the other reviewers.

1.1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Guide

The scope of this guide reflects the priorities and terms of reference that were provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which stipulated that the guidance should focus on:

- Policies and activities that could help improve opportunities for rural women, in their roles as *smallholder producers and unpaid family labor*.
- Policies and activities that could be implemented by *international food sourcing companies*.
- Policies and activities that would be relevant to smallholders in *East and West Africa* specifically.
- Practical actions that could be taken by relevant corporate decision-makers *in the short term*.

In light of these priorities, and in particular the last stipulation, this guide concentrates on what can be done to improve women's opportunities within the smallholder sourcing and support programs *in which food sourcing companies are already engaged*. In other words, rather than encouraging companies to set up new programs that are specifically targeted at women producers, the emphasis is on taking steps to ensure that women and men have equal access to the opportunities that companies are already providing to smallholders. Given that women are currently much less likely to benefit from companies' smallholder programs than men (see Section 1.1.1), such an approach has the potential to deliver significant benefits for women without requiring major investments in new women-specific projects or programs.

This predefined scope does, however, mean that this guide has the following limitations:

- **The potential of alternative business models to deliver improved opportunities for women producers is not explored in depth.** This document takes as a given the broad business models,

together with the accompanying power relations, that currently prevail in the global food market. This does not necessarily imply that current business models do not need to be challenged, nor that alternative business models might not deliver greater opportunities for women (and men) in smallholder communities. Indeed, the final section (Section 8) introduces some innovative business models that might do just that. However, a more detailed assessment of such approaches falls beyond the scope of this guide.

- **The guide does not address the needs of the paid female labor force or the broader labor rights agenda.** Many smallholder farms do of course use paid labor, both female and male, particularly at peak times such as during land preparation or harvest. However, addressing the needs of the paid female labor force raises a different set of issues—issues that require a gendered analysis of international labor standards and their implementation. Such an analysis would require drawing on a very different set of skills and experience, and so although important, it unfortunately also falls outside the scope of this guide.
- **The majority of the case studies and examples are drawn from East and West Africa.** We believe that the general guidance that is contained in the guide is also relevant to corporate smallholder programs in other developing regions, and that many of the lessons from our case studies will be applicable elsewhere. Nevertheless, the collection of further examples and case studies from Asia and Latin America would undoubtedly be valuable for those companies that source predominantly from these regions.
- **The guide does not provide specific guidance to agrochemical companies.** Given the key role that agrochemical companies play in the global food industry, and their substantial engagement with smallholders, there is undoubtedly a need for further work to explore what role these companies could play in increasing opportunities for women in smallholder communities in Africa. However, because the nature of their commercial relationship with smallholders is very different from that of food sourcing companies, this again raises a new set of issues that falls beyond the scope of this guide.

The author and the foundation recognize the need for further work to define and promote good corporate practice in each of the four areas outlined above.

1.2 How to Use This Guide

This guide can of course be read from cover to cover, but it has been designed to allow readers to select and review specific sections that are most relevant to their interests. Each section and subsection is therefore self-contained and can be read on its own.

Because the focus of the guide is on increasing women's participation in existing smallholder programs, the core parts of the document are structured around the different types of smallholder programs that food companies are already engaged in:

- Smallholder sourcing schemes, including outgrower programs and other contract farming schemes (see Section 3)
- Programs that provide technical training and other production inputs to ensure that technical standards, quality standards, and production targets are met (see Section 4)
- Sustainability certification schemes, such as programs that support smallholders to meet Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance standards (see Section 5)
- Social or integrated community development projects in smallholder communities such as the ECHOES project, the Mars Partnership for African Cocoa Communities of Tomorrow (iMPACT) project, and the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (see Section 6)

Given that not all companies will be engaged in all these types of programs, the structure of this guide allows each individual company to quickly locate those areas of guidance that are most relevant to its project portfolio. To assist with this process, an overview of each section, including an indication of which types of companies and whom within a company each section is most relevant to, is provided in the remainder of this section.

SECTION 2: The Business Case for Supporting Women in Smallholder-based Supply Chains

Who should read it:

This section is relevant to all food companies. It is particularly relevant in direct sourcing situations and where recommended actions need to be justified in terms of their contribution to core business goals.

What it Covers:

This section sets out the potential commercial benefits to be gained from supporting women in smallholder-based supply chains and presents evidence of each benefit. It also includes a summary of how investment in these women can help achieve broader corporate social responsibility goals and targets.

SECTION 3: Increasing Women's Membership and Participation in Smallholder Sourcing Schemes

Who should read it:

This section is relevant to all food companies that source one or more products directly from smallholders. It is particularly relevant to outgrower managers, smallholder sourcing managers, and buyers.

Vegetable	Iron (mg)	Carbohydrate (g)	Protein (g)	Calcium (mg)	Other	Role of Nutrient (Kazi ya Madini)
Spinach (Kiwanda)	8.9	6.0	1.0	0.7		Builds blood, renews red blood cells
Spinach (Kiwanda)	4.6	4.8	4.3	1.7		Builds cells, repairs cells, forms hair, etc
Spinach (Kiwanda)	84.0	84.6	87.2	91.4		For healthy body functions
Spinach (Kiwanda)	42.0	34.0	38.0	26.0		For energy (Inaongeza Nguvu Mwilini)
Spinach (Kiwanda)	8.2	5.2	5.7	6.0		For Energy (Inaongeza Nguvu Mwilini)
Spinach (Kiwanda)	1.8	-	1.3	1.2		For Proper digestion bowel movement
Spinach (Kiwanda)	64.0	13.0	20.0	54.0		For good skin, Absorption of Nutrients, Resistance to infection
Spinach (Kiwanda)	410.0	288.0	442.0	4.7		For Building Bones, Teeth, & Strong Muscle
Spinach (Kiwanda)	103.0	111.0	75.0	40.0		Mineral for bone tooth formation, Kidney functions, Assists in utilization of Nutrients
Spinach (Kiwanda)	51.60	-	366.00	100.0		Boosts Immune System, Good Vision, Bone growth & Resists infections
Spinach (Kiwanda)	0.1	-	-	0.0		For energy, vision healthy skin etc.
Spinach (Kiwanda)	0.4	-	0.6	0.1		

A poster used by the EPK Outgrower Empowerment Project as part of training to help women tea farmers generate extra income and improve household food security (Nandi Hills, Kenya).

What it Covers:

This section explains why women tend to be underrepresented as both members and leaders in company contract farming schemes, as well as in producer groups and cooperatives. It then provides guidance and examples of what companies can do to (a) encourage more women to join outgrower and contract farming schemes and producer groups, and (b) support more women to take up leadership positions within these structures.

SECTION 4: Ensuring that Women Benefit from Technical Training, Extension Services, and Production Inputs Provided by Your Company***Who should read it:***

This section is relevant to all companies that support the provision of technical training, extension services, or production inputs for smallholders. This includes situations where the actual training is delivered by an external organization. It is particularly relevant for outgrower managers, technical managers, and CSR managers, as well as training delivery partners.

What it Covers:

This section explains the reasons that women are less likely than men to benefit from technical training and extension programs as well as credit and input provision schemes. It then provides guidance and examples about what companies can do to (a) increase women's participation in company-supported training and extension schemes, and (b) ensure that women don't lose out from credit and input provision schemes.

SECTION 5: Ensuring that Women Benefit from Sustainability Certification Programs***Who should read it:***

This section is relevant to all companies that are supporting smallholders to meet sustainability certification standards such as Fairtrade, GLOBALG.A.P, Rainforest Alliance, UTZ CERTIFIED, and organic standards. It is particularly relevant to technical managers, ethical sourcing and ethical trading managers, CSR managers, smallholder sourcing managers, and project delivery partners.

What it Covers:

This section explains some of the reasons that women are less likely than men to benefit from sustainability certification programs, and provides guidance and examples about what companies can do to ensure that women benefit fully from such schemes.

SECTION 6: Increasing Opportunities for Women within Community Development Projects***Who should read it:***

This section is relevant to all companies that are supporting social or integrated community development projects in smallholder communities: projects that include social or welfare aims that are not directly related to production of the purchased product. It is particularly relevant to CSR managers, ethical trading and ethical sourcing managers, smallholder sourcing managers (including outgrower managers), and project delivery partners.

What it Covers:

This section explains how such community development projects don't always address women's needs and priorities in a systematic way and often focus on social or welfare improvements at the expense of improving economic opportunities for women. It then provides guidance and examples about what companies can do to ensure that women's needs and priorities are better addressed in such projects.

SECTION 7: Building the Necessary Human Resources and Skills

Who should read it:

This section is relevant to all food companies. It is particularly relevant to CSR managers and smallholder sourcing managers (including outgrower managers).

What it Covers:

This section provides guidance about how to build or source the human resources and skills that are necessary to effectively implement the recommended actions in Sections 3 through 6. Although much can be done without recruiting or contracting in specialist expertise, strengthening the relevant skills set should be considered as part of a longer-term strategy to improve women's participation in your supply chain.

SECTION 8: Further Strategies for Improving Women's Opportunities

Who should read it:

This section is relevant to all food companies, especially those that have positioned themselves as CSR leaders in their sector. It is particularly relevant to CSR directors and managers, as well as those within the business who are responsible for business innovation.

What it Covers:

This final section explores what companies could do to improve women's opportunities, if they are willing to go beyond their current modes of engagement with smallholders. For example, it introduces innovative smallholder business models that are built on the principle of a "double bottom line" and discusses what companies can do to improve relevant regulations and policy frameworks through appropriate lobbying and stakeholder dialogue.

APPENDIX 1: Case Studies

Who should read it:

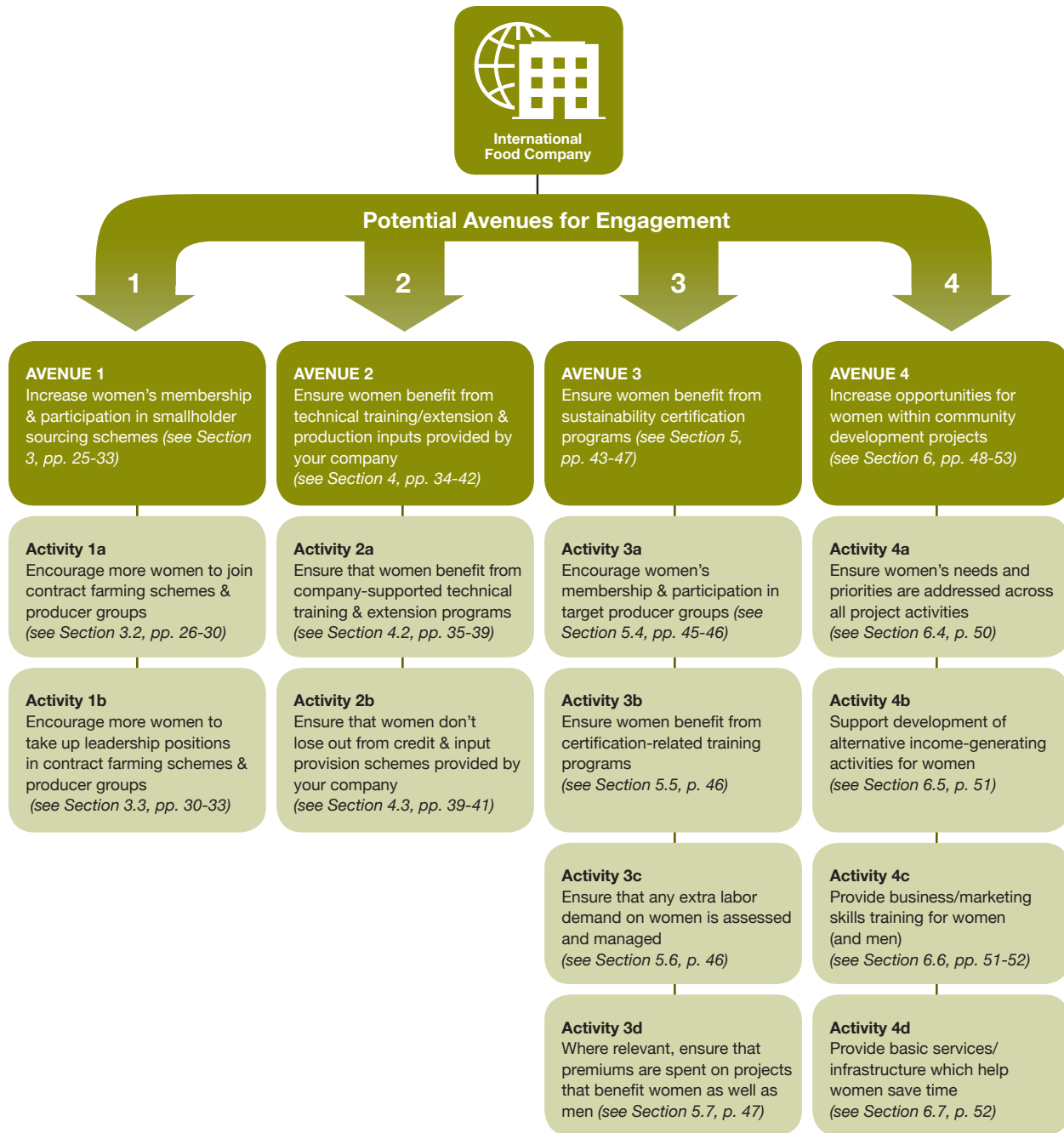
Appendix 1 is relevant to all food companies. It is particularly useful for CSR managers, ethical sourcing and ethical trading managers, outgrower managers, and others with direct responsibility for implementing some or all of the recommended actions in this document.

What it Covers:

Appendix 1 provides detailed descriptions of seven projects and initiatives in Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, and Tanzania that have adopted specific measures to improve opportunities for women in smallholder-based supply chains. The case studies provide additional and more detailed examples of the recommended actions that are contained in Sections 3 through 6, together with an analysis of the impacts, challenges, business benefits, and lessons from each initiative.

Diagram 1 (next page) summarizes the four avenues for engagement and recommended actions that are described in Sections 3 through 6, and provides a navigational tool that is also referred to at the beginning of each relevant section.

DIAGRAM 1
Improving Opportunities For Women In Smallholder-Based Supply Chains: Four Potential Avenues For Engagement



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- ¹ Source: Dolan, C. (2001): "The 'good wife': struggles over resources in the Kenyan horticultural sector," *The Journal of Development Studies*, 37(3), pp.39-70. Quoted in: Schneider, K. and Gugerty, M.K. (2010): *Gender and contract farming in Sub-Saharan Africa: Literature Review*, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington.
- ² Maertens, M., & Swinnen, J. (2009): "Trade, Standards, and Poverty: Evidence from Senegal," *World Development*, 37(1), pp.161-178. Quoted in: Schneider, K. and Gugerty, M.K. (2010): *Gender and contract farming in Sub-Saharan Africa: Literature Review*, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington.
- ³ Source: International Co-operative Alliance (2001): *Survey on agricultural co-operatives in Kenya*. Quoted in: Majurin, E. (2010): *Promising practices: how co-operatives work for working women in Africa*, International Labour Organization.
- ⁴ Source: The World Bank and International Food Policy Research Institute (2010): *Gender and governance in rural services: insights from India, Ghana and Ethiopia*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- ⁵ Source: Porter, G. & Philips-Howard, K. (1997): "Comparing contracts: An evaluation of contract farming schemes in Africa," *World Development*, 25(2), pp.227-238.
- ⁶ Source: Schneider, K. and Gugerty, M.K. (2010): *Gender and contract farming in Sub-Saharan Africa*.
- ⁷ Source: UNAIDS: "HIV, Gender and Food Security. Gender and HIV/AIDS Factsheet No 14." Quoted in: Mehra, R. and Hill Rojas, M. (2008): *Women, food security and agriculture in a global market place*, International Center for Research on Women.
- ⁸ Source: interview with company representative, September 2009.
- ⁹ In keeping with international use, the term "Fairtrade" is used in this guide to refer to products, producers, and producer organizations that are certified to comply with the international Fairtrade standards of the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). See www.fairtrade.net for further information about FLO's certification system. In contrast, "fair trade" is used as a general term to describe all products (and associated supply chains and producers) that are traded under "fair" or ethical terms, including those products that are not certified under the FLO system.
- ¹⁰ See Appendix 1, Case Study 5 and Case Study 6 in this guide.

Section 2: The Business Case for Supporting Women in Smallholder-based Supply Chains

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all food companies. It is particularly relevant in direct sourcing situations, and where recommended actions need to be justified in terms of their contribution to core business goals.

Key points: Our study shows that investing in women in smallholder-based supply chains can help deliver the following commercial benefits:

- Improved product quality
- Increased productivity
- Reduced management and coordination costs
- A secure supply base
- A stronger brand and improved access to premium markets
- Improved delivery of broader corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals

2.1 Introduction

As Section 1.1.1 shows, there are compelling moral and social reasons for supporting women in smallholder-based supply chains. However, our study also demonstrates that there are good commercial reasons for doing so. Significantly, the findings show that investing in women producers makes commercial sense for companies that operate at the low-value/high-volume end of the market, as well as for those companies that target higher-value or premium markets.

