

## Gender-Responsive Green Growth: Green Value Chains

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### Introduction

A business creates and delivers value for its customers through its business model. **Gender-responsive green business models** are those that account for the differences between women and men and overcome historical gender biases while also either: solving environmental challenges by reducing negative environmental impacts; increasing resilience against environmental impacts; or providing a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources. In doing so, these business models contribute to the protection of the environment and also promote gender equality.

A business’ value chain is an important part of any green business model. The term **value chain** refers to the sequence of related business activities from the provision of inputs, primary production, transformation, marketing, up to final consumption; and the set of enterprises that performs these functions (i.e. the producers, processors, traders and distributors).<sup>1</sup> **Green value chains** incorporate the sustainable use of natural resources on the input side, maximise material and energy efficiency, reduce negative environmental impacts at all points of the chain, and are climate resilient.<sup>2</sup> Green value chains can be **gender-responsive** through accounting for the gender context in which the value chain is operating, and addressing gender inequalities and historical gender biases at all levels.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Value Links](#), 2015.

<sup>2</sup> [DCED](#), 2012.

<sup>3</sup> [KIT, Agri-ProFocus and IIRR](#), 2012.

Development agencies often support **value chain analysis** and **value chain development** as strategic approaches to poverty reduction and private sector development. This is based on the idea that development agencies can: identify appropriate points of intervention for upgrading industries to compete in bigger markets; increase the efficiency of value chains; and improve the competency of workers to achieve higher, more-stable financial returns and increase their share of the total generated value. Gender-responsive green value chain development interventions consider gender in the selection of the green value chains of focus and support the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of value chain interventions that contribute to gender equality. In doing so, these approaches can reform existing gender relations and provide opportunities to enhance gender equity.

This Guidance Sheet sets out the case for incorporating gender-responsive approaches to value chains in donor interventions; presents examples of how diverse gender approaches of this nature have been integrated into existing donor-funded activity; and offers success factors and recommendations for future programmes.



### Why is gender relevant to green value chains?

- **Green businesses and their wider value chains are affected by gender inequalities and differences at every level.** Gender relations form the context that the value chain operates in, including for example, the types of jobs that are available to men and women and differences in remuneration. Moreover, any value chain interventions resulting in economic shifts in the productive roles of women and men will affect existing gender relations, such as increasing or decreasing women’s access to or control over income or shifts in the balance of decision-making power at household and community levels.

- Women play an important role in the value chain but often this work is invisible and takes place in the **least-valued parts of a value chain**. More often than not women’s work is informal, home-based, low paid and without social protection. This invisibility affects perceptions about value chains. For example, women represent nearly half of the people worldwide working in fisheries and aquaculture but it is often assumed that men are the main workers in fisheries and aquaculture value chains.<sup>4</sup>
- **Women and men in green value chains face different gender-based constraints**. These can limit their respective participation in and the benefits from participating in the value chain.
- **Gender inequality in green sector value chains presents financial and operating risks for businesses**. For example, home-based women may be working informally and without pay. This poses constraints to value chain development as it affects where power is located, and where and how change can occur.
- **Increasing women’s participation in green business models and value chains can contribute to promoting gender equality and poverty reduction** through providing women with the opportunities for employment and contributing to their economic empowerment.



## How has gender been integrated into existing green value chain programmes?

Examples of approaches to gender-responsive green business models and value chains in donor activities and programmes include:

- Collating and **sharing information** for practitioners (Box 1);
- Conducting **research and gender analysis** on green sector value chains (Box 2);
- Enhancing women’s participation through **technical guidance and support** (Box 3); and
- Building entrepreneurial skills of women by increasing **access to, and use of, sustainable energy** (Box 4).

Existing approaches feature a balance of interventions mainstreaming gender (e.g. the GIZ project in Box 2) and targeting specifically women beneficiaries (e.g. USAID’s programme in Box 3). There appears to be a limited focus on integrating a gender-responsive approach into green business models of large companies, or green value chains within the framework of green growth programmes. There is an identified opportunity for donors to undertake gender-responsive value chain mapping exercises in green growth sectors, as well as to produce guidance on this process tailored for green economy sectors beyond agriculture and energy. Furthermore, there is a potential gap in direct technical support and capacity building to entrepreneurs and larger businesses in a range of value chains.

