

Tool for Assessing Motivations of Private Sector Partners to Work with Women as Suppliers, Employees, and Consumers

Purpose:

As part of ACDI/VOCA's approach to private sector engagement within inclusive market systems development, this assessment is intended to help project staff work with partners to evaluate the commercial incentive, feasibility, scale, and sustainability of integrating women or gender inclusion within business proposals. Information collected through this assessment will allow project staff to better align company incentives with impact for women as project participants. This process will enable partners to more effectively identify and address gender gaps within their business sector as well as see the "business case" to co-invest in doing so.

EXAMPLE: Feed the Future Bangladesh Rice and Diversified Crops (RDC) partners focused on export markets in the mung bean sector have significant quality and quantity constraints. Women are predominantly involved in household farming of mung bean but are largely low-skilled and relegated to secondary or "helper" roles.

Using this assessment tool, RDC identified an alignment of incentives, where the companies can enhance their brand value and benefit from high-quality products by improving access to technology and negotiating sales contracts with female farmers. Both parties in this scenario realize improved quality and quantity of mung bean and see corollary increases in profitability.

Instructions:

Work on the checklist prior to the preparation of the final proposal or during the co-creation phase, to give time for Private Sector Partners to answer questions and provide additional information in their proposal drafts.

1. Fill out the assessment after reviewing a proposal/concept draft.
2. Once the assessment has been completed, follow up with the Private Sector Partner by:
 - a. **Share the “Yes” responses** - discuss how working with women could present new business opportunities and in what ways.
 - b. **Share the “No” responses** - discuss whether this matches the partner expectations and discuss whether there are gender considerations that have not been recognized? Are there risks that should be considered?
 - c. **Share the “Follow up Questions”** - discuss questions that have been identified. Do the responses change any of the Yes/No answers?
 - d. **Share the “Suggestions/Sourcing Data”** - discuss any places where evidence is needed to support ideas, plans, or assertions. Discuss places where information is lacking or unknown. Discuss how information will be collected and shared (i.e., research, reviewing company records, site visit, etc.)
3. Schedule a call or meeting with the Private Sector Partner to discuss assessment information and requests for additional information.
4. Work with the Private Sector Partner to adjust proposed activities or develop new activities based on assessment findings.

If the Private Sector Partner needs support in identifying how to address gender gaps, contact the Project Gender Advisor for further assistance:

Project Gender Advisor Name:	Project Gender Advisor Email:
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Leading Questions	Yes	No	Comments based on available information/ proposal etc.	Follow up Questions	Suggestions/Sourcing data
Do women represent a new market segment for the agricultural input company? <i>E.g., as a buyer of inputs or insurance</i>			<i>E.g. the proposal from the agricultural input company did not have sufficient information.</i>	<i>E.g. The portfolio of indicated outreach is not mentioned; are they women farmers or household members?</i>	<i>E.g. Needs physical visit to existing activities by the input company</i>
Would working with women lead to greater profitability for partner? <i>E.g., as purchasers of products or reduced costs in labor</i>					
Could the agricultural input company realize increased efficiency by working with women? <i>E.g., they are faster at a given job</i>					
Will the agricultural input company have access to higher volumes of raw materials? <i>E.g., a needed input such as vegetables or grain</i>					
Can agricultural input company improve quality from engaging with women suppliers?					

Leading Questions	Yes	No	Comments based on available information/ proposal etc.	Follow up Questions	Suggestions/sourcing data
Does working with women represent a 'doubling of options' for agricultural input company? <i>E.g., more consumers, more suppliers, more employees</i>					
Will working with women impact the sustainability and scalability of agricultural input company in future?					
Does the model affect the condition of women's engagement at the cost of increased business? <i>E.g., is there any threat it might bring for women?</i>					
Does the agricultural input company consider the socio-economic status of women in that VC or MS as a prior requirement to strategize?					
What potential impact might the model have on the economic empowerment indicators? And what is the agricultural input company's incentive, if there is any at all, to have impact on WEE dimensions?					

Example Interventions with an Input Company Promoting Advisory Services for Farmers

Using this assessment tool, the Bangladesh RDC project was able to work with a private sector partner to identify key opportunities to better understand female farmers as a customer demographic and strengthen sales/distribution to women customers. The opportunities and activities are detailed below:

Pre-intervention Activities:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Further analysis of the profile of women who visit agricultural advisory service points in existing locations.2. Assessment of market demand among women farmers /family laborers to determine the % of women among the projected outreach.
Intervention: Effective coordination/linkage with women farmers in the community to increase access to info and value-added services
Envisioned Systemic Changes (Access)
Agribusiness adjusts marketing and distribution strategies to target productivity related inputs and advisory services to women
Intervention Activities:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Based on the analysis of women customers visiting the advisory service points, set target for the company to reach 10-20% of women customers.2. Include content in the training of advisors on the technicalities and skills on communicating, coordinating and marketing to women customers.3. Train both men and women on good agriculture practices and use of improved inputs, which increases the rate of adoption and in long-term sustainability of the business model. Women influence household/ agriculture decision-making and contribute largely to the farm productivity.4. Create women-only groups of farmers, especially in areas where women face restraints of mobility5. Provide additional incentives for women to visit nearby retail shops to purchase products (e.g., discount cards)

Intervention: Affirmative actions to create women positive deviants to promote adoption of quality input and enhance women's decision-making practice (agency)

Envisioned Systemic Changes (Agency)

- Private companies, NGOs and media partners collaborate to promote and influence women's leadership roles in community and market
- Women have improved control over their own and household income

Intervention Activities:

1. As entry points the input company can choose demonstration plots supervised by women farmers.
2. Nominate women leaders / champion farmers/ loyal customers as brand ambassadors within the community.
3. Include women figures in branding and promotional materials.