- **Competing in low-value, high-volume markets:** Our research shows that increasing the participation of women in smallholder-based supply chains, and improving the technical support they receive, can help maintain or grow production volumes and improve productivity (thus helping to cut or maintain margins), as well as reduce management costs.
- **Competing in high-value and premium markets:** Increasing women's participation can also help improve product quality and enhance the company's ethical credentials, both of which can be critical in winning business and increasing market share in high-value and premium markets.

This section explains how investing in women producers can contribute to these key commercial goals. The section also provides supporting evidence obtained from our study findings.

2.2 Maintaining and Improving Quality

The study found that women smallholders often deliver better-quality product than their male counterparts, which indicates that increasing the number of women smallholders in your supply chain can help improve or at least maintain product quality. Reasons given by company representatives and other respondents for the superior quality of women's crops included women's greater diligence and attention to quality control, and their greater willingness to invest in the longer-term interests of their families and communities.

► EVIDENCE: Women smallholders often produce better-quality product.

- **Field research findings:** In five of the case studies that are included in Appendix 1 of this guide, we asked staff who were responsible for buying or collecting smallholder crops about what, if any, benefits they saw from having women members or outgrowers. In four out of these five case studies, respondents mentioned the quality of women's crops as a key benefit, reporting that in their experience women consistently deliver better-quality crops than men.
- **Finlays, Kenya:** At Finlays, both David Kirui, Outgrower Manager, and Samwal Sang, Assistant Outgrower Manager, said that it was “very noticeable” from their experience that women tea outgrowers deliver better-quality green leaf than male farmers (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).
- **Peets Coffee and Las Hermanas, Nicaragua:** Las Hermanas, an all-women coffee producers' cooperative in Nicaragua that is part of the wider fair trade Soppexcca cooperative, has been supplying Peets Coffee, a U.S. specialty coffee retailer, since 2001. Las Hermanas was originally split off from the main cooperative after the general manager noticed the superior quality of the women's coffee. Las Hermanas coffee has since been singled out by Peets' buyers for its quality and has also been recognized annually in the regional “Cup of Excellence” coffee competition, consistently edging out the coffee produced by some of the male members of Soppexcca.¹¹

“If you see the green leaf from the woman and the man, without doubt you will choose the woman's.”

SAMWAL SANG, ASSISTANT
OUTGROWER MANAGER,
FINLAYS KENYA



Women workers picking tea on Finlays' estate in Kericho, Kenya. Finlays' staff report that women outgrowers consistently deliver better-quality tea than male farmers.

2.3 Increasing Productivity

Our study found that investing in women producers can improve productivity in two ways. First, ensuring that women have access to technical training can improve production practices and thereby improve productivity. Second, encouraging men to give a share of their land or crop income to female family members can increase productivity through improved incentives.

2.3.1 Increasing Productivity by Improving Women’s Access to Technical Training

Ensuring that women as well as men receive technical training can be key to improving productivity, because women typically do a substantial proportion—often the majority—of the work on smallholder export farms in Africa. This includes farms that are owned by and registered in a man’s name.

► **EVIDENCE: Women often do the majority of work on smallholder export farms, even on “men’s” farms.**

- **Nasufwa coffee farms, Uganda:** At Nasufwa, a cooperative of small-scale coffee farmers in Uganda that supplies international fair trade and mainstream markets, more than 85 percent of the registered members are men. Yet, according to both men and women coffee farmers who were interviewed, women do 90 percent of the work on members’ coffee farms (see Appendix 1, Case Study 5).
- **Eastern Produce outgrower tea farms, Kenya:** In these outgrower communities, men own the vast majority of the tea farms, but their wives do most of the work on the farms (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).
- **Cocoa farms, Côte d’Ivoire:** Wives of male cocoa farmers are regularly involved in 12 of the 19 key stages in cocoa production, and play a lead role in tending the young cocoa trees and performing post-harvest activities.¹²
- **Cocoa farms, Ghana:** Women play a key role in land preparation and clearing, planting, tending young cocoa plants when they are intercropped with food crops, weeding, and post-harvest activities.¹³

Moreover, our study provides direct evidence that including women in company-supported training programs can yield significant productivity gains.

► **EVIDENCE: Training women (including female household members of male outgrowers) can increase productivity.**

- **Eastern Produce, Kenya:** After receiving training on tea husbandry, women started plucking their tea three times a month (they previously thought they could only pluck once a month), leading to a significant increase in productivity (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).
- **Video Viewing Clubs (VVC), Ghana:** A VVC evaluation study showed that, after completing the training about improved cocoa farming techniques, women VVC graduates increased their yields by 59 percent, as compared to only a 47-percent yield increase for non-trainees. Moreover, individual women trainees who were interviewed during our field research confirmed that they had achieved significantly higher yields after implementing new cultural practices that they learned at the VVCs, with several women more than doubling their cocoa yields (see Appendix 1, Case Study 1).

.....
“To improve productivity and quality, we train the women as well as the men. Why? Because female family members play a key role in plucking the tea”.

Leah Kibii, Outgrower Manager,
 Eastern Produce Kenya Limited.

2.3.2 Increasing Productivity by Improving Incentives for Women

Despite often doing most of the work, women typically receive little of the income from crop sales. Encouraging male smallholders to give a share of their land or crop income to their wives and other female family members could therefore help increase productivity, because women will gain a greater incentive to improve production.

► **EVIDENCE: Giving women land or a share of the crop income can increase productivity.**

- **Ghana:** A study showed that if women and men had equal land rights and security of tenure, women's use of fertilizer and profits per hectare would nearly double.¹⁴
- **Rwele, Tanzania:** A male coffee farmer reported that giving his wife half of his coffee had led to increased productivity, because his wife works harder now that she knows she will get the income (see Appendix 1, Case Study 6).
- **Nasufwa, Uganda:** A male coffee farmer said he had decided to give some of his coffee trees to his wife, because he believes she will work harder if she knows she will get the income (see Appendix 1, Case Study 5).

Moreover, three of the case study initiatives—EPK (Eastern Produce Kenya) Outgrower Empowerment Project (Kenya), Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise (Uganda), and the Karagwe District Cooperative Union (Tanzania)—have had significant success in encouraging men to give land or crops to their wives, which led to recorded increases in female membership in the respective outgrower schemes and cooperatives. As the detailed case studies in Appendix 1 show, their experience demonstrates that companies and other outside organizations *can* successfully challenge traditional gender norms concerning land and crop ownership.

2.4 Reducing Management and Coordination Costs

Our study also shows that having female representation on smallholder management committees can help reduce management costs for smallholder sourcing programs. As the following evidence shows, having women in management positions can improve communications between the company and outgrowers, and can help resolve disputes more quickly.

► **EVIDENCE: Female committee members tend to be more diligent and willing to share information.**

- **Field research findings:** In six of the case studies, we asked relevant stakeholders about what, if any, benefits they saw from having women committee or board members. In four out of these six case studies, respondents reported that in their experience, women committee members are more honest and willing to share information, and take greater pains to represent the interests of the wider membership. Two of these respondents were (male) company representatives.
- **Finlays, Kenya:** Finlays' outgrower management team has found that female committee representatives tend to be better at "leadership" than men. If there is a problem or dispute with an outgrower member, female representatives are more likely to reveal information about the sources of the problem and to help resolve the dispute. In contrast, male representatives are often reluctant to share too much information with "a company" (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

.....
"Of the 193 wet mills we work with, Embu is the one I enjoy working with most. Why? Four of the six committee members there are women—they do not play games, and Embu's productivity is higher than many."

KAMAU KURIA, DIRECTOR,
 COFFEE MANAGEMENT
 SYSTEMS (CMS), KENYA

2.5 Growing the Supply Base

Our research shows that successfully attracting women producers into outgrower schemes and producer groups can help grow or at least secure your smallholder supply base in both the long term and the short term, as explained in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.

2.5.1 Growing the Supply Base: Women as Effective Recruitment Agents.

The study shows that women can be particularly effective at recruiting new members to outgrower schemes and producer groups. Successfully attracting female members can therefore help to establish new outgrower schemes as well as expand existing operations.

► **EVIDENCE: Women are effective at recruiting new members to outgrower schemes and producer groups.**

- **Field research findings:** In six of the case studies, we asked relevant stakeholders about what, if any, benefits they saw from having women members and outgrowers. In three out of these six case studies, respondents (male and female) mentioned women's effectiveness at recruiting new members as a key benefit.
- **Finlays, Kenya:** David Kirui, Outgrower Manager for Finlays, said that when they established their outgrower scheme it was the women who joined first. The women then persuaded the men to join, convincing them that it was worthwhile making the commitment to Finlays because it would benefit them in the long run, for example by securing a better price (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

“Our women members have been more successful at recruiting new members than Kuapa Kokoo’s formal membership campaigns.”

REGINA CORLETEY, GENDER OFFICER, KUAPA KOKOO

2.5.2 Securing Future Supply

In the longer term, bringing more women producers into your supply chains is also likely to be important for securing future supply of key smallholder-dependent commodities. Global demand for food products will continue to increase for the next four decades (albeit at a slower rate than in the previous four decades).¹⁵ In contrast, the smallholder sector worldwide is unlikely to grow because virtually all population growth over the next decade is projected to be in urban areas.¹⁶

However, out-migration from rural areas is generally not gender-neutral: men, particularly young men, are more likely to migrate or take up nonfarm employment, leaving the women behind to tend family farms. As a result, women are increasingly taking charge of smallholder farms,¹⁷ including those involved in producing export crops.

► **EVIDENCE: Women are increasingly taking charge of rural households and family farms.**

- **Ghana:** Female-headed households now make up 35 percent of the total, with 53 percent of these being in rural areas.¹⁸
- **Southern Africa region:** Women-headed households make up 42 percent of the total.¹⁹
- **Kenya:** Of the 8,000 smallholder outgrowers who supply tea to Finlays, about a third are effectively female-headed households (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

Removing barriers to entry into company supply chains for women smallholders could therefore also be part of an effective strategy for securing future supply. Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate has recognized this. Following research that they supported about the challenges that face smallholder coffee suppliers in Kenya,²⁰ they realized that young people, particularly young men, are no longer interested in going

into coffee farming, which raises concerns about the future supply of coffee from these communities. In response, the company is now supporting a program that engages and trains the youth in coffee production, with a particular emphasis on increasing women's participation (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).

2.6 Strengthening the Brand and Improving Access to Premium Markets

Supporting marginal women producers also offers a new branding and marketing angle for companies that are aiming at premium markets, where a company's perceived ethical credentials have a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Two U.S. coffee retailing companies, Starbucks and Peets Coffee, have recognized this potential and the commercial benefits to be gained.

► EVIDENCE: Supporting marginal women producers can strengthen the brand and secure customer loyalty.

- **Peets Coffee:** Peets Coffee's sourcing relationship with the Nicaraguan women's cooperative Las Hermanas (see Section 2.2), which is featured prominently on the company's website, has generated positive media coverage as well as goodwill and positive feedback from customers. Positive stories have appeared in a wide range of media, from local San Francisco Bay Area magazines (such as *Diablo*, July 2008) to trade publications (for example, feature article in *Coffee & Cocoa International*, May 2009). Moreover, as Shirin Moayyad, Director of Coffee Purchasing at Peets Coffee, explains, "What cannot be measured—the intangible benefit—is the goodwill it imparts. For a relatively small company, the recognition from both our customer base and staff that this coffee lends is very valuable."²¹
- **Starbucks:** Research conducted by Starbucks in 2008 showed that their consumers were interested in the ethical conditions under which the company's promotional goods were produced. In response, the company launched pilot initiatives to source two merchandise lines (basket charms and soft toys) from women's producer groups in Kenya and Rwanda. These initiatives were well-received by the press (for example, *The Seattle Times*, 27 July 2009) and consumers, and the company is now exploring how they might transfer this model to other product lines and countries.²²

.....
"The [Las Hermanas] coffee is excellent, and especially wonderful is that the purchase supports women in business. Good for you, Peets Coffee!"

PEETS COFFEE CUSTOMER,
 TORRANCE, CA (USA), 14 JULY
 2008



Women members of the Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise in Uganda using drama to promote the benefits of organic farming. Gumutindo is also part of an initiative to develop and market women's coffee as a premium product.

2.7 Contributing to Broader Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Development Goals

Clearly, improving opportunities for women producers contributes to promoting gender equity and women's empowerment (which relates directly to the third United Nations Millennium Development Goal). However, there is also considerable evidence to show that improving women's opportunities will also help achieve broader social and economic development goals. Investing in women producers can therefore help you meet the wider objectives and targets that are typically associated with corporate smallholder support programs.

2.7.1 Improving Food Security, Child Nutrition, and Health

There is substantial evidence to show that improving women's, as opposed to men's, income is much more effective at improving household food security, children's health, and children's nutrition.

► **EVIDENCE: Women spend more of their income on improving children's health and nutrition.**

- **Côte d'Ivoire:** A study found that the improvements in child health and nutrition brought about by a \$10 (U.S.) increase in women's income would require a \$110 increase in men's income to bring about the same improvements.²³
- **World Development Report 2008:** This report recognized that women, more than men, spend their income on food, with consequent improvements in household food and nutritional security. For example, it reports that in Guatemala, in households whose profits from non-traditional agricultural exports were controlled by women, the amount spent on food was double that of households in which men controlled the profits.²⁴

2.7.2 Increasing School Attendance and Combating Child Labor

There is evidence to show that increasing women's share of income or assets within a household will increase household expenditure on children's education.

► **EVIDENCE: Increasing women's assets raises investments in children's education.**

- **International Food Policy Research Institute:** Research conducted by IFPRI in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and South Africa showed that, in all four countries, assets in the hands of women increase the share of household income that is spent on children's education.²⁵

Moreover, increasing school attendance and improving women's status are broadly accepted as key components in any effective strategy to combat child labor.²⁶ Improving economic opportunities for women in smallholder communities can therefore form part of a credible corporate approach to addressing child labor.

2.7.3 Contributing to Poverty Reduction and Economic Development

Finally, there is strong evidence to suggest that investing in women (rather than men) yields greater marginal returns in terms of increasing agricultural productivity, improving economic development, and reducing poverty.

► **EVIDENCE: Investing in women yields greater marginal returns.**

- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** It has been calculated that agricultural productivity could increase by up to 20 percent if women's access to such resources as land, seed, and fertilizer were equal to men's.²⁷
- **Egypt and Mozambique:** Studies have shown that mothers' education is crucial to poverty reduction. In Egypt, ensuring that all mothers complete primary school would reduce the proportion of the population below the poverty line by 33.7 percent. Similarly, in Mozambique, if one more adult female in each household were to complete primary school education, this would result in a 23.2 percent decrease in the proportion of the population who live below the poverty line. In both of these studies, female education had a much larger impact on poverty than other factors, including male education.²⁸

¹¹ Sources: www.peets.com/sustainable/highlights.asp and www.peets.com/who_we_are/community_hermanas.asp.

¹² Source: Bogui, N. and Belleau, M. (1999): *Réalisation du diagnostic Genre et Développement*, SOCODEVI, quoted in *The role of certification and producer support in promoting gender equality in cocoa production*, UTZ CERTIFIED Solidaridad-Certification Support Network in cooperation with Oxfam Novib, February 2009.

¹³ Source: Agyare-Kwabi, P. (2009): *Gender mainstreaming into the CNFA, BMGF-funded cocoa project in Ghana*, Gender assessment report, first draft.

¹⁴ Source: "Executive Summary: Investing in women as drivers of economic growth." In *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2008, p.2.

¹⁵ Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2006): *World agriculture: towards 2030/2050. Interim Report. Prospects for food, nutrition, agriculture and major commodity groups*, p.31.

¹⁶ McGranahan, D., Mitlin, D., Satterthwaite, D., Tacoli, C., and Turok, I. (2009): *Africa's urban transition and the role of regional collaboration*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

¹⁷ Source: Lastarria-Cornhiel, S. (2008): *Feminisation of agriculture: trends and driving forces. Background paper for the World Development Report 2008*, p.8.

¹⁸ Agyare-Kwabi, P. (2009): *Gender mainstreaming into the CNFA*.

¹⁹ Lastarria-Cornhiel, S. (2008): *Feminisation of agriculture*, p.8.

²⁰ This research was conducted by the Lorna Young Foundation.

²¹ Source: email correspondence from Shirin Moayyad, 7 May 2010.

²² Source: interview with Dennis Macray, Director, Ethical Sourcing, Starbucks, 12 August 2009, telephone interview.

²³ Source: "Executive Summary: Investing in women as drivers of economic growth." In *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2008, p.2.

²⁴ Source: World Bank (2007): *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development*, World Bank, Washington, D.C.

²⁵ Source: Quisumbing, A. and Maluccio, J. (2000): *Intrahousehold Allocation and Gender Relations: New Empirical Evidence from Four Developing Countries*, FCND Discussion Paper 84, IFPRI, Washington, D.C.

²⁶ See for example ILO/UNICEF (1997): *Strategies for eliminating child labour: prevention, removal and rehabilitation (synthesis document)*. *International Conference on Child Labour*, Oslo, Norway.

²⁷ Source: Department for International Development (2005): *Gender equality at the heart of development: why the role of women is crucial in ending world poverty*, DFID, London.