### Box 1: Case study – Information sharing

IUCN runs the [G-REEN Platform](#), designed for mitigation practitioners to participate in information sharing on best practices and lessons learned in mainstreaming gender in renewable energy projects and policies. Additionally, it aggregates sector-specific resources as a [knowledge centre](#) on experiences, methodologies, best practices, trainings on gender and the environment. IUCN has previously run a series of energy and gender webinars which are available [online](#).

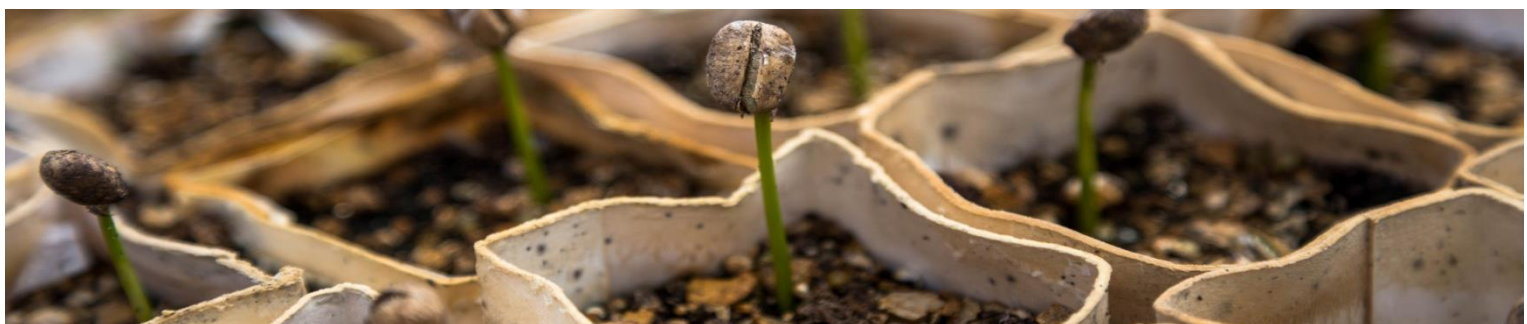
<sup>4</sup> [FAO, 2013](#).

## Box 2: Research and gender analysis

- The Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll) partnership is focused on the enabling environment for gender-responsive energy value chains. It has published a research report *Levers of Change: How Global Trends Impact Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Access to Sustainable Energy*, which scans a half-dozen key global trends that can drive – or hamper – women’s participation in the global energy access movement, both in delivering sustainable energy solutions and in gaining access to sustainable energy. These trends include: energy services are increasingly decentralised; energy services are increasingly affordable; access to mobile payments is expanding; women’s business ownership is on the rise in many countries; the world’s population is increasingly urban; and more people are living in humanitarian aid settings. It also analyses these trends in the national contexts of Nigeria and Tanzania in Africa, Bangladesh and Myanmar in Asia, and Haiti.
- The GIZ, on behalf of BMZ, [Adaptation of agricultural value chains to climate change](#) project is operating in Madagascar over 2018-2022. The project seeks to improve the structural frameworks of value chains and improve access to extension services so that production can be adapted to climate change. It is conducting a deep gender/inclusion analysis of the value chains using the [value links approach](#), considering as well both climate and economic risks. This is to understand the different levels of participation and roles of women at different stages of the value chains and to design gender-specific and gender-sensitive interventions. The project will focus on supporting select value chains based on the results of this research.
- Running from 2017-2020, the IUCN [Global Programme on Governance and Rights](#) has an explicit focus on the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment; strengthening the governance of natural resources; and advancing the realisation of a human rights-based approach to conservation. In this scope it has adopted a gender-sensitive approach to green sector value chains in its programme’s research activities. Specifically it has conducted research and provided gender guidance on the energy, fisheries, and forestry value chains.

