

Achieving gender equality is widely acknowledged as critical to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender inequality is a key driver of poverty, meaning gender inequality is not only a human rights issue, it is also a development and business issue. Yet, at the current rate of progress, it will take 135 years to close the gender gap worldwide.

The challenge



Around the world, women play important roles in global, regional and local supply chains, in the farms and factories that supply the world with goods and services. Despite the significant role women play, they often occupy some of the lowest-paid and most vulnerable jobs. The reality for millions of women is that they earn less, work longer hours, often in unsafe conditions, and are less likely to receive training and promotions.



Furthermore, sociocultural norms and systemic barriers limit women's access to education, training, technology and finance, their decision-making power and control of resources, and their ownership of land and property. Female smallholders tend to have lower farm yields and household incomes and are more financially excluded than men. Therefore, female smallholders make fewer investments in agriculture despite their reliance on this as a source of income.



Ignoring gender gaps and inequities can leave companies exposed to lower production and productivity than is possible, as well as delivery disruptions, and systemic inefficiencies, while there is growing evidence of the economic costs of intimate partner violence due to absenteeism and productivity which also affects companies.

Despite the important roles that women play in value chains at the local, national, and global levels, women's contribution remains undervalued and untapped.

The business case for gender

Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to building healthy and resilient businesses. Holding back half the population from achieving their full potential is not good business sense. Here are just 4 reasons why:

- By tailoring goods and services to the needs of women, companies can reach a **large and often** underserved market, potentially **increasing**



revenues from service provision or enhancing their supply security when sourcing from these farmers.ⁱ

- If women are supported to achieve similar access to and control of productive resources as men, **yields of female farmers could increase by up to 30 percent**. Higher yields and incomes at the farm-level create greater business opportunities for the companies interacting with those farmers. Greater control over farm and household income by **women also increases investments in children's health and education**, with positive effects on food security and economic growth.ⁱⁱ
- **Companies that are committed to gender equality outperform their peers**. Improving gender diversity in the workplace can **improve a company's financial performance by up to 25 percent**. Gender inclusion has been proven to lead to better business results: greater access to talent; lower turnover costs; increased consumer insight; and strengthened employee engagement.ⁱⁱⁱ
- When companies are seen to invest in gender equality, this has the potential to lead to **higher levels of farmer and/or worker loyalty**. Conversely, unequal opportunities for women can negatively affect companies' reputations which can lose businesses customers as well as workers.^{iv}

Where to start?

Gender equality and women's empowerment is good for business and good for society. Therefore, IDH has decided to mainstream gender throughout its operations, both internally as well as its work with partners. In order to successfully mainstream gender, we first need to know where we stand.

IDH has adopted the following definitions to define the extent to which a gender lens has been integrated by partners/projects/platforms. IDH aims for all its projects to be intentional and for 10-15% to be transformative.

 <p>Gender unintentional</p>	 <p>Gender intentional</p>	 <p>Gender transformative</p>
<p>No steps taken to understand the different needs and preferences of men and women, or target gender gaps/barriers.</p>	<p>Considers the different needs and constraints of women and men and takes some steps to create gender equality. Such projects adapt to the needs of women and men without seeking to change gender norms or barriers.</p>	<p>Understands the different needs and constraints of women and men, and address the root causes of gender inequality. A gender transformative approach needs to foster changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• individual capacities (agency)• gendered norms and expectations (relations),• institutional rules and practices (structures).



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The table below gives some ideas of what the different gender levels might involve. This list is not exhaustive.