²⁸ Sources: Datt, G. and Joliffe, D. (1998): *The Determinants of Poverty in Egypt*, IFPRI, Washington, D.C.; and Datt, G., Simler, G., and Mukherjee, S. (1999): *The Determinants of Poverty in Mozambique*, IFPRI, Washington, D.C.

Section 3: Increasing Women’s Membership and Participation in Smallholder Sourcing Schemes

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all food companies that source one or more products directly from smallholders. It is particularly relevant to outgrower managers, smallholder sourcing managers, and buyers.

Key points: Poorer access to land, education, and other productive resources means that fewer women than men are (a) members of company contract farming schemes and smallholder producer groups, and (b) represented in associated management structures.

To encourage more women to become members, consider:

- Ensuring that the membership criteria for your contract farming schemes and producer groups offer equal opportunities for women and men.
- Proactively recruiting for women members.
- Encouraging men to give a share of their land or crops to their wives, so that women can become members in their own right.

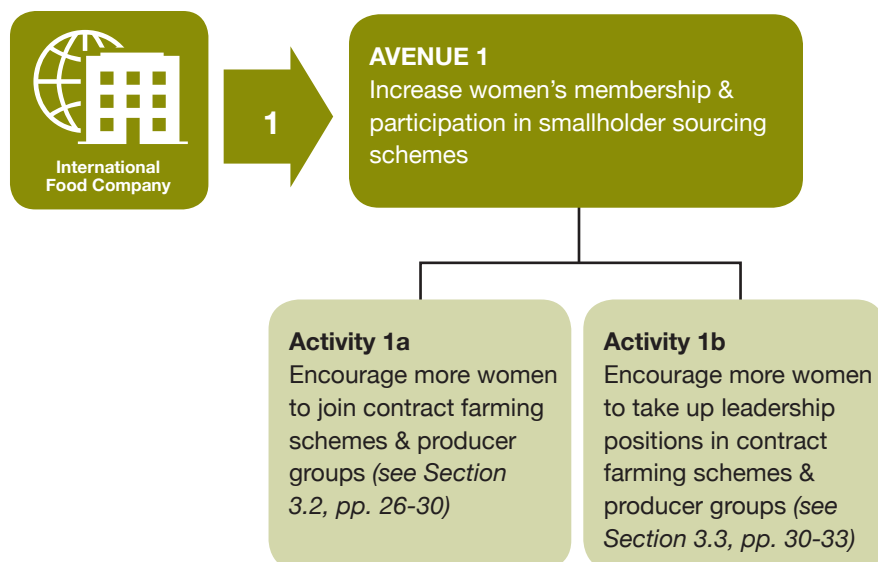
To support more women to take up leadership or management positions, consider:

- Introducing quotas for women’s representation on relevant committees or boards.
- Encouraging and supporting women to stand for election to these positions.
- Explaining the importance and benefits of women’s representation to men.

This section covers Avenue 1 of the four avenues for engagement.

DIAGRAM 2

Avenue 1 For Engagement: Increase Women’s Membership And Participation In Smallholder Sourcing Schemes



3.1 Introduction

Women are underrepresented both as general members and as committee members in company contract farming schemes, as well as in smallholder producer groups that international food companies typically source from (see Section 1.1.1). In situations where the company has a direct sourcing relationship with smallholders or smallholder groups, much can be done to help redress this imbalance. This section sets out the steps that companies can take.

- **Section 3.2** provides guidance about what companies can do to increase women's membership in contract farming schemes and producer groups.
- **Section 3.3** provides guidance about how to support more women to take up leadership positions within group and scheme management structures.

3.2 Encourage More Women to Join Contract Farming Schemes and Producer Groups (*Avenue 1, Activity 1a*)

3.2.1 Introduction

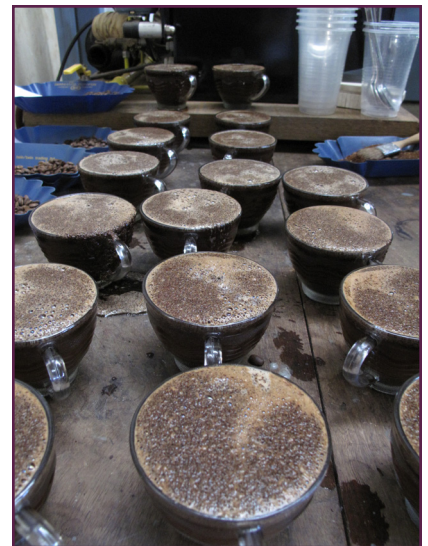
This subsection provides guidance about what companies can do to encourage more women to join their contract farming schemes or the producer groups they source from.

- **Section 3.2.2** explains some of the reasons that women are less likely than men to become members of these groups and schemes.
- **Section 3.2.3** summarizes the potential commercial benefits of increasing women's membership.
- **Sections 3.2.4 through 3.2.7** outline four key steps that companies can take to increase women's membership, providing practical guidance and examples.

3.2.2 What Needs Fixing?

As already noted, fewer women than men are members of company contract farming schemes and smallholder producer groups. Key reasons for this include:

- Only a small percentage of women in Africa own land. For example, women own just 10 percent of the land in Cameroon,²⁹ and only “a fraction” of the land in Uganda.³⁰ Yet land ownership is often a prerequisite for becoming a registered member of company contract farming schemes, producer groups, and cooperatives.³¹
- Other common membership requirements of contract farming schemes and producer groups can also inadvertently discourage or prevent women from becoming members (see Section 3.2.4).
- In many African societies, women are considered responsible for producing subsistence crops, which can make it more difficult for women to release land and labor for cash crop production.
- In contrast, cash crops are typically perceived to be men's responsibility or domain. This means that even where crops have traditionally been grown by women, men can take over control of production and income when these crops enter higher-value export markets.³²
- Women typically have less access to credit and financial resources to buy agricultural inputs and associated equipment such as pesticide sprayers. For example, a 1990 study of credit schemes in Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Zimbabwe found that women received less than 10 percent of all credit given to smallholders and only 1 percent of the total credit extended to agriculture.³³ Yet production of export crops typically requires high levels of inputs.
- Women's lower education and literacy levels can create a real or perceived barrier to joining “formal” contract farming schemes and producer organizations.³⁴



Checking the coffee quality at Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise Ltd (Mbale, Uganda). Both the chief and deputy coffee quality officers at Gumutindo are young women: the result of gender-sensitive recruitment policies.

Because women are less likely to become contract farmers, outgrowers, or members of relevant producer groups, women lose out not only on the income from crop sales but also from other services that many companies provide to their contract farmers, such as training, prefinancing, and provision of inputs.

3.2.3 Potential Commercial Benefits

Supporting more women to become members of your contract farming scheme or smallholder supplier groups will not only help improve women's income and access to productive resources—it can also deliver the following commercial benefits for your company:

- Improving or maintaining crop quality (see Section 2.2)
- Increasing productivity through improving incentives for women producers (see Section 2.3.2)
- Growing the supply base (see Section 2.5)
- Improving access to premium markets (see Section 2.6)

3.2.4 To Increase Women's Membership: Ensure that Membership Criteria Offer Equal Opportunities to Women and Men

Many contract farming schemes and producer organizations apply formal or informal membership eligibility criteria that can inadvertently make it difficult for women to become members. For example:

- **Requiring land ownership or registration:** Requiring that members must own the land on which the purchased crop is grown, through possession of legal or traditional land rights (see Section 3.2.2).
- **Stipulating minimum production or harvest volumes:** Requiring that smallholders must be producing a minimum volume of the crop to become members, to demonstrate that they are “serious farmers.”³⁵ Such criteria can make it difficult for women to join, because they typically own smaller farms than men and so may not be able to meet minimum volume requirements.
- **Registering only heads of household as members:** Registering all farms under the name of the “head of household,” or requiring that all members must be a household head.³⁶ There are two problems with this approach. First, it is often assumed that a household head must be male, yet in many parts of Africa female-headed households make up a significant proportion of total households (see Section 2.5.2). Second, in many parts of Africa, husbands and wives are allocated separate plots of land, each managing production and controlling the income from their own farms or plots.³⁷ Registering a woman's farm under her husband's name will therefore risk depriving her of the income from that farm (see Section 3.2.5).

Therefore, if you operate a contract farming or outgrower scheme, make sure that the membership criteria do not discriminate, either explicitly or implicitly, against women becoming members, and wherever possible avoid using the types of membership criteria that are outlined here. Instead, consider basing membership eligibility on the principle of control: as long as you have been assigned land where you have control over the produce, you can become a member, regardless of whether you have ownership rights over the land itself.

If you source from established producer groups rather than individual contract farmers, encourage and support these groups to review their membership criteria and to make necessary changes to improve women's access to membership. Although your influence in these sourcing situations is likely to be less direct compared to a contract farming arrangement, steps you can take include:

- Amending your ethical sourcing principles or code of practice for smallholder suppliers, so that supplier groups are required or encouraged to adopt gender-sensitive membership criteria as well as to implement the usual environmental and labor standards criteria.
- Amending the conditions in your supply contracts, to require that producer groups take steps to improve their membership criteria as a condition for continuing supply.

- Educating your supplier groups about the potential benefits of increasing women’s membership (such as improved quality, productivity, and market access), for example as part of routine training sessions that you provide to your suppliers.
- Providing pricing or other financial incentives to supplier groups that take proactive measures to encourage women’s membership.

Practical instances of gender-sensitive membership criteria for producer groups and cooperatives are provided in Examples 3a and 3b.

Examples 3a, 3b: Membership criteria—working toward equal opportunities for women and men

Finlays, Kenya: The Food Retail Industry Challenge Fund (FRICH) project is supporting Finlays’ tea outgrowers to set up five new cooperatives. To ensure that women as well as men outgrowers can join the cooperatives in their own name, the project has decided to base membership eligibility on having been assigned land *where you have control over the produce*; formal land title is not necessary (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

Karagwe District Cooperative Union (KDCU), Tanzania: Membership eligibility for KDCU is such that anyone who owns or has control of one or more coffee trees can become a member of their primary societies. Although this still constitutes a barrier to entry for many women (women still make up less than 20 percent of overall membership), basing membership on ownership or control of crops still offers more opportunities to women than many other alternatives, such as basing membership on land ownership (see Appendix 1, Case Study 6).

3.2.5 To Increase Women’s Membership: Ensure that Women Who Are *De Facto* Main Producers or Decision-Makers Are Registered in Their Own Name

It is common practice in some parts of Africa (in Kenya, for example) for female farmers to register in producer groups and outgrower schemes under the name of a husband or male relative, even where they are eligible to join in their own name. This may be due to pressure from husbands or male relatives who seek to take control of the purchase contracts and expected income. For example, Finlays has found that about a third of the households involved in their outgrower scheme are effectively female-headed households, where men have migrated to work off the farm and have left their wives to tend the tea gardens. However, the farms are often still registered in the name of the husband or other male relative, and hence the contracts with Finlays are also drawn up in the husband’s name (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

Therefore, if you operate a contract farming or outgrower scheme, take proactive measures to ensure that outgrower registration and contracts are made out in the name of the individual who is the main producer or decision-maker. If you source from established producer groups, take steps to encourage these groups to adopt similar measures (see Example 3c). See Section 3.2.4 for suggestions about how to influence supplier groups.

Example 3c: Ensuring that women farmers are registered in their own name

Finlays, Kenya: The new outgrower cooperatives that are being set up with support from the FRICH project have specified that membership eligibility is based on having been allocated land where you have control over the produce. On this basis, the project is insisting that if it is a woman who is the *de facto* main producer or decision-maker, it is she who must be registered as the member. If the husband or male relative doesn’t agree to this principle, the project will not accept the household into membership (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

3.2.6 To Increase Women's Membership: Take Proactive Steps to Recruit Women Members

For the reasons outlined in Section 3.2.2, women may be more reluctant than men to join contract farming schemes and producer groups, or may assume that it will be difficult for women to join. Therefore, in contract farming situations, take proactive measures to ensure that women as well as men farmers are informed about your scheme, about the benefits it offers, and about that fact that women as well as men can join. If you are sourcing from established producer groups, encourage and support these groups to take similar measures. (See Section 3.2.4 for suggestions about how to influence supplier groups.) Examples 3d and 3e illustrate practical instances of proactive recruitment measures.

Examples 3d, 3e: Proactively recruiting for women members

Eastern Produce, Kenya: Eastern Produce explicitly told local communities that, unlike many other outgrower schemes, women as well as men were welcome to join the Eastern Produce scheme. Women farmers who were interviewed expressed their appreciation of the company's openness to women members and welcomed the opportunity to join the scheme in their own right (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

Nasufwa primary society, Uganda: Following encouragement from Twin,³⁸ a female board member of Nasufwa primary society set up a women's drama group to encourage women coffee farmers to join the society (among other aims). The drama piece they developed raises awareness about the benefits of membership to women farmers. Their efforts have been successful at getting more women to join (see Appendix 1, Case Study 5).

3.2.7 To Increase Women's Membership: Encourage Men to Give a Share of Their Land or Crops to Their Wives or Other Female Family Members

In many communities and social groups in Africa, women have little control over crops, let alone control or ownership of land. In such situations, it will be difficult to increase women's membership of contract farming schemes or producer groups unless proactive measures are taken to encourage redistribution of crops or land between men and women.

Therefore, in such situations, encourage and support male contract farmers to give a portion of their crops or land to their wives, so that women can register as outgrowers or contract farmers in their own right. If you source from established producer groups rather than from individual contract farmers, encourage and support these groups to take similar actions. (See Section 3.2.4 for suggestions about how to influence supplier groups.) Although you may feel reluctant to "interfere" with traditional tenure practices, remember that a more balanced distribution of land and crops between husband and wife can increase productivity, benefiting both the household as a whole and your company (see Sections 2.3.2 and 2.7). Moreover, Examples 3f and 3g show that companies and other external organizations *can* successfully challenge traditional land and crop ownership practices.

Examples 3f, 3g: Encouraging men to give a portion of their land or crops to female household members

Eastern Produce, Kenya: When the EPK Outgrower Empowerment Project was first set up in 2005/6, only 2 percent of its members were women, reflecting the low level of land and crop ownership among women in the local (Nandi) communities. To encourage greater participation of women in OEP and the EPK outgrower scheme, OEP encouraged male members to swear affidavits to give some of their land to their wives. This enables the women to register with the Kenya Tea Board as tea farmers, which in turn means they can register as EPK outgrowers and OEP members. These efforts have met with considerable success, as evidenced by the increase in women OEP members from 2 percent of the membership in 2005/6, to 13 percent in 2009 (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

Karagwe District Cooperative Union, Tanzania: Following earlier work to raise awareness of gender issues in KDCU societies, Twin supported KDCU to organize a women's campaign planning workshop in 2007. The workshop brought together one female board member or representative from each of KDCU's 74 societies to discuss and plan what each representative could do to increase women's membership in their own societies. As a result, each participant agreed to lobby their society's board to encourage male members to give a portion of their coffee trees to their wives. Some of these women have clearly been successful in their efforts: overall female membership of KDCU societies increased by 22 percent over the following year (from 2,930 women members in 2007/8 to 3,573 in 2008/9), compared to only a 4 percent increase in male membership over the same period (see Appendix 1, Case Study 6).

3.3 Encourage Women to Take Up Leadership and Management Positions in Contract Farming Schemes and Producer Groups (*Avenue 1, Activity 1b*)

3.3.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance about what companies can do to encourage more women to take up leadership positions in the management structures of contract farming schemes (for example, buying committees) or in smallholder producer groups that supply your company.

- **Section 3.3.2** explains some of the reasons that women are typically underrepresented in governance structures.
- **Section 3.3.3** summarizes the potential commercial benefits of increasing women's representation.
- **Sections 3.3.4 through 3.3.6** outline three key steps that companies can take to improve the situation, providing practical guidance and examples.

3.3.2 What Needs Fixing?

Even where a significant proportion of the overall membership of producer groups or contract farming schemes is female, women tend to be underrepresented in group committees and boards (see Section 1.1.1). Typical reasons for women's underrepresentation in governance positions include:

- **Cultural beliefs and practices**, whereby women are perceived to be unsuitable for leadership positions. As a result, women may lack the confidence to put themselves forward for election.³⁹
- **Women's lower education and literacy levels**, because literacy and higher educational qualifications are often considered (either officially or unofficially) as prerequisites for becoming a committee member.⁴⁰
- **Women's greater household responsibilities**, which mean that many women struggle to find time to attend committee meetings and meet other responsibilities of office.⁴¹

3.3.3 Potential Commercial Benefits

Getting more women into leadership positions will not only help ensure that women members and their priorities and concerns are better represented in group decision-making; it can also deliver commercial benefits to your company. Our field research shows that having more female committee members can:

- Reduce management costs by improving communications with outgrowers and producer groups, and streamlining dispute resolution processes (see Section 2.4).
- Help boost female membership numbers overall,⁴² which in turn can deliver further commercial benefits, as outlined in Section 3.2.3.

3.3.4 To Support Women Leaders: Introduce Quotas for Women's Representation on Boards and Committees

Our study indicates that quotas for women's representation are an essential component of any approach to increasing women's role in the governance of producer groups and contract farming schemes. Quotas were used in four out of the five case study initiatives that had made successful interventions to increase women's representation, and in virtually all of the successful initiatives that were identified through our secondary research. Moreover, our findings indicate that it is easier to establish quotas when a new producer group or contract farming scheme is being set up, rather than later on when the group or scheme is already well-established.