## What are the lessons learned from existing programmes?

- ✓ **Identify who is responsible for maintaining ecological assets within green value chains.** This aspect of green value chains is often missed. The conservation of the ecological assets is usually the responsibility of women.
- ✓ **In forestry value chains identify land ownership as this has an important gender dimension.** If women lack ownership of the land due to legal constraints or customary practices regarding inheritance, they do not have access to the forest products as inputs to the value chain. As a result, it is necessary to work around issues of land tenure.
- ✓ **Budget is needed to hire gender experts with knowledge of the local culture** to conduct gender analysis on green value chains.
- ✓ **A value chain analysis that does not include the individual and household levels** may not capture key factors affecting the nature of women’s and men’s participation in and benefits from value chains.
- ✓ **There is a need to go beyond focusing on women’s participation in green value chains, to focus also on enhancing their agency** and decision-making power within the value chain at both the household and institutional levels.



## Recommendations for future programmes

Below are some recommendations to consider when incorporating a gender-responsive approach to green value chains. See Box 5 for resources to assist with adopting these recommendations.

### Diagnosis and design

- ✓ Develop criteria to inform the selection of specific green value chains, considering not only gender but also other environmental, social, and governance factors.
- ✓ Refer to and draw on sector-specific gender-sensitive green value chain resources for recommendations and good practice principles in designing interventions and undertaking value chain mappings. If they are unavailable for the sectors of focus, consider creating such a resource as part of programme implementation activities.
- ✓ Identify existing national-level sex-disaggregated data on women and men's participation as business leaders, employees, and entrepreneurs, and in turn ascertain whether the data are available at a sector level for the green value chains of focus. If any of the sector-level data are unavailable, consider undertaking a representative national or subnational quantitative survey during programme implementation.
- ✓ Draw on existing literature to identify where women and men may be located in the green value chains, as well as the gender differences in the roles and constraints facing women and men. In turn, consider potentially different approaches for targeting women and men beneficiaries at different levels of the green value chain.
- ✓ During stakeholder consultation ask for views as to why women/men are excluded from specific green sectors or whether they are involved in invisible activities as family workers.
- ✓ Ensure that the language and terminology used in the project documentation is gender inclusive and does not make assumptions regarding the gender of individuals. Where possible avoid using the term or designing initiatives that target the head of households as this may perpetuate existing discriminatory norms (legally or in customary practice

women may not be able to be a head of household unless they are widowed).

- ✓ Identify existing initiatives at a national level that promote transparency and disclosure in value chains and consider incorporating such approaches into project design.

### Implementation

- ✓ Consider incorporating activities that provide linkages to markets, particularly for female producers and vendors, and support matchmaking between buyers and producers.
- ✓ Include a focus on green procurement that also incorporates incentives to procure from women suppliers, as well as green equipment or technology. Engage with ITC's [Women and Trade Programme](#) which works with buyers and governments to increase the procurement of goods and services from women entrepreneurs and also has a focus on green trade.
- ✓ Partner with, or support the creation of, women's sector-level associations within and at the specific level of green value chain.
- ✓ Consider the relevance of value chain standards that incorporate gender equality considerations. It is noted that while most are not designed with a focus on women or to ensure gender equality, they increasingly incorporate gender aspects and so these standards may be of use by partners in programme implementation, or the standards setters may be relevant programme implementation partners.

### Monitoring and evaluation

- ✓ For each level of analysis of the green value chain, use gender and sex-disaggregated indicators including: participation in the chain; access to and control over productive resources; and access to and control over benefits.
- ✓ Incorporate indicators to measure changes in the level of gender-sensitivity of the business environment for gender-responsive green value chains resulting from programme activities.

## Box 3: Case study – Technical guidance and support

Launched in 2015, USAID’s Engendering Utilities programme focuses on gender sensitizing the electric utility value chain, through enhancing women’s participation as employees in electric utilities companies. Partners receive information on global best practices to implement gender equality interventions as well as tailored change management coaching, and are able to participate in a 12-month Gender Equity Executive Leadership Program. To date, the programme has partnered with seven utilities from five countries. All seven utilities have reportedly seen increase in the number of female employees. Most utilities also saw an increase in the number of women participating in employee training programs, and some saw an increase in the number of women trainees hired, the number of women interviewed, and the number of women participating in internship programs. Additionally, all of the partner utilities have reviewed their human resources procedures and benefits against a global standard and are in the process of adopting equal opportunity statements. They have also conducted salary reviews to examine gender gaps in pay and are collecting sex-disaggregated employee satisfaction data.