Gender unintentional	Gender intentional	Gender transformative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with farmers or workers without stepping back to understand gender differences • Provides training without considering the time or location to enable women to join • Recruits only men as entrepreneurs or provides loans to only male heads of households • Engages only male leadership on farm cooperatives, factories, associations etc., without raising questions about women's participation and leadership opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes steps to include women in training (adjusts time, invites women etc) • Provides childcare facilities for women to attend training • Addresses women's reproductive needs (breastfeeding time, maternity leave etc) without challenging gender norms (e.g. paternity leave) • Supports women with initiatives that play into women's traditional roles, e.g. stoves or market gardens • Integrates mixed village saving and loans associations (VSLAs) • Allows women to join entrepreneur and finance initiatives but doesn't adapt criteria to reflect women's different starting points. • Establishes or strengthens mechanisms to address gender based violence (GBV). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts from a gender analysis to understand the differences in women's and men's lives, including those which create social and economic inequity • Engages women to understand their needs and priorities • Builds women's skills and agency to make autonomous decisions over their lives • Builds women's collective agency through VSLAs, networks, cooperatives, associations, unions, etc. • Engages men in discussions on gender equality to challenge traditional gender norms • Uses discussions on household decision making to increase women's control over resources • Works with finance institutions to adjust policies and thresholds for women's access to loans • Supports women's leadership opportunities • Establishes or strengthens mechanisms to address GBV <u>AND</u> fosters dialogue to challenge the underlying norms and attitudes that perpetuate GBV. • Uses qualitative data collection to explore changes in gender and power relations

The IDH gender tool

What is it?

IDH has developed the Gender Tool to support IDH staff and partners to integrate a gender lens in our work. The tool is intended to help facilitate conversations with partners on gender, and provides guidance on how to work with partners in more gender intentional and transformative ways.

The gender tool will:

- ✓ Give an assessment of a partner/project/platform's gender status
- ✓ Provide prompts to facilitate a conversation with IDH partner(s)
- ✓ Generate a list of ideas of recommended actions

- ✓ Give suggestions on key gender indicators

Before you start, don't forget to go to the 'Instructions' tab and select the relevant type of engagement from the list.

What can you expect?

	What are you doing in this step?	What is the output of this step?	Where can you get the information to fill out this step?	How to fill out this step?
Step 1: Initial screening	<p>Asking a few screening questions to understand how intentional the IDH partner/project/platform is in thinking about gender in their operations or projects</p> <p>Questions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is gender equality a strategic goal for the partner/project/platform? 2. Are practices or policies in place to make the workplace more inclusive for both women and men? 3. Does the IDH partner/project/platform engage end customers or communities when designing its product or interventions? 4. Does the IDH partner/project/platform provide services that allow women to have more independence and control over resources? 	<p>Rapid Gender Assessment of where the IDH partner/project/platform stands in the gender ladder: unintentional, intentional, or transformative.</p> <p>Step 1 also provides a list of potential actions for the partner/project/platform</p>	IDH partner/project/platform	A one-hour conversation with your partner/s
Step 2: Gender recommendations	<p>Asking more in-depth questions to understand what steps the IDH partner/project/platform can take to strengthen its gender intentionality/transformativity</p> <p>Questions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the IDH partner/project/platform track gender related KPIs as part of their gender equality strategy? 2. Does the IDH partner collect and analyze gender disaggregated data? 3. Does the IDH partner give equal pay for equal work between men and women? 	More in-depth gender recommendations with a strategic angle	IDH partner/project/platform	2-3 sessions of 2 hours with your partner/s
Step 3: Data Collection	<p>Identifying key indicators the IDH partner/project/platform should monitor to track progress on gender-related initiatives</p> <p>Indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of staff that are women • Percentage of middle and senior management from the total percentage of women employees • Women's salary compared to men per equivalent time unit 	Quantitative indicators for IDH partner/project/platform	IDH partner/project/platform & their available datasets	A one-hour conversation with IDH partner/s (if IDH partner/s has data available)

ⁱ ICRW, 2016. The Business Case for Women's Economic Empowerment: An Integrated Approach
ⁱⁱ FAO, 2011. The State of Food and Agriculture; BSR Women's Empowerment in Global Value Chains Framework for Business Action
ⁱⁱⁱ McKinsey & Company, 2020. Diversity wins: How inclusion matters.
^{iv} IFC, 2016. Investing in Women along Service Provider Value Chains