Therefore, if you operate a contract farming scheme, consider introducing quotas for women's representation in the relevant outgrower management committees, such as buying committees. If you source from established producer groups or cooperatives, encourage these groups to introduce quotas for relevant governance bodies. (See Section 3.2.4 for suggestions about how to influence supplier groups.) If you are planning to set up a new contract farming scheme or support the development of new producer groups, make sure that you establish and enforce gender equality principles and quotas as soon as possible, to maximize the chance of success. Examples 3h and 3i summarize two different types of quota systems that have been effectively implemented.

Examples 3h, 3i: Quota systems for ensuring women's representation in governance bodies

Kuapa Kokoo, Ghana: Quotas for women's representation on Kuapa Kokoo (KK) primary society committees and district-level committees were established from the beginning, when KK was formed (1993).⁴³ At the primary society level, the initial stipulation was that at least two of the seven committee members should be female. After the principle of female representation and the initial quotas became widely accepted and implemented, KK then increased the quota from two to three female members (out of a total of seven committee members). In addition, quotas were also established for representation at their annual general meeting (AGM), KK's key decision-making forum: one of the two AGM representatives from each society must be a woman. Interestingly, although no gender quotas exist for the national-level governance body (the KK Farmers' Union, elected at the AGM), over half (12 of the 20) of the current KKFU Board are women (see Appendix 1, Case Study 2).

Finlays, Kenya: When Finlays in Kenya first established approximately 100 buying centers to help administer their outgrower scheme, they asked the outgrowers to form buying center committees. They stipulated that each center must elect three representatives, of which one must be a woman, one a man and one a "youth." Following advice and training from the Co-operative College of Kenya through the FRICH Project, they have further revised the buying center committee structure to allow for four elected representatives in total: one older man, one older woman, one young man, and one young woman (see Appendix 2, Case Study 4).

3.3.5 To Support Women Leaders: Encourage and Support Women to Stand for Election

For the reasons outlined in Section 3.3.2, women are typically more reluctant than men to put themselves forward for election to committees or boards, especially in the absence of gender quotas. Therefore, if you operate a smallholder contract farming scheme, take steps to encourage and support women to stand for election in relevant smallholder committees. If you source from established producer groups, encourage those groups to adopt similar measures. (See Section 3.2.4 for suggestions about how to influence supplier groups.) Practical examples of possible measures are provided in Examples 3j and 3k.

Examples 3j, 3k: Encouraging and supporting women to stand for election to committees and boards

Finlays, Kenya: As well as introducing quotas for women’s representation in the new cooperative’s governance structures, the FRICH project has also decided to conduct all their initial member training sessions in four separate streams: older women, older men, young women, and young men. This way, from the outset women are given the opportunity to (a) participate in the cooperative’s activities on an equal basis with men, and (b) act collectively to ensure that women have an equal stake in decision-making (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

Gumutindo, Uganda and KDCU, Tanzania: The Twin manager who is responsible for providing training and capacity-building to Twin’s coffee producer groups in East Africa recognizes the importance of informal encouragement in getting women farmers to stand for election. Oliva Kishero, one of the four current female board members of Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise Ltd. (GCCE), is a case in point. The Twin manager first noticed Oliva’s enthusiasm and capabilities as a coffee farmer at a society-level meeting and encouraged her to put herself forward for election to her society’s board. Having successfully achieved this (she was treasurer of her society for six years), she then went on to run for and win a seat on the GCCE board. Similarly, Twin’s representative also encouraged Emiliana Aligaesha to stand for election to the Karagwe District Cooperative Union’s Board (Tanzania). Emiliana was also successful, and is now the first female KDCU Board member, after a decade of solely male leadership (see Appendix 1, Case Studies 5 and 6).

3.3.6 To Support Women Leaders: Explain the Importance and Benefits of Women’s Representation to Men

Any efforts to promote women’s leadership are likely to be met with some level of resistance from local communities, particularly from older men. (See for example Appendix 1, Case Study 7.) Thus, winning the acceptance of male community members is important to ensure success. One key point to stress is the benefits of having women in leadership positions. Another is the principle of equal opportunities: the aim is to ensure that women and men have equal representation, rather than to promote women’s interests at the expense of men’s. Examples 3l and 3m illustrate specific measures that you or your supplier groups can take. (See Section 3.2.4 for suggestions about how to influence supplier groups.)

Example 3l: Explaining the importance and benefits of women’s representation to men

KDCU, Tanzania: As part of the general capacity-building workshops that Twin organizes for its producer groups in East Africa, Twin has introduced awareness-raising sessions to encourage more women to become members and representatives in the cooperatives. In mixed-gender sessions, Twin has encouraged both women and men to identify and debate the advantages of women owning coffee in their own names, of them joining societies, and of them being elected to represent farmers in societies and unions. In these sessions, Twin has emphasized consumer interests: because women make the majority of food purchases,⁴⁴ consumers (mostly women) want to know that women producers at the other end of the supply chain are benefiting from their purchases (see Appendix 1, Case Study 6).

Example 3m: Explaining the importance and benefits of women's representation to men (cont.)

Finlays, Kenya: When the Co-operative College of Kenya introduced the draft bylaws for the new farmer cooperative to be formed by some of Finlays' outgrowers, they met with resistance to the proposed quotas, which would ensure an equal gender and age balance in the cooperative governance structures. After some discussion, the college managed to convince the smallholders that it would be in their long-term interests to ensure that more young people—women and men—were involved in governance: if it is only older men who sit on the committees, there will be no one to take over the running of the cooperative when they are gone (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

²⁹ Source: Mason, K. and Carlsson, M. (2004): *The Development Impact of Gender Equality in Land Rights*, paper presented at the Human Rights and Development: Towards Mutual Reinforcement conference hosted by the New York University School of Law, New York. Quoted in Mehra, R. and Hill Rojas, M. (2008): *Women, food security and agriculture in a global market place*, International Center for Research on Women.

³⁰ Tripp, A. (2004): "Women's Movements, Customary Law, and Land Rights in Africa: The Case of Uganda," *African Studies Quarterly*, 22 March. Quoted in Mehra, R. and Hill Rojas, M. (2008): *Women, food security and agriculture*.

³¹ For example, see: Schneider, K. and Gugerty, M.K. (2010): *Gender and contract farming in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p.4; and Hirway, I. and Lodhia, S. (2008): *Engendering database in co-operatives in Asia-Pacific Region: A Study Report for ICA*, International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi, p.11.

³² See for example Dolan, C. S. (2002): "Gender and witchcraft in agrarian transition: The case of Kenyan horticulture," *Development and Change*, 33(4), pp.659-681.

³³ Source: Quisumbing, A. (1994): *Improving women's agricultural productivity as farmers and workers*, World Bank Education and Social Policy Department Discussion Paper 37, The World Bank, Washington, D.C. Quoted in Mehra, R. and Hill Rojas, M. (2008): *Women, food security and agriculture*.

³⁴ Source: Pauline Tiffen, external adviser to Kuapa Kokoo, April 2010, personal communication.

³⁵ Source: interview with Ian Agnew, Director – Strategy, Lorna Young Foundation, 19 November 2009, telephone interview.

³⁶ For example, see: Majurin, E. (2010): *Promising practices*; and von Bulow, D., & Sørensen, A. (1993): "Gender and contract farming: Tea outgrower schemes in Kenya," *Review of African Political Economy*, 20(56), pp.38-52.

³⁷ For example, see: Alderman, H., Hoddinott, J., Haddad, L. and Udry, C. (1995): *Gender differentials in farm productivity: implications for household efficiency and agricultural policy*, FCND Discussion Paper No. 6, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, D.C.

³⁸ Twin (www.twin.org.uk) is a producer-owned membership organization dedicated to developing the fair trade supply chain for coffee, nuts, cocoa, sugar and fruit farmers.

³⁹ For example, women members of Rumukia and Gikanda coffee cooperatives in Nyeri District, Kenya, believed that men were better at being leaders than women, so board membership should be left to the men. Source: interview with Christina Longden, Director – Operations, Lorna Young Foundation, 29 September 2009, phone interview.

⁴⁰ In Tanzania, for example, government regulations stipulate minimum education requirements for cooperative committee members. See Appendix 1, Case Study 6 in this document.

⁴¹ See for example Hirway, I. and Lodhia, S. (2008): *Engendering database in co-operatives in Asia-Pacific Region*, p.11.

⁴² For example, Pauline Tiffen, external adviser to Kuapa Kokoo, believes that the relatively large number of women in leadership positions has been a key factor contributing to the growth in female membership of Kuapa Kokoo, where women make up over a third of the total membership. The fact that women members feel that their views are well represented encourages them to become or remain members. (Pauline Tiffen, April 2010, personal communication.)

⁴³ Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (2004): *Chains of fortune: linking women producers and workers with global markets*.

⁴⁴ For example, the Marketing to Women conference team estimate that 93 percent of food purchases in the United States are made by women (www.m2w.biz/fast_facts.php).

Section 4: Ensure that Women Benefit from Technical Training, Extension Services, and Production Inputs Provided by Your Company

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all companies that support the provision of technical training, extension services, or production inputs for smallholders. This includes situations where the actual training is delivered by an external organization. It is particularly relevant for outgrower managers, technical managers, and CSR managers, as well as training delivery partners.

Key points: Fewer women than men benefit from agricultural training and extension programs due to their greater domestic responsibilities, lower education levels, and other factors. In addition, women can lose out from credit and input provision schemes due to lack of collateral, poor access to pesticide application equipment, and exposure to women-specific health risks from pesticide use.

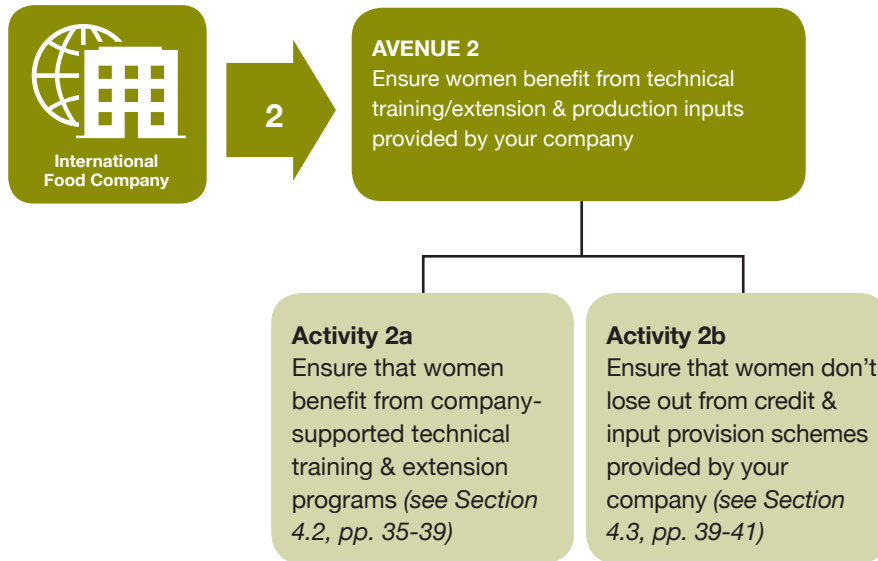
To ensure that women benefit fully from training and extension services:

- Ensure that women as well as men are directly invited to attend training sessions.
- Make sure that the training methods used are appropriate for women as well as men.
- Ensure that an appropriate proportion of farmer-trainers (where used) are female.
- Recruit female extension officers where possible and appropriate.

To ensure that women don't lose out from credit and input provision schemes:

- Ensure that entry and guarantee requirements for credit schemes are women-friendly.
- Improve women's access to pesticide application equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Ensure that women receive information about pesticide application and health risks.
- Consider promoting alternative approaches to crop protection and soil improvement.

This section covers Avenue 2 of the four avenues for engagement.

DIAGRAM 3.**Avenue 2 For Engagement: Ensure That Women Benefit From Technical Training, Extension Services, And Production Inputs Provided By Your Company**

4.1 Introduction

In situations where companies source directly from smallholders, it is common for the company to provide some combination of technical training, extension services, credit, and production inputs to their smallholder suppliers, in order to ensure that target production volumes and quality standards are met. Unfortunately, however, for a number of reasons women tend to benefit less than men from these inputs and services. This section therefore provides guidance about what companies can do to help redress this imbalance.

- **Section 4.2** provides guidance about what companies can do to ensure that women benefit fully from company-supported technical training and extension services.
- **Section 4.3** sets out what companies can do to ensure that women don't lose out from credit and production input provision schemes.

4.2 Ensure that Women Benefit from Company-Supported Technical Training and Extension Programs (Avenue 2, Activity 2a)

4.2.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance about what companies can do to increase women's participation in company-supported technical training and extension programs.

- **Section 4.2.2** introduces the types of technical training and extension programs that companies typically support and explains the key reasons that women are less likely than men to benefit from such programs.
- **Section 4.2.3** summarizes the potential commercial benefits of increasing women's participation in company-supported training and extension programs.
- **Sections 4.2.4 through 4.2.7** outline four key steps that companies can take to improve the situation, providing practical guidance and examples.

4.2.2 What Needs Fixing?

As noted above, it is common for companies that source directly from smallholders to provide technical training or extension services to their smallholder suppliers (examples are **British American Tobacco** in Uganda, and **Homegrown** and **Eastern Produce** in Kenya). Moreover, some international food companies also support smallholder training programs even where they do not source directly from the smallholders involved. In such cases, companies typically rely on one or more external organizations to deliver the actual training, or they join forces with multiple private and public sector partners to support sector-wide training programs. For example:

- **Cargill** has supported the establishment of 54 Farmer Field Schools in partnership with GTZ (the German Agency for Technical Cooperation) and ANADER (the National Rural Development Agency) to teach better agricultural practices to cocoa smallholders in Côte d’Ivoire.⁴⁵
- Several international cocoa companies support the **Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP)**, a private-public sector initiative that aims to generate growth in rural incomes among tree crop farmers in West and Central Africa. Training programs that have been developed and piloted by STCP include Farmer Field Schools and Video Viewing Clubs to improve farming practices among smallholder cocoa farmers in target countries.⁴⁶



A video (on postharvest practices) being shown at a Video Viewing Club (VVC) training session in Ghana. Given low literacy levels among women smallholders in Africa, film is an effective way of getting the message across.

However, in Africa as in most of the developing world, fewer women farmers receive technical training and advice than men (see Section 1.1.1). Key reasons for this include:

- **Most extension officers and trainers are men.** For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that only 15 percent of the world’s agricultural extension agents are women.⁴⁷ Male trainers and extension officers are in turn more likely to select, train, and advise male farmers. Moreover, in some societies women may also face cultural barriers to interacting with male strangers, and so may be further discouraged from participating in training sessions or extension visits.⁴⁸
- **Many rural women in Africa are illiterate or semi-literate**, which can prevent them from registering or benefiting from training sessions. For example, 74 percent of women living in rural areas in Ghana are illiterate,⁴⁹ and in Ethiopia, the female adult literacy rate is only 23 percent, as compared to 50 percent for men.⁵⁰
- **Women typically have greater domestic and childcare responsibilities** than men, and so have less time available to attend training sessions.⁵¹
- Even where women do the majority of farm work, their **husbands are often the registered contract farmers** (see Section 3.2.5) so it is likely that the husband, rather than the wife, will be invited to attend relevant training.

4.2.3 Potential Commercial Benefits

Ensuring that women have full access to your company’s training and extension services will not only help improve women’s technical skills, knowledge, and confidence; it can also help **improve crop productivity and quality**, as Section 2.3.1 shows.

4.2.4 To Ensure that Women Benefit from Training: Ensure that Women are Directly Invited to Attend Training Sessions

Because women are less likely to attend training sessions (for the reasons outlined in Section 4.2.2), proactive measures are needed to ensure women’s attendance. An important but simple step is to ensure that women are directly informed about and invited to attend your training sessions. Use of quotas to ensure a fixed proportion of female trainees can also be considered. In both cases, make sure that both of the following groups are included:

- Women who are registered contract farmers or producer group members in their own right
- Wives and other female family members who perform a substantial amount of the work on the farms of male contract farmers or member farmers

If your company does not deliver the actual training, use your financial influence to encourage the implementing organizations to adopt the above measures. Two instances of initiatives that have adopted relevant approaches or measures are provided in Examples 4a and 4b.

Examples 4a, 4b: Ensuring that women are invited and encouraged to attend training sessions

Eastern Produce, Kenya: In the local Nandi community where EPK operates, men own the majority of the tea smallholdings, so the large majority of EPK outgrowers are men. However, women do the majority of the work on their farms. In recognition of this, EPK has welcomed wives of their predominantly male outgrowers to attend all of the field days and training sessions that they organize for their outgrowers; indeed, women often make up the majority of participants at these events (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

KDCU, Tanzania: Twin has set and enforced specific gender quotas for attendance at the capacity-building workshops that they organize for KDCU societies. Working with about 10 societies per workshop, they ask each society to send six representatives. These representatives must include the chair, the society manager, and sometimes the treasurer; also at least three of the representatives must be women. Although some societies continue to ignore the rules, the quotas have by and large been effective: on average, women make up 40 to 45 percent of participants at these workshops (see Appendix 1, Case Study 6).