## Box 4: Case study – Access to, and use of, sustainable energy

Established in India in 2017 by UN Women, the [Women’s Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy Programme](#) focuses on building leadership and entrepreneurial skills of women in non-gender stereotypical domains using: access to energy; enhancing productive uses of sustainable energy for women through entrepreneurship; and mainstreaming gender in energy policies. A solar rooftop and training pilot co financed by Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam (State New and Renewable Energy Agency, Government of Madhya Pradesh) has been implemented to solar power anganwadi (rural mother and child care) centres in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The pilot transformed these centres into safe spaces with potential to host a range of services and activities, such as use of tablets/laptops to meet information, education, and communication needs of children and community. With access to electricity, they can be utilized in the evening hours for community meetings, productive purposes by women and their community-based organizations. Another pilot on employing new age clean solar dehydration technology to create and embed a cadre of women entrepreneurs in the dried and processed food value chain is underway.



## Box 5: Resources

- **Gender-sensitive value chain tools**
  - [Fit for purpose? A review of guides for gender-equitable value chain development](#)
  - [Making the Strongest Links – A Practical Guide to Mainstreaming Gender Analysis in Value Chain Development](#), ILO
  - [IDH Gender Toolkit](#), IDH
  - [Value Links](#)
  - [Developing Gender-Sensitive Value Chains – A Guiding Framework](#), FAO
  - [Developing Gender-Sensitive Value Chains – Guidelines for Practitioners](#), FAO
  - [Voluntary Sustainability Standards and Gender Equality in Global Value Chains](#), ICTSD

## Box 5: Resources continued

- **Value chain selection**
  - [Guidelines for Value Chain Selection: Integrating economic, environmental, social and institutional criteria](#), ILO and GIZ
- **Value chain transparency**
  - [Unlocking the Inclusive Growth Story of the 21st Century Accelerating Climate Action in Urgent Times](#), New Climate Economy
- **Value chains in the agriculture sector**
  - [Gender in Value Chains: Practical toolkit to integrate a gender perspective in agricultural value chain development](#), AgriProFocus
  - [Challenging Chains to Change: Gender Equity in Agricultural Value Chain Development](#), Royal Tropical Institute, AgriProFocus, and IIRR
  - [Gender and agricultural value chains - A review of current knowledge and practice and their policy implications](#), FAO
  - [Handbook on Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities in Agricultural Value Chains](#), USAID
  - [Guide on Improving Opportunities for Women in Smallholder-based Supply chains](#), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
  - [Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains](#), IFC
- **Value chains in the aquaculture and fisheries sector**
  - [Gender analysis toolkit](#), IUCN
  - [Regional synthesis report](#), IUCN
  - [Good practice policies to eliminate gender inequalities in fish value chains](#), FAO
  - [Advancing Gender in the Environment: Gender in Fisheries – A Sea of Opportunities](#), USAID and IUCN
  - [Gender and aquaculture value chains: A review of key issues and implications for research](#)
  - [Gender in coastal and fisheries resource management: A Regional Synthesis Report — MFF, SEI, SEAFDEC , Mangroves for the Future](#), IUCN
- **Value chains in the energy sector**
  - [Gender and Renewable Energy Platform](#), IUCN
  - [Gender Toolkit: Energy. Going Beyond the Meter](#), ADB
  - [A Best Practices Framework for Increasing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries](#), USAID
  - [Women at the Forefront of the Clean Energy Future](#), USAID and IUCN
  - [Supporting Last-Miles Women Energy Entrepreneurs: What works and what does not](#), Energia
  - [Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective](#), IRENA
  - [A Snapshot of gender opportunities and constraints in the large scale electricity sector](#), DFID
  - [Advancing Gender in the Environment: Making the case for gender equality in large scale renewable energy infrastructure development](#), USAID and IUCN

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