4.2.5 To Ensure that Women Benefit from Training: Make Sure Training Methods Used Are Appropriate for Women

Many of the barriers that women typically face to attending training (see Section 4.2.2) can be removed through appropriate design of training programs. In particular, appropriate selection of the location and venue, the timing and duration of the training sessions, and the types of learning materials used can be key to attracting more women members. Therefore, consult your target female (as well as male) trainees to find out what works for them. Ensure that:

- **The location and venue of training sessions is appropriate.** Make sure that training sessions are held in a place in which women feel comfortable, and which they can easily reach from their homes.
- **The timing and length of the sessions is appropriate.** Make sure that the time of day at which the training sessions are held is compatible with women's domestic and other responsibilities. Consider dividing the training into more numerous but shorter sessions, because women often find it difficult to take out a large block of time from their daily chores.
- **The training methods and materials used are appropriate for prevailing literacy levels.** Find out the level of literacy among your target women trainees, and make sure that the training materials and methods used will be easily accessible, given prevailing literacy levels.

If an external partner organization is responsible for training delivery, use your financial leverage in the partnership to encourage the partner to address the above issues in training design. Examples 4c and 4d show how these issues can be effectively addressed.

Examples 4c, 4d: Ensuring that training methods are appropriate for women as well as men

Video Viewing Clubs (VVCs), Ghana: In designing the VVC methodology, STCP took the following steps to ensure that the training would be fully accessible to their target trainees, female cocoa smallholders with typically low levels of literacy:

- In each target community, women trainees were fully involved in choosing the venue for the training sessions.
- The length, timing, and frequency of VVC sessions have been adapted to suit women's needs in each community: meeting fortnightly rather than weekly, holding shorter sessions, and scheduling training on taboo days.⁵²
- The three key training media used are fully accessible to illiterate farmers: (a) short films/videos, (b) facilitated discussions using a picture guide, and (c) practical demonstrations and practice of the techniques on one of the trainee's farms.
- All the training materials (videos and picture guide) were developed in close consultation with female and male cocoa farmers to ensure that the messages were understandable and engaging to the target audience.

Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate, Kenya: In recognition of the additional household responsibilities that are typically borne by women smallholders (child care, domestic duties, and other caring commitments), female participants at the initial needs assessment will be asked to propose and agree the most suitable timing and venue for the training in order to maximize women's attendance. The literacy levels of women farmers will also be assessed; this will guide the design of the training materials and methods, and help ensure that potential low literacy levels will not be an obstacle to women's full participation in the training course.⁵³

4.2.6 To Ensure that Women Benefit from Training: Ensure that an Appropriate Proportion of Farmer Trainers are Female

Experience shows that, in general, female as opposed to male trainers and extension workers are more effective at training women farmers in Africa. Therefore, when using farmers as trainers (for example, in Farmer Field Schools), make sure that a proportionate number of the selected farmer-trainers are female. For example, if 40 percent of the farmers you want to train are women, aim for 40 percent of your trainers to be female. Typically, this will require reviewing the selection criteria used for recruiting farmer-trainers; in particular, it may be necessary to revise minimum education requirements to take account of women's lower education levels.

If an external partner organization is responsible for training delivery, use your financial leverage in the partnership to encourage the partner to adopt appropriate measures. Successful instances of using female farmer trainers are provided in Examples 4e and 4f.

Example 4e: Ensuring that an appropriate proportion of farmer-trainers are women

Eastern Produce, Kenya: When EPK Outgrower Empowerment Project (OEP) developed its current farmer-training program, it wanted to train women as well as men farmers. It recognized that in order to reach women, they needed women trainers. To get around women's lower education levels, they adopted different trainer selection criteria for women and men. For women, OEP looked mainly for individuals who had strong community participation roles. For men, in addition to community participation, they also took educational and professional qualifications into account (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

Example 4f: Ensuring that an appropriate proportion of farmer-trainers are women (cont.)

Video Viewing Clubs, Ghana: Because the VVCs in the pilot phase in Ghana were for women only, STCP recognized that they needed to use all-female facilitators (trainers) to ensure effective communication with the trainees. To become a facilitator, the women had to be cocoa farmers themselves, be able to read and write English, and have attended secondary school. At times it could be difficult to find women who fit these criteria, given low education levels among rural women in Ghana and small numbers of female cocoa farmers in some communities. However, given that only one facilitator is needed per community, the VVC team did eventually manage to identify appropriate facilitators for all target communities (see Appendix 1, Case Study 1).

4.2.7 To Ensure that Women Benefit from Training: Recruit Female or Gender-Sensitive Extension Staff Where Possible

As noted in Section 4.2.6, female extension officers tend to be more effective at reaching and supporting women farmers. Therefore, if your company employs field-level extension officers, aim to recruit a mix of female as well as male extension staff wherever possible. (Section 7.2.5 provides further guidance and examples about how this can be done.)

4.3 Ensure that Women Don't Lose Out from Credit and Input Provision Schemes Provided by Your Company (*Avenue 2, Activity 2b*)

4.3.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance about what companies can do to ensure that women as well as men have access to the production inputs and credit provided by your company, and that the special health requirements of woman are safeguarded.

- **Section 4.3.2** introduces some of the mechanisms that are used by food companies to provide credit and production inputs to smallholder suppliers and explains why women may benefit less than men from these schemes.
- **Section 4.3.3** summarizes the potential commercial benefits of increasing women's access to these schemes.
- **Sections 4.3.4 through 4.3.7** outline four key steps that companies can take to improve the situation, providing practical guidance and examples.

4.3.2 What Needs Fixing?

As noted above, in situations where international food companies source directly from smallholders, it is common practice for the company to provide the smallholders with production inputs or credit with which to purchase these inputs. In many cases, such as **Eastern Produce Kenya** and **Finlays in Kenya**, the company simply provides necessary inputs to the farmers at the required time, and then deducts the cost of these inputs from the price paid for the purchased crop.

Other companies prefer to use different credit mechanisms, partly because there can be a significant risk of default under the simple prefinancing arrangements described above—for example, where the farmer, after receiving “free” inputs from Company A, decides to sell his crop to Company B, therefore avoiding having to pay for the inputs received. These companies also provide inputs on credit, but establish alternative or additional mechanisms to manage and guarantee repayment of the cost of the inputs. Examples of this are **Cottco** in Zimbabwe (see Example 4g in Section 4.3.4) and **UVAN Ltd.** in Uganda.⁵⁴

In addition to providing the actual inputs, many companies also provide training and advice about how these inputs need to be applied, in recognition of smallholders' limited knowledge of agrochemicals.

Although in theory women and men stand to benefit in equal measure from these services and inputs, in practice women can lose out for the following reasons:

- Entry requirements and guarantee mechanisms used by many credit schemes can effectively preclude most women from joining (see Section 4.3.4).
- Women's poor access to pesticide application equipment and PPE can prevent women from using pesticides, even if the inputs are available (see Section 4.3.5).
- Women are at risk from women-specific reproductive health problems associated with pesticide exposure, yet women are less likely than men to receive information about these risks (see Section 4.3.6).



Women members of a Kuapo Kokoo primary society, Ghana. Women as well as men have access to loans from Kuapa's Credit Union, since qualification for a loan depends on approval by the society's executive committee: collateral is not required.

4.3.3 Potential Commercial Benefits

Ensuring that women smallholders have access to credit, relevant production inputs, and information will help ensure appropriate and timely application of necessary fertilizers and pesticides, thus helping to improve productivity and crop quality.

4.3.4 To Give Women Access to Production Inputs: Ensure that Entry and Guarantee Requirements for Your Credit Schemes are Women-Friendly

Typical entry requirements for many credit schemes make it difficult for women to take out loans. Therefore, if your company operates a credit scheme for smallholders that goes beyond a simple deduction system (see Section 4.3.2), review the existing entry requirements and guarantee systems that are used in the scheme, and ensure that they do not implicitly prevent women from joining. In particular:

- **Make sure that a man's signature is not required** to approve the loan or prefinancing arrangement. It is common for credit schemes to require a male relative or "head of household" to approve a loan, but this can discourage or prevent women from joining the scheme.⁵⁵
- **Ensure that "women's" assets are accepted as collateral where this is required.** Most women smallholders do not have formal ownership of land or other large assets that are typically requested as collateral. Accepting assets that are more typically owned by women, such as jewelry or household utensils, will help increase women's access to the scheme.⁵⁶
- **Consider group guarantee schemes as an alternative to collateral requirements.** Horticultural and other companies in East and Southern Africa have successfully used group guarantee schemes to ensure repayment of loans by smallholder suppliers (see Example 4g).

Example 4g: Using group guarantee mechanisms in smallholder credit schemes

The Cotton Company (Cottco), Zimbabwe: Cottco, the largest cotton company in the country, has been operating a smallholder contract scheme since 1992/3. The company offers credit in the form of physical inputs (seed, fertilizer, and pesticides) to smallholder groups of between five and 25 members. The whole group is penalized if one member defaults, so there is an incentive for peer policing to ensure repayment. As of 1998 there were 50,000 smallholders involved in the scheme, and the repayment rate for the 1997/98 season was 98 percent.⁵⁷

4.3.5 To Give Women Access to Production Inputs: Improve Women’s Access to Pesticide Application Equipment and PPE

The cost of spraying equipment and proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is prohibitive for many smallholders, particularly women.⁵⁸ This can lead to safety shortcuts or discourage women from using pesticides altogether. Therefore, consider providing shared spraying equipment and PPE to your smallholder groups, or go one step further, as **Hortico** has done in Example 4h.

Example 4h: Providing pesticide application services for smallholders

Hortico, Zimbabwe: As a leading horticultural exporter in Zimbabwe, Hortico provides a pesticide application service for its vegetable outgrowers, 60 percent of whom are women. The company employs and trains its own workers to apply pesticides on smallholders’ vegetable farms, thus removing the need for smallholders to buy their own spraying equipment and PPE.⁵⁹

4.3.6 To Safeguard Women’s Health: Ensure that Women Receive Information about Pesticide Application and Health Risks

It is well-documented that inappropriate application and storage of agrochemicals carries significant health risks, with particular concerns for women’s reproductive health.⁶⁰ Therefore, make sure that relevant application instructions and health and safety information are effectively communicated to women as well as men. This means ensuring that:

- **Relevant information is communicated directly to the women**, not via husbands or male relatives. It can often be assumed that purchase and application of agrochemicals is a “man’s” job, but independent women farmers may themselves be applying fertilizers and pesticides, or be instructing others on how to do so.
- **The information is presented in forms that women will understand.** This means providing written instructions in relevant local languages, and supplementing these with other nonwritten forms of communication, such as audio-cassettes, pictorial guides, and organized face-to-face meetings where these issues can be discussed.
- **Ensure that wives (and other family members) of male contract farmers and member farmers** are also informed about the key health risks and how they can be minimized. Although men are normally responsible for applying and spraying pesticides, women and other family members are often involved in related activities that also expose them to associated health risks, including mixing pesticides, weeding during the spraying season, and re-using pesticide containers for domestic purposes.⁶¹

4.3.7 To Safeguard Women’s Health: Consider Promoting Alternative Approaches to Crop Protection and Soil Improvement

Many argue that use of pesticides and other agrochemicals is intrinsically inappropriate for women smallholders in developing countries, due to the high financial cost and health risks involved, and that therefore alternative approaches to crop protection and soil improvement should be promoted instead. Indeed, there is evidence to show that approaches such as integrated crop or pest management (IPM/ICM) can be beneficial for women smallholders when compared to relying on agrochemicals alone, because they generally involve lower financial costs.⁶²

Therefore, where possible, consider promoting and training your smallholder suppliers to adopt IPM/ICM techniques. This will also help you meet the environmental production criteria that are found in most sustainability certification standards, such as GLOBALG.A.P and Rainforest Alliance standards. However, bear in mind that IPM approaches typically involve increased labor requirements; these requirements must be assessed and managed to ensure that they do not outweigh the financial cost savings and health benefits to be gained (see Section 5.6, page 46).

- ⁴⁵ Source: Cargill factsheet: *Sustainable and responsible cocoa activities in West Africa*.
- ⁴⁶ Source: www.treecrops.org
- ⁴⁷ Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation (2007): *Gender and Food Security: facts and figures*. FAO, Rome.
- ⁴⁸ Source: “Module 7: Gender and agricultural innovation and education – Thematic Note 1: Gender in extension organizations.” In *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*, p.270.
- ⁴⁹ Source: survey conducted by Ghana Statistical Service in 2000, quoted in Agyare-Kwabi, P. (2009): *Gender mainstreaming into the CNFA*, p.25.
- ⁵⁰ Source: 2004 data from World Development Indicators database, www.worldbank.org/data. Quoted in: The World Bank and International Food Policy Research Institute (2010): *Gender and governance in rural services*.
- ⁵¹ Source: Nhat Tuyen, N. (1997): “Women Farmers and IPM Farmer Field Schools in Viet Nam,” *ILEIA Newsletter* 13 (4): 20. Quoted in: “Module 12: Gender in crop agriculture – Thematic Note 3: Gender in crop protection,” in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*, p.550.
- ⁵² “Taboo days” are weekly rest days that vary among villages. Farmers typically do not work on their farms on taboo days, and so have more time to attend meetings.
- ⁵³ Source: email correspondence from Christina Longden, Project Manager, Lorna Young Foundation, 12 May 2010.
- ⁵⁴ Source: *Uganda Vanilla Growers Association*. Case study presented in: *Smallholders in export horticulture: a guide to best practice*, Natural Resources Institute, 2003.
- ⁵⁵ Source: “Module 3: Gender and rural finance – Thematic Note 2: Rural finance products – from access to empowerment” in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*, p.106.
- ⁵⁶ Source: “Module 3, Thematic Note 2” in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*, p.106.
- ⁵⁷ Source: *The Cotton Company of Zimbabwe*. Case study presented in: *Smallholders in export horticulture, 2003*.
- ⁵⁸ See for example Appendix 1, Case Study 1.
- ⁵⁹ Source: *Zimbabwe’s experience with intensively managed outgrower schemes*. Case study presented in: *Smallholders in export horticulture, 2003*.
- ⁶⁰ Source: Module 12, Thematic Note 3, in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*, p.548
- ⁶¹ Sources: Rother, H. A. (2000): “Influences of Pesticide Risk Perception on the Health of Rural South African Women and Children.” *African Newsletter on Occupational Safety and Health* 2: 42–46; and Mancini, F., van Bruggen, A., Jiggins, J., Ambatipudi, A. and Murphy, H. (2005): “Acute Pesticide Poisoning among Female and Male Cotton Growers in India.” *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* 11 (3): 221–32. Quoted in: Module 12, Thematic Note 3, in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*.
- ⁶² Source: Module 12, Thematic Note 3, in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook, 2008*, p.548 and p.550.

Section 5: Ensure that Women Benefit from Sustainability Certification Programs

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all companies that are supporting smallholders to meet sustainability certification standards such as GLOBALG.A.P, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, UTZ CERTIFIED, and organic standards. It is particularly relevant to technical managers, ethical sourcing and ethical trade managers, CSR managers, smallholder sourcing managers, and delivery partners (where relevant).

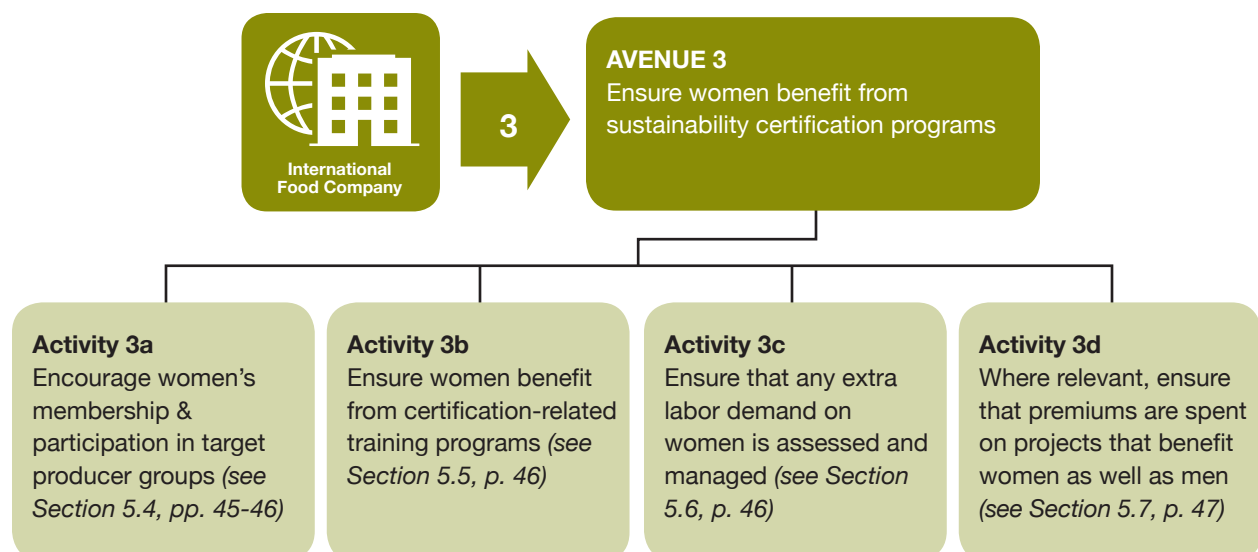
Key points: There is a risk that women will benefit less than men from sustainability certification programs due to their lower membership in producer groups, their lower access to training, and the potential extra labor demand resulting from certification. However, companies can take the following proactive steps to help ensure that women do benefit fully from their sustainability certification schemes:

- Encourage women’s membership and participation in the target producer groups (where relevant).
- Ensure that women can benefit fully from certification-related training activities.
- Ensure that any extra labor demand on women (and men) is assessed and managed equitably.
- Where certification generates a collective premium, ensure that the premium is spent on projects that benefit women as well as men.

This section covers Avenue 3 of the four avenues for engagement.

DIAGRAM 4.

Avenue 3 for engagement: ensure that women benefit from sustainability certification programs



5.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance about what companies can do to ensure that women benefit fully from company-supported sustainability certification programs.

- **Section 5.2** introduces the types of sustainability certification programs that companies typically support and explains the key reasons that women are less likely than men to benefit from such programs.
- **Section 5.3** summarizes the potential commercial benefits of increasing women's participation in these programs.
- **Sections 5.4 through 5.7** outline four key steps that companies can take to improve the situation, providing practical guidance and examples.

5.2 What Needs Fixing?

Many international food companies support programs that help smallholders meet sustainability certification standards such as Fairtrade, organic, GLOBALG.A.P, Rainforest Alliance, and UTZ CERTIFIED standards. Some companies provide direct support to their suppliers to achieve certification. For example:

- **Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate's** ethical trading manager worked directly with Rumukia and Gikanda, two smallholder coffee cooperatives in Kenya, to help them achieve Fairtrade certification (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).
- **Blue Skies**, a U.K.–headquartered fresh fruit processor that maintains field operations in Ghana, South Africa, Egypt, and Brazil,⁶³ supported the formation of Blue Skies Organic Collective Association (BSOC) in 1998 with a view to consolidating their trading relationship with their various small-scale pineapple suppliers in Ghana. In order to meet the requirements of U.K. and other European supermarkets, Blue Skies helped BSOC put in place the systems and facilities required to achieve EurepGAP⁶⁴ certification and also supported the farmers to work toward organic and Fairtrade certification.⁶⁵



Women members of a Kenyan coffee cooperative that supplies Bettys & Taylors. The company has supported the cooperative to achieve Fairtrade certification. (Photo credit: Cristina Talens)

However, larger multinational companies often work in partnership with other companies, relevant certification bodies, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to implement these programs. For example:

- **Kraft Foods** has been supporting a public-private partnership program that involves the Rainforest Alliance, the Sustainable Tree Crops Program, and the ECHOES project, among others, to support cocoa smallholders in Côte d'Ivoire in achieving certification to Rainforest Alliance standards. The initiative worked with six different producer cooperatives to improve productivity and environmental performance, and resulted in approximately 4,000 tonnes of Rainforest Alliance-certified cocoa being sold.⁶⁶
- **Cargill** is partnering with UTZ CERTIFIED, major chocolate manufacturers, retailers, Solidaridad, Oxfam Novib (Netherlands Organisation for International Assistance), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to establish a credible sustainability certification program for mainstream cocoa. The group also supports smallholder groups to improve agricultural, social, and environmental practices.⁶⁷

In theory, both male and female producers can benefit from such support programs. In practice, however, there is a risk that women will benefit less than men unless specific measures are taken to ensure equal access. Key reasons for this include:

- Many such programs work with existing producer groups or aim to set up new smallholder groups to facilitate the certification process. Yet, as Section 3.2.2 explains, women are less likely to be members of such groups due to various barriers to entry that they face.
- Women also tend to face greater constraints to participation in technical training programs unless specific measures are taken to ensure equal access (see Section 4.2.2).
- Some sustainability certification standards can generate extra labor demand, which can fall disproportionately on women. In contrast, women may see little of the additional income or benefits derived from certification (see Section 5.6).

5.3 Potential Commercial Benefits

Ensuring that women benefit fully from sustainability certification programs can help deliver the following business benefits:

- **Improve compliance with the relevant sustainability standards.** Ensuring that women as well as men can take part in certification-related training programs could be key to ensuring compliance with relevant certification standards. Because women typically do a substantial proportion of the work on smallholder export farms, including on farms owned by or registered in a man's name (see Section 2.3.1), women rather than men may be responsible for those stages of production that are critical for compliance, such as post-harvest activities.⁶⁸
- **Improve compliance with quality standards.** As the evidence in Section 2.2 shows, having more women producers in your supply chain can help improve or maintain quality standards, which in turn can help you maintain or gain access to fair trade, organic, or other premium markets where high quality standards are key.

5.4 Encourage Women's Membership and Participation in Target Producer Groups (*Avenue 3, Activity 3a*)

As explained in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.3.2, women are less likely than men to be members or leaders of producer groups unless specific measures are taken to ensure equal access. Therefore, take proactive measures to encourage more women to join and participate in the governance of the target producer groups. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 provide an overview and examples of appropriate measures that you can take. If an external organization is responsible for implementing relevant activities, use your influence in the partnership to encourage the organization to adopt these measures.

If the certification program is supporting the formation of new producer groups, make sure that women's membership and leadership issues are addressed from the outset. Experience indicates that it is easier to instill equal-opportunities principles and quotas when a new group is being formed, rather than later on when the group is already well-established.

If the program is working with established producer groups, consider using the certification process as a catalyst for introducing new measures to increase women's membership and participation. Some of the sustainability certification standards include specific principles or criteria that promote women's increased membership and participation in governance. These can be used to leverage change; for example:

- **The Fairtrade standards** that are relevant for smallholder producer organizations include a section on non-discrimination, which specifies that *"the organization is expected to show how it directly supports members from disadvantaged or minority groups to participate actively in the organization, e.g. by*

assuming organizational responsibilities,” and that “special attention should be given to the participation of female members.”⁶⁹

- The **UTZ CERTIFIED Good Inside** Code of Conduct for Cocoa specifies that certified producer groups must be “*inclusive to all producers,*” and that “*women and men receive equal access to training and equal opportunities for promotion.*” The producer group is also expected to “*organize awareness-raising meetings for producers and their families to inform them on...equal rights and opportunities for women,*” among other issues.⁷⁰

5.5 Ensure that Women Benefit Fully from Certification-related Training Programs (*Avenue 3, Activity 3b*)

As explained in Section 4.2.2, women are less likely to attend and benefit from technical training unless specific steps are taken to ensure equal access. Therefore, take proactive measures to ensure that women can benefit fully from the training activities that are provided as part of your sustainability certification programs, such as training about productivity improvement, good agricultural practices, integrated crop and pest management, record-keeping, and management systems. Section 4.2 provides an overview and examples of appropriate measures you can take. If an external organization is responsible for implementing relevant activities, use your influence in the partnership to encourage it to adopt similar measures.

5.6 Ensure that Any Extra Labor Demand on Women Is Assessed and Managed (*Avenue 3, Activity 3c*)

Adoption of new production methods that are required for sustainability certification, particularly organic certification, can lead to increased labor demand, which often falls disproportionately on women. For example, research conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Uganda in 2008 showed that although organic production had increased yields, the high quality standards required for organic products had also led to increased labor requirements, particularly in the post-harvest stages, which were largely met by women. Not only did this mean that women had to work longer hours, it also reduced the amount of time they could spend on their own income-earning activities, and so led to a net reduction in their incomes.⁷¹

Therefore, assess the extra labor demands on women and men that are likely to result from the new production methods required for meeting the relevant certification standards, and work with men and women producers to identify equitable solutions for managing the extra labor demand. If an external organization is responsible for implementing relevant activities, use your influence to encourage the partner to implement these measures. Example 5a shows a company that has adopted such measures.

Example 5a: Assessing and managing extra labor demand resulting from certification

The Body Shop International, Ecuador: When the Body Shop was assessing the suitability of a prospective supplier in Ecuador, a smallholder association that produces organic alcohol from sugarcane, the Body Shop found that some women were unable to join the group or had become lapsed members. On investigation, the Body Shop found that this was because it was difficult for the women to meet the extra labor requirements of organic production methods. The Body Shop responded by working with the producer group to identify and cost the exact labor requirements, and by adjusting the final price accordingly to reflect the real, full, and fair labor costs of organic production.⁷²

5.7 Ensure that Premiums Are Spent on Projects that Benefit Women as Well as Men (*Avenue 3, Activity 3d*)

Where certification generates a premium paid to the producer group, such as in the case of Fairtrade certification, male dominance in the governance structures of producer groups creates a risk that premiums will be spent on projects that benefit men rather than women. To counteract this risk, take measures to ensure that premiums are spent on projects that benefit women as well as men. If an external organization is responsible for implementing relevant activities, use your influence to encourage the partner to do the same. Examples 5b and 5c illustrate possible measures.

Examples 5b, 5c: Ensuring that premiums are spent on projects that benefit women as well as men

The Body Shop International: The Body Shop's Community Trade program has committed to an inclusion policy, whereby they try to ensure that their sourcing will benefit marginal communities as well as marginal groups within communities. As part of their efforts to implement this policy, they encourage producer groups to spend a proportion of their premium funds on projects that specifically benefit women or other marginalized groups in the community. The Body Shop then follows up to discover what women-specific projects have been implemented during their biennial monitoring visits. Examples of women-focused project activities that have been supported by their producer groups include credit provision, assistance for purchase of livestock, and education and other measures to reduce alcohol-induced domestic violence.⁷³

Kuapa Kokoo, Ghana: At Kuapa Kokoo, the systems for selecting projects to be supported by their fair trade premiums help ensure that the projects address women's as well as men's interests. First, all applications for premium projects must be approved by all members of the relevant primary society committee, and Kuapa's gender quotas specify that three out of the seven primary society committee members must be female. Second, the project committee that is appointed by the community to supervise implementation of an approved project must also include female as well as male representatives (see Appendix 1, Case Study 2).

⁶³ Source: www.blueskies.com.

⁶⁴ Now renamed GLOBALG.A.P.

⁶⁵ Source: www.fairtrade.org.uk/producers/pineapples/blue_skies_products.aspx.

⁶⁶ Source: interview with Steve Yucknut, Vice President for Sustainability, Kraft Foods, 12 August 2009.

⁶⁷ Source: Cargill factsheet: *Sustainable and responsible cocoa activities in West Africa*.

⁶⁸ Sources: UNCTAD (2008): *Certified organic export production: Implications for economic welfare and gender equality among smallholder farmers in tropical Africa* and EPOPA (2007): *Household food security effects of certified organic export production from tropical Africa: a gendered analysis*. Quoted in: UTZ CERTIFIED and Solidaridad (2009): *The role of certification and producer support in promoting gender equality in cocoa production*.

⁶⁹ Source: Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (2009): *Generic Fairtrade Standards for Small Producers' Organizations, August 2009*, Section 1.4 Non-discrimination.

⁷⁰ Source: UTZ CERTIFIED *Good Inside* (2009): UTZ CERTIFIED *Good Inside Code of Conduct for Cocoa, Version 1.0 – April 2009*, Sections 6.A and 6.B.

⁷¹ Sources: UNCTAD (2008): *Certified organic export production* and EPOPA (2007): *Household food security effects*. Quoted in: UTZ CERTIFIED and Solidaridad (2009): *The role of certification and producer support*.

⁷² Source: Interview with Christina Archer, Senior Buyer Ingredients – Community Trade, Body Shop International, 17 September 2009.

⁷³ Source: Interview with Christina Archer, 17 September 2009.

Section 6: Increase Opportunities for Women within Community Development Projects

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all companies that are supporting social or integrated community development projects in smallholder communities: projects that include social or welfare aims that are not directly related to production of the purchased product. It is particularly relevant for CSR managers, ethical trading and ethical sourcing managers, smallholder sourcing managers (including outgrower managers), and delivery partners (where relevant).

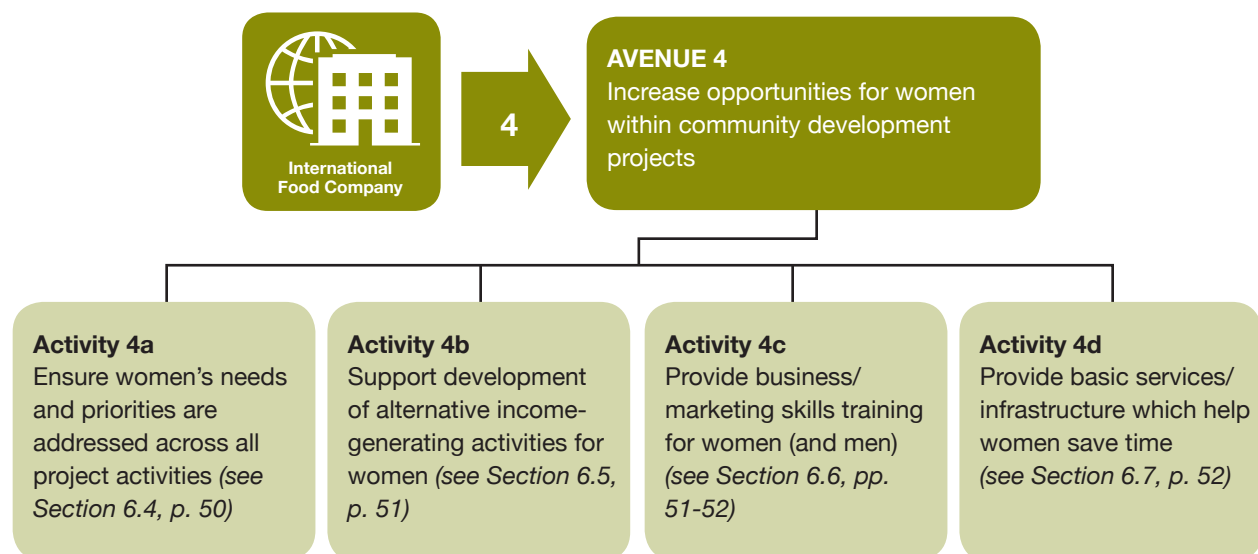
Key points: Although many company-supported community development projects include women-specific activities, the projects' overall impacts on women could be further improved by adopting a more systematic approach to gender inclusion and a greater emphasis on increasing *economic* opportunities for women. Specifically, companies can:

- Ensure that women's needs and priorities are addressed across *all* project areas and activities.
- Support the development of alternative income-generating opportunities for women.
- Provide business and marketing skills training for women (and men).
- Provide basic services and infrastructure that help women free up time to invest in new income-generating activities.

This section covers Avenue 4 of the four avenues for engagement.

DIAGRAM 5.

Avenue 4 For Engagement: Increase Opportunities For Women Within Community Development Projects



6.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance about what companies can do to increase opportunities for women within community development projects.

- **Section 6.2** introduces the types of community development projects that companies typically support and explains some of the ways in which the impact of these projects on women could be improved.
- **Section 6.3** summarizes the potential commercial benefits of increasing women's opportunities within these projects.
- **Sections 6.4 through 6.7** outline four key steps that companies can take to improve the situation, providing practical guidance and examples.



Women who have benefited from Kuapa Kokoo's Gender Programme in Ghana. The program provides useful lessons for companies wishing to improve women's economic opportunities through their community development projects.

6.2 What Needs Fixing?

Many international food companies support community development projects in key smallholder sourcing areas. Some of these projects focus primarily on specific social or welfare aims, such as provision of primary health care services and provision of potable water supplies. Others, such as the **Mars iMPACT project**, recognize the need for a more coordinated approach that combines social, economic, and environmental aspects to deliver a more integrated package of support.⁷⁴

Sometimes, especially in direct sourcing situations, companies implement these community development initiatives themselves (for example **Eastern Produce Kenya**; see Example 6h in Section 6.7).

Increasingly, however, multinational food companies are partnering with other stakeholders to deliver joint community development projects, often relying on specialist development organizations to manage the day-to-day implementation of project activities. For example:

- **Starbucks Coffee Company, Kraft Foods, Mars Inc, The Hershey Company, Olam International Ltd.**, and other companies support the ECHOES project, a public-private partnership initiative that focuses on improving opportunities for youth and young adults in rural cocoa-producing communities through provision of vocational training and other relevant education.⁷⁵
- **Cadbury** is investing £45 million (U.K.) over the next 10 years in the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, an initiative that has been set up to support the sustainable development of cocoa-growing rural communities in Ghana and other key sourcing countries. A wide range of stakeholders, including international development bodies, national governments, and NGOs, are involved in the governance and implementation of Cadbury Cocoa Partnership activities; for example, CARE, VSO, and World Vision are responsible for implementing core project activities in Ghana.⁷⁶

Increasingly, these types of projects include components or activities that are specifically targeted at women. However, even where this is the case, women's inclusion is often not systematically addressed across all project activities. Moreover, women's activities often focus on meeting immediate social or welfare needs rather than improving longer-term social and economic opportunities for women.

6.3 Potential Commercial Benefits

Increasing economic opportunities for women, and addressing women's needs more systematically within company-supported community development projects, can generate the following business benefits:

- Strengthening the company's brand and improving access to premium markets (see Section 2.6)
- Supporting the achievement of broader CSR and community development goals and targets (see Section 2.7)

6.4 Ensure that Women's Needs and Priorities Are Addressed across All Project Activities (*Avenue 4, Activity 4a*)

Experience shows that unless direct efforts are made to address women's specific needs and priorities, community development initiatives are likely to benefit men more than women. This is evidenced in the fact that, historically, development aid has benefited men far more than women. One estimate shows that women in forestry, fishing, and agriculture have only received 7 percent of total aid for all sectors.⁷⁷ Key reasons for this include:

- In rural communities in Africa, women's and men's needs and priorities are likely to vary significantly, due to differing access to resources, pronounced gender division of labor, and the very different social roles and responsibilities that men and women perform.⁷⁸
- Due to women's greater domestic responsibilities and time constraints, women are less likely to attend project meetings or needs assessment exercises unless specific measures are taken to ensure their participation.
- Even if women are able to attend meetings, they often lack the confidence to express their needs and interests in mixed-gender gatherings.⁷⁹
- Overall, women's voices and concerns are therefore less likely to be heard and accounted for in project design and implementation.⁸⁰

Therefore, make sure that proactive measures are taken to identify and address women's needs and priorities for *all* project areas and activities, not only for activities that are targeted specifically at women. If an external organization is responsible for designing or implementing project activities, use your influence in the partnership to encourage the organization to adopt similar measures. In particular, ensure that:

- Women as well as men are included in initial needs assessment exercises, and that women's and men's needs are assessed separately.
- Appropriate targets are set for women's participation in all relevant project activities.
- All relevant performance and monitoring data to be collected is disaggregated by gender (for example, the number of women and men who attend a training session is recorded separately).

Examples 6a and 6b show how two companies have implemented these measures.

Examples 6a, 6b: Addressing women's needs in project design, monitoring, and evaluation

Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate, Kenya: Working with a U.K.-based NGO and a local training provider, Bettys & Taylors is designing and delivering business skills training to coffee smallholders in Kenya. A key aim of the project is to ensure that women benefit as fully from the training as men do. To achieve this, the following steps are being taken:

- "Empowerment and greater inclusion of women" has been written into the project concept note as one of the project's strategic objectives.
- Quotas for the participation of women (and youth) in the initial training needs assessment will be enforced, to ensure that the training materials and curriculum being developed will fully address women's needs, skills, and priorities.
- A quota has also been established for women's participation in the actual training program: more than 50 percent of the farmer trainees must be female (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).

Cadbury's Cocoa Partnership, Ghana: In setting up project activities in Ghana, the partnership will conduct separate focus group discussions with women and youth in the target communities to ensure that they understand their needs properly.⁸¹

6.5 Support Development of Alternative Income-Generating Activities for Women (*Avenue 4, Activity 4b*)

Due to their weaker access to land, credit, and other productive resources (see Section 3.2.2), women are likely to need targeted support to help them develop new income-generating activities that are suitable to their needs. The choice of appropriate activities will of course be very dependent on the local context: for example, women's access to land and other resources, the particular social and cultural constraints that women face, and the local market opportunities that are available. Therefore, make sure that a proper assessment of local conditions, opportunities, and constraints is conducted before deciding on which activities to support, because what may work for one community or region may well be unsuccessful elsewhere.

Nevertheless, Examples 6c, 6d, and 6e offer successful income-generating activities that are supported by companies and other organizations as possible ideas for consideration.

Examples 6c, 6d, 6e: Supporting the development of alternative income-generating activities for women

Eastern Produce Kenya and Finlays, Kenya: These two companies are providing training to women smallholders in their outgrower communities for establishing kitchen gardens—intensive, mixed vegetable gardens that require no external inputs and can be established on very small plots of land. Activities at Finlays are just starting, but EPK has already trained 100 smallholders, with a target to reach a further 200 farmers by the end of 2010. In addition to saving money that they would otherwise have had to spend on buying vegetables to feed their families, some women adopters have also been able to earn extra income from sale of surplus vegetables (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

Kuapa Kokoo, Ghana: Kuapa's Gender Programme provided practical skills training to women members, for example training on how to make soap from cocoa by-products, with the aim of developing collective income-generating activities that would provide income during the cocoa off-season. However, although these activities met with some success, some women started asking for individual rather than group-based business support because they wanted to choose when and how they invested money and time, and also because the group activities could face free-rider problems. In response, Kuapa also introduced micro-credit facilities for individual women members, which provide loans for individual enterprises (see Appendix 1, Case Study 2).

Dairy farmers in Thika District, Kenya: Small-scale dairy farmers in Thika, many of them women, received external help with analyzing opportunities to expand their existing activities. In response, they have worked collectively to capture additional activities along the milk supply chain, and are now involved in collection, transportation, processing, and sale of milk; and in formulation and processing of cattle feed. Some of the women have also started baking snacks to accompany the milk they sell, thus accessing a new market as well.⁸²

6.6 Provide Business and Marketing Skills Training for Women and Men (*Avenue 4, Activity 4c*)

Due to low education and literacy levels, most women in rural African communities lack even rudimentary business skills, such as how to keep simple records of income and expenditure. Training about basic business and marketing skills, as well as education about the functioning of global markets and how to meet market requirements, can therefore be very important for ensuring that women (and men) can make the most of existing and potential income-earning opportunities.

Therefore, consider including tailored business and marketing skills training for women (and men) as part of your community development projects for smallholders. Examples 6f and 6g illustrate possible approaches.

Examples 6f, 6g: Providing business and marketing skills training to women (and men)

Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate, Kenya: Bettys & Taylors is working with the Lorna Young Foundation (LYF), a U.K.–based charity that supports smallholders to obtain more value from the supply chain, and with Nyeri Technical Training Institute, a local training provider with business and marketing expertise, to develop and deliver business and marketing skills training to women and men coffee farmers in Nyeri District, Kenya. The training will teach marketing and enterprise skills, provide an introduction to the international coffee supply chain and ethical certification schemes, and build farmers’ confidence to negotiate prices, terms, and conditions. The project will also bring in the expertise of Ambo College, Ethiopia, which has already worked with LYF to develop and implement a similar training program for coffee cooperatives in Ethiopia—a program that Bettys & Taylors has also supported (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).

Eastern Produce, Kenya: As part of the integrated training provided by EPK Outgrower Empowerment Project to 11,000 participants (smallholders and family members) in 2009, women farmers received training about record-keeping skills. Some of the women who attended these training sessions said they particularly valued the record-keeping skills they learned, because it helps them to assess which of their multiple income-earning activities are most profitable, thus allowing them to concentrate their efforts on the most worthwhile activities (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

6.7 Provide Basic Services and Infrastructure that Help Women Save Time (*Avenue 4, Activity 4d*)

For women in rural Africa, lack of time is often a key constraint to developing new income-earning activities and making the most of existing opportunities.⁸³ Reducing the amount of time that women need to spend on time-consuming daily chores, such as fetching water and firewood, food preparation, and childcare, can therefore be an important prerequisite for ensuring the successful adoption of new income-earning activities.

Therefore, ensure that any support you provide for income-generating activities is complemented by the provision of basic services and infrastructure that can help women free up time to invest in these activities. Examples 6h and 6i show the types of relevant services and infrastructure.

Examples 6h, 6i: Providing basic services and infrastructure that can help women save time

Eastern Produce, Kenya: Eastern Produce Kenya has supported the provision of several improved water facilities for some of their Kenyan outgrower communities, which has helped reduce the time women need to spend fetching water, both for their families and for their livestock (both are traditionally seen as women’s responsibilities). The introduction of energy-saving stoves and stoves that use alternative fuel (such as wood shavings from the nearby sawmill) also means that women have to spend less time fetching firewood. Finally, EPK’s construction of more leaf collection sheds and organization of subsidized transport for green leaf means that women now can take less time carrying green leaf to the collection sheds (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

Kuapa Kokoo, Ghana: The fair trade premium that Kuapa Kokoo earns has been used to fund the provision of a variety of community infrastructure elements and services that can help women save time, including schools, nurseries, day care centers, health care facilities, and boreholes or hand-dug wells. A study conducted in 2006 confirmed specifically that women members appreciated the nurseries and day care centers because they allowed mothers to attend to farming and other income-earning activities while knowing their children were in safe hands.⁸⁴

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- ⁷⁴ Source: interview with Jeff Morgan, Director – Global Programs, and Alastair Child, Global Programs Manager, Mars, Inc., 12 August 2009, telephone interview.
- ⁷⁵ Source: www.worldcocoaoundation.org/what-we-do/current-programs/ECHOES_summary.asp.
- ⁷⁶ Source: Interview with Anna Swaithes, Head of Development – Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, 29 July 2009, London.
- ⁷⁷ Source: OECD (2008): *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, OECD-DAC Secretariat. Quoted in: Mehra, R. and Hill Rojas, M. (2008): *Women, food security and agriculture*.
- ⁷⁸ For an overview of key differences in women's and men's priorities and how these can affect appropriate project design, see "Executive Summary: Investing in women as drivers of economic growth," in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, 2008, p.3.
- ⁷⁹ Source: "Module 16: Gender issues in monitoring and evaluation – Overview." In *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, 2008, p.677.
- ⁸⁰ For example, a study on gender equality conducted by the Nordic Development Fund in 2004 found that among the most commonly cited major obstacles to women participating and benefiting from development activities were (i) the lack of participation by women in design, and (ii) poorly conducted needs analyses. Quoted in: Module 16, in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, 2008.
- ⁸¹ Source: Interview with Anna Swaithes, 29 July 2009.
- ⁸² Source: "Module 5: Gender and agricultural markets – Thematic Note 4: Supporting agricultural value-adding strategies," in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, 2008, p.206-211.
- ⁸³ See for example Mehra, R. and Hill Rojas, M. (2008): *Women, food security and agriculture*, p.7.
- ⁸⁴ Source: van Vuure, R.P. (2006): *The interaction of civic conventions aimed at improving gender equality for women working in the Ghanaian cocoa sector with their respective livelihood strategies*, unpublished Masters thesis.

Section 7: Building the Necessary Human Resources and Skills

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all food companies. It is particularly relevant to CSR managers and smallholder sourcing managers (including outgrower managers).

Key points: Building up appropriate human resources and skills should be part of a longer-term strategy to ensure that your company's smallholder programs are gender-sensitive. Two approaches (not necessarily mutually exclusive) should be considered:

To build the necessary skills in house, consider:

- Providing practical gender training to field staff such as outgrower managers and extension staff.
- Recruiting female or gender-sensitive field level staff.
- Recruiting CSR staff with practical gender expertise.

To contract in external expertise:

- Wherever possible, ensure that the lead implementing organization has strong gender skills.
- Otherwise, recruit a gender or social development specialist to work alongside the lead implementing organization.

Finally, if you plan to recruit a gender specialist (either an organization or an individual):

- Establish clear gender objectives, targets, and terms of reference.
- Provide gender awareness-raising sessions for the lead implementing organization.
- Provide a direct reporting line for the gender specialist.

7.1 Introduction

As noted earlier, an increasing number of food companies are interested in improving opportunities for women in their smallholder-based supply chains. However, many of these companies feel that they lack the skills and experience to do this effectively and feel unsure about how to go about building or contracting in the necessary skills. Although in fact much can be done without specialist gender expertise, building the appropriate capacity and skills base should undoubtedly be part of a longer-term strategy to ensure that your smallholder programs are gender-sensitive. This section therefore provides guidance about how to build or source the human resources and skills that are necessary to effectively implement the actions recommended in Sections 3 through 6 above.

- **Section 7.2** gives guidance about how to build the necessary skills in house.
- **Sections 7.3 and 7.4** discuss partnering with or contracting in appropriate external organizations or individuals.

7.2 Building the Necessary Skills In House

7.2.1 Introduction

The guidance in this section is relevant primarily to direct-sourcing situations, where companies have smallholder sourcing managers, outgrower managers, or other field staff on the ground who interact directly with their smallholder suppliers. However, any company with a reasonable-sized CSR team can also consider building gender skills in house.

- **Section 7.2.2** outlines the main advantages of the in-house approach.
- **Sections 7.2.3 through 7.2.6** provide guidance about key steps that companies can take to build appropriate capacity and skills in house.

7.2.2 Advantages of the In-House Approach

There are various advantages to building the necessary skills in house, rather than relying on external partners:

- **Experience and skills are more likely to be internalized.** Building, and keeping, the necessary skills in house will increase the likelihood that gender skills, knowledge, attitudes, and experience will be passed on to other colleagues within the company.
- **Companies realize longer-term cost savings.** After the initial investment is made (in recruitment or training), you are likely to save costs in the long run, since you will not need to continue paying for external gender advice and input.
- **Extra partnership management and coordination costs are avoided.** Working with external partners can be very time-consuming, because it requires regular communication and it takes time to build common values, aims, and targets. Building the skills in house can therefore avoid incurring extra management and coordination costs.

7.2.3 To Build Gender Capacity in House: Get Started—Don't Be Held Back by Delays in Recruitment or Gender Training

Many of the innovative practices that are found in our case study projects were initiated by individuals with no specialist gender skills or background. For example:

- **Eastern Produce Kenya and EPK Outgrower Empowerment Project (OEP)** initiated and implemented measures to ensure that women could benefit from the EPK outgrower scheme and from the EKP and OEP training opportunities and community development initiatives, without the direct involvement of any external organizations (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).
- Measures and activities to promote greater membership and participation of women in both the **Gumutindo** and **KDCU** cooperative unions have been managed and implemented largely by internal staff and members, with external guidance and support from a (male) program manager who has a background in enterprise and cooperative development (see Appendix 1, Case Studies 5 and 6).



KDCU's personnel and administration manager explaining the benefits of women's membership (Karagwe, Tanzania). She is one of several KDCU staff members who have taken a lead role in promoting women's participation within the cooperative.

Their experience clearly demonstrates that it is quite possible for companies to initiate and implement effective activities and measures to improve women's opportunities, without having to rely on advice or inputs from external gender specialists.

Therefore, don't be put off if you can't immediately find the resources to train staff about gender issues or recruit a gender specialist. Get started with some simple activities or measures, and plan to build up gender skills in your company over time.

7.2.4 To Build Gender Skills in House: Provide Practical Gender Training to Field-level Staff

Most extension staff are likely to have technical backgrounds and may feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to tackle social or gender issues in their jobs. Therefore, consider organizing gender training sessions for your field-level staff, including smallholder sourcing managers, outgrower managers, and extension staff, with a focus on creating awareness about the business benefits of increasing women's participation and identifying practical steps that staff can take. One possible approach is provided in Example 7a; although the approach was developed and used for field staff in an international NGO, it could be adapted for use within a company context.

Example 7a: Providing gender training to field level staff, such as extension officers

CARE and Circles of Learning: CARE has developed and used an approach called "Circles of Learning" to build practical gender skills among their agricultural field staff, who are often technical staff with little experience of dealing with social issues. The Circles of Learning focus on sharing and building on participants' own experience through games, case studies, role-playing, and discussion. For example, in order to learn how to collect, analyze, and use sex-disaggregated data, participants at Circles of Learning in Ghana and Mozambique were tasked with evaluating a typical baseline survey questionnaire. They identified which aspects were related to women's empowerment and gender equality, and where those who designed the questionnaire may have inserted their own biases. Participants then suggested improvements to the survey to capture the differing priorities and problems of men and women concerning agricultural production, income, food security, physical assets, and farming systems and technologies.⁸⁵

7.2.5 To Build Gender Skills in House: Recruit Female or Gender-Sensitive Field Staff

As noted in Section 4.2.6, female extension officers tend to be more effective at reaching and supporting women farmers. Therefore, proactively recruit for female extension staff whenever the opportunity arises (for example, when expanding your extension team or when replacing existing staff). Aim for a mix of female and male extension staff, even if few of your existing contract farmers or smallholder suppliers are female, for two reasons:

- Having women extension staff is likely to help encourage more women to register as contract farmers (or as members of smallholder producer groups).
- Women are likely to be doing a substantial proportion of the work on members' farms, even if the farms are registered in a man's name. Ensuring that extension services reach these women directly can help improve productivity and quality (see Section 2.3.1).

In addition, consider recruiting at least one staff member who has specific experience in gender-sensitive approaches to extension. For example, look for:

- Staff with experience of using participatory research or extension approaches, as well as having the necessary technical skills (see Section 7.2.6).

- Agricultural extension staff who have previously worked for NGOs and have successfully increased women's participation in existing agricultural projects.

Examples 7b, 7c, and 7d highlight companies that have recognized the importance of recruiting female or gender-sensitive extension staff.

Examples 7b, 7c, 7d: Recruiting female or gender-sensitive extension and outgrower management staff

Nestlé, Pakistan: Two key factors have influenced Nestlé's dairy extension approach in Pakistan. First, although buffalo are usually owned by men, it is women who take key responsibility for looking after the animals, including doing the milking. Second, cultural norms make it difficult for local women to interact with men, in particular those who do not come from the same community. In response, Nestlé, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has trained women from rural communities to become extension workers or "barefoot vets," teaching them how to diagnose and treat common buffalo health problems. The program has been very successful because the extension workers are female and come from the local community, so local women buffalo farmers feel comfortable approaching them for advice and treatment.⁸⁶

Eastern Produce, Kenya: In EPK's outgrower management team, the outgrower manager and one of the three extension officers are female. Although this is not the result of any specific policy to employ female extension staff, it clearly influences the level of understanding and attention that are given to gender issues in their outgrower activities (see Appendix 1, Case Study 3).

Finlays FRICH project, Kenya: The newly appointed local project manager for the FRICH project was specifically recruited for her background in working with rural women and youth. (She is also a trained agronomist.) Although she is employed by one of the partner NGOs that is involved in the project (Africa Now), she will be based full time in Finlays' outgrower management office at their Kericho estate, thus facilitating learning between herself and the outgrower management team at Finlays (see Appendix 1, Case Study 4).

7.2.6 To Build Gender Skills in House: Recruit Corporate-level CSR Staff Who Have Practical Gender Expertise

Larger multinational food companies that support multiple smallholder programs may benefit from recruiting one or more in-house CSR staff members with gender or related experience and skills. Such a staff member could provide gender advice and support across the company's whole portfolio of social projects in developing countries. Therefore, when recruiting for new CSR staff, consider looking for an individual with one or more of the following skills and experience:

- **Social development skills.** Social development specialists are trained to help ensure that the needs of marginal groups within communities (such as landless laborers, ethnic or religious minorities, youth, and women) are effectively identified and addressed by development projects.
- **Participatory research or extension skills.** Participatory approaches help ensure that all social groups within a community take an active role in shaping and implementing development initiatives.
- **Gender skills and experience in a development context.** If recruiting a gender specialist, look for someone with practical experience of addressing gender issues in rural communities in Africa, rather than someone who has a primarily academic interest and knowledge of gender issues.

7.3 Identifying Appropriate External Partners

7.3.1 Introduction

This section provides guidance about how to identify external organizations or individuals who can provide appropriate gender inputs. It is most relevant for larger multinational companies that rely on external partner organizations to implement their smallholder programs. However, other companies may also consider contracting an external gender specialist (either an individual or an organization) to perform specific tasks, for example designing and delivering gender training for field-level staff.

- **Section 7.3.2** outlines the main advantages of contracting in external gender expertise.
- **Sections 7.3.3 through 7.3.4** provide guidance about identifying appropriate external partners or contractors.

7.3.2 Advantages of Using External Partners

The advantages of relying on an external organization or individual for gender advice and inputs (as opposed to building the skills in house) include:

- **Access to a higher level of specialization.** By bringing in external gender specialists as and when necessary, you can select the specific experience and specialization needed for the particular project or program, such as someone who has a track record of ensuring that women are represented in cooperative governance structures.
- **Potential access to local knowledge.** Working with external partners can also allow you to access local gender knowledge, for example knowledge of specific cultural beliefs and practices within the target communities, by bringing in relevant local women's NGOs or groups where available.

7.3.3 To Identify External Partners: Where Possible, Ensure that the Lead Implementing Organization Has Strong Gender Skills

Contracting a separate organization or individual to provide gender inputs can create additional risks and management concerns (see Section 7.3.4). Therefore, wherever possible, select a lead implementing organization that prioritizes gender issues and has a strong track record of ensuring women's participation across their projects.

In particular, make sure that the field staff who have day-to-day responsibility for implementing your project are sensitive to gender issues and have practical experience of ensuring that women's needs are addressed. If you are considering contracting or partnering with a large organization, such as an international NGO with many different departments and country offices, remember to check where gender expertise sits within the organization. The existence of high-level gender expertise solely at headquarters level is likely to be of limited use if the experts will not be directly involved in project implementation.

7.3.4 To Identify External Partners: Otherwise, Recruit a Gender or Social Development Expert to Work Alongside the Lead Implementing Organization

It will often be difficult to ensure that the lead implementing organization has the necessary gender skills and experience. For example, this may be the case if:

- The project is already under way and the lead implementing organization has already been contracted.
- It proves impossible to identify a single organization that has gender skills in addition to the other essential qualities, experience, and skills that are required for implementing the project overall.

In such situations, consider recruiting (or lobbying for the recruitment of) an external gender or social development expert to provide gender advice and support to the project. If the project is operating in only one country, look for an individual or organization who is locally based and has experience of working on gender issues in the locality of your project. Example 7d illustrates this approach.

Example 7e: Bringing in specialist gender expertise

Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate, Kenya: In recognition of the hurdles they faced in trying to increase participation of women in similar training programs in Ethiopia, the Lorna Young Foundation (LYF) is considering bringing in a local women’s rights NGO to work alongside the lead implementing organization in Kenya to design and deliver training to male and female coffee farmers in Nyeri District. The lead organization, Nyeri Technical Training Institute, has experience and expertise in marketing and business management (the subject of the training) but has little experience of dealing with gender and social issues in rural communities. LYF believes that the best chance of breaking down entrenched male dominance in the governance of the target cooperatives is to work with local groups that have a good understanding of local cultural norms and practices and how these are best challenged (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).

However, this approach involves some risks that need to be managed if the partnership is to be successful.

- There is some risk that the project manager and project team in the lead organization will not see gender as part of their remit, because “gender” is contracted out to a third party.
- Bringing in an additional partner organization adds to the risks and costs associated with managing multi-stakeholder partnerships (such as increased communication and administration needs, or risk of conflict).

Section 7.4 provides some guidance about how these risks can be minimized.

7.4 Managing External Gender Experts

7.4.1 Introduction

As noted above, initiatives that involve multiple partners carry significant risks that require careful management if the initiatives are to be successful. Moreover, the role of a gender expert in any project is always challenging, because that job usually requires challenging and overcoming entrenched attitudes, not only in target communities but also among colleagues. Sections 7.4.2 through 7.4.4 provide some suggested measures for minimizing these risks.

7.4.2 Establish Clear Gender Objectives, Targets, and Terms of Reference

Ensure that gender objectives, targets, and roles are established at the following levels:

- Make sure that clear gender objectives and targets are established for the project as a whole.
- Ensure that the project manager within the lead implementing organization takes at least partial responsibility for achieving these objectives and targets, for example by ensuring that they are reflected in his or her job description and annual performance objectives.
- Develop specific terms of reference for the gender expert, which should include the specific advice and inputs that he or she should provide, the specific outputs that he or she is expected to deliver, and the nature of his or her working relationship with the lead implementing organization.

Example 7f shows how one company has set and applied gender objectives and targets in one of its projects.

Example 7f: Setting clear gender objectives and targets

Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate, Kenya: To help ensure equal participation of women and men in their planned business and marketing training program, Bettys and Taylors has (among other measures) set quotas and targets for women’s participation in (a) the initial training needs assessment exercise, and (b) the actual training: the target is that more than 50 percent of the trainees should be women. These targets have been clearly communicated to the lead implementing organization from the outset (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).

7.4.3 Provide Gender Awareness-raising Sessions for the Lead Implementing Organization

Consider organizing a gender awareness-raising session for the project team within the lead implementing organization, to help ensure that the gender expert’s advice is taken seriously. The awareness-raising session should emphasize the importance of gender issues, and how addressing them effectively will help achieve the project’s primary aims.

7.4.4 Provide a Direct Line of Communication between the Gender Expert and the Corporate CSR Manager or Equivalent

Finally, consider providing the gender expert with a direct line of communication to the person with overall responsibility for the project, such as your company’s CSR manager. This should be a different person from the gender expert’s main contact within the lead implementing organization. Establishing an alternative line of communication may help the gender expert to raise and manage any potential concerns regarding the level of support and buy-in from the lead implementing organization.

⁸⁵ CARE USA (2009): *A place to grow: empowering women in CARE’s agricultural programming*, CARE Briefing paper.

⁸⁶ Sources: interview with Hans Jöhr, Corporate Head of Agriculture, Nestlé, 8 October 2009; and the film *Barefoot Vet*, produced by Community Empowerment through Livestock Development and Credit, a joint project of Nestlé Pakistan and UNDP Pakistan, 2008.

Section 8: Further Strategies for Improving Women's Opportunities

Who should read this section? This section is relevant to all food companies, especially those that have positioned themselves as CSR leaders in their sector. It is particularly relevant for CSR directors and managers, as well as those within the business who are responsible for business innovation.

Key points: For those companies that are ready to push the boundaries of how companies currently engage with smallholders, there are a number of further strategies they could pursue to improve opportunities for women producers. These include:

- Developing “double bottom line” business initiatives that benefit both women smallholders and the company.
- Developing new markets for women's products.
- Extending ethical sourcing commitments to address gender equality issues in smallholder producer groups.
- Engaging national governments to improve relevant regulations and policies.

8.1 Introduction

In light of the predefined scope of this document, which was to focus on what companies can do in the short term to improve women's opportunities, the bulk of the guidance (Sections 3 through 6) has taken companies' current modes of engagement with smallholders as the starting point. This approach is pragmatic but has limitations (see Section 1.1.5). This final section seeks to partially address these limitations by briefly introducing some additional strategies for improving women's opportunities. These are strategies that require stretching beyond the confines of most current corporate smallholder sourcing and support programs; however, those food companies that have established themselves as CSR leaders may be in a position to explore one or more of these approaches.

- **Section 8.2** considers the development of “double bottom line” business initiatives that benefit both women smallholders as well as the company.
- **Section 8.3** considers the potential to develop new markets for women's products.
- **Section 8.4** explores the possibility of extending ethical sourcing commitments to address gender equality issues in smallholder producer groups.
- **Section 8.5** looks at how companies could engage national governments to improve relevant regulations and policies.

8.2 Developing “Double Bottom Line” Business Initiatives that Benefit Women Smallholders as Well as the Company

For a number of years, multinational food companies such as **Unilever** and **Danone** have been developing business initiatives that explicitly seek to provide social and economic benefits to small-scale producers, as well as meet key commercial needs or objectives of the company. Such social enterprises or “double bottom line” initiatives have typically been developed in partnership with international development organizations, such as Oxfam and CARE, that in turn proactively pursue these partnerships as a means of furthering social and economic development goals. Some of these initiatives have specifically sought to benefit women producers (see Examples 8a and 8b), and there is clearly an opportunity for other companies to explore the development of similar social enterprises as an additional means of supporting women producers.

Examples 8a, 8b: “Double bottom line” initiatives that benefit poor rural women

Grameen Danone Foods Ltd., Bangladesh: A joint venture between Groupe Danone and Grameen Bank was set up in 2006 to produce and sell Shokti Doi, a fortified yoghurt-based product that was designed to provide 30 percent of a child’s daily nutrient needs in just one portion. At six cents per portion (per cup), it costs significantly less than similar products on the market and is affordable for poor families.

But the business doesn’t only benefit the poor as consumers—it also provides income to small-scale dairy farmers, as well as waged jobs for women. To keep costs low, Grameen Danone decided to create a local supply chain from scratch. The company:

- Established microfarms for milk production, working with NGOs to train farmers.
- Set up a milk-processing factory that relies on human labor more than technology.
- Developed a unique distribution model by training women to market the yoghurt door-to-door: currently 1,600 of these “Grameen Ladies” are selling the product.⁸⁷

Mars Inc., Indonesia: MyCocoaPaper, a line of handmade paper products that are produced primarily from cocoa bark, was developed by Mars to introduce more sustainable cocoa farming practices as well as improve economic opportunities for women in cocoa farming communities in Indonesia. Through partnerships with Indonesian NGOs, Mars trains local women to strip the bark from pruned cocoa branches (a byproduct of cocoa farming). MyCocoaPaper products are then produced in an all-female company that provides employment opportunities and job skills for local women. MyCocoaPaper products are purchased by Mars and sold in their M&M’s World stores.⁸⁸

8.3 Developing New Markets for Women’s Products

A handful of international food companies, including **Starbucks** and **Peets Coffee** (see Evidence box in Section 2.6), have recognized the “double bottom line” potential of marketing women’s products separately from men’s. Although at present it represents a relatively untapped potential, this approach has several features that may make it attractive to other international food companies.

- Supporting marginal women producers means targeting some of the poorest sectors of society, because women typically make up the majority of the poor.⁸⁹
- As Section 2.7 shows, improving opportunities for poor rural women is proven to have a substantial multiplier effect, because it typically generates broader development gains.
- Because the vast majority of food purchases are made by women,⁹⁰ the concept of supporting (other) women in less fortunate circumstances is likely to have significant consumer appeal.

One organization that has started capitalizing on this potential from the producer end is Twin, as evidenced in Example 8c.

Example 8c: Developing a supply chain for women's products

Twin and women's coffee: Twin, a U.K.–based fair trade membership organization that has both trading and capacity-building operations, recently started working with existing women's groups such as micro-credit and AIDS awareness groups in several African countries to develop and market women's coffee. Twin aims to sell the product into the high-value end of the market, including the specialty coffees, fair trade, and organic sectors. Although still in the early stages, the success of this initiative has exceeded Twin's expectations, with growing interest from customers. For example, by March 2010 they had already sold 50 bags of the women's coffee from their Ugandan producer group at a premium of 40 cents per pound—four times the standard Fairtrade premium⁹¹ (see Appendix 1, Case Study 5).

8.4 Extending Ethical Sourcing Commitments to Address Gender Equality Issues in Smallholder Producer Groups

To a greater or lesser extent, most major international food companies now incorporate ethical sourcing principles as part of their broader CSR strategies. These companies have therefore committed to monitoring and improving environmental and labor practices in their global supply chains. The companies have concentrated primarily on applying these principles to their direct or largest suppliers; however, some have started to extend their scope to small-scale suppliers further down the supply chain. For example, **Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate** has worked with its smallholder coffee suppliers in Kenya to monitor and improve labor conditions as part of its ethical trading commitment (see Appendix 1, Case Study 7).

Moreover, many of the independent sustainability certification initiatives have introduced standards that apply to smallholder producer groups. For example, the UTZ CERTIFIED *Good Inside* Code of Conduct for Cocoa is specifically targeted at smallholder producer groups, and the Rainforest Alliance has a specific group certification standard and policy. Most of these standards specify not only the production standards that they expect producer members to comply with, but also certain management and governance principles that the producer group itself must adhere to.

Both of these trends provide opportunities for incorporating gender equality principles within companies' existing ethical sourcing commitments. Food companies might therefore consider lobbying relevant sustainability certification initiatives to incorporate gender principles and criteria into future amendments of producer group standards. Possible requirements might be for the producer group to ensure that membership criteria offer equal opportunities for women, and for the group to put in place measures to encourage women's representation on the board. Both Fairtrade and UTZ CERTIFIED *Good Inside* standards already address these issues to some extent (see Section 5.4); other certification initiatives could follow suit.

Where relevant, companies might also consider amending in-house ethical sourcing principles or codes of practice to incorporate similar gender equality principles and criteria.

8.5 Engaging National Governments to Improve Relevant Regulations and Policies

Many of the disadvantages and barriers that are faced by women producers can be exacerbated by inappropriate government policies and regulations, or the lack of proactive efforts by governments to address gender imbalances. For example:

- Far fewer women train in agricultural studies compared to men, thus limiting the supply of qualified female agricultural extension workers. For example, a study of 21 sub-Saharan African countries showed that less than a third (27 percent) of tertiary-level agricultural sciences students in the region are female.⁹²
- Cooperative laws in some countries can effectively discriminate against women becoming members or board representatives, for example by insisting that cooperative members must own land, or that only one member per family can become a member.⁹³

Therefore, one further strategy that food companies can consider for supporting women producers is to engage with relevant national governments to address these types of constraints. For example, companies could:

- Lobby national governments in key sourcing countries to amend laws and regulations that restrict women's opportunities, such as inappropriate cooperative laws. If a company does not have significant market share or leverage in relevant countries, it could consider joining forces with other sourcing companies to push for change.
- Provide financial or technical support for proactive measures to promote women's opportunities, for example by providing scholarships for rural women to attend agricultural training colleges.

⁸⁷ Source: World Economic Forum (2009): *The next billions: business strategies to enhance food value chains and empower the poor*.

⁸⁸ Source: www.mycocoapaper.com.

⁸⁹ According to some estimates, women represent 70 percent of the world's poor. Source: www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_poverty_economics/.

⁹⁰ For example, the Marketing to Women conference team estimate that 93 percent of food purchases in the United States are made by women (www.m2w.biz/fast_facts.php).

⁹¹ Note, however, that the price premium obtained here is not directly comparable to the standard Fairtrade premium, in the sense that it was negotiated with an individual buyer and does not carry any restrictions on its use. In contrast, the standard Fairtrade premium is mandated by a globally certified trading system, and is only supposed to be used for development projects that benefit the community.

⁹² Beintema, N. M. (2006): *Participation of Female Agricultural Scientists in Developing Countries*, brief prepared for Women in Science: Meeting the Challenge, adjunct to the CGIAR Annual General Meeting, Washington, DC, December 4. Quoted in: Module 7, Thematic Note 3, in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook*, 2008, p.280.

⁹³ Source: International Labour Organization (2002): *Legal constraints to women's participation in cooperatives*, ILO Cooperative Branch, Geneva. Quoted in: Majurin, E. (2010): *Promising practices*.