



How to foster access to finance for women in the agri-food sector

Guidance document
January 2024

What is this document about?

The objective of this document is to provide insights, background and guidance around the challenge of how to promote opportunities for improved livelihoods, and better economic and social resilience specifically for women engaged in the agri-food sector in partner countries through access to financial services.

As such, this document touches on the interfaces and linkages between the following topics:

- 1. Women in the agri-food sector**, their roles, classifications, and needs; as well as
- 2. Access to finance** for these women, and the opportunities and constraints they face, particularly with regards to accessing financial services

Who is this document for?

This document intends to provide guidance to development practitioners working in partner countries or headquarters;

- Who are engaged in (or interested in) the agri-food sector;
- Who are requested to or experience the necessity to work on access to financial services for their target beneficiaries;
- Whose project has a specific focus on women (or aims at promoting women's access to finance)

How to use this document?

This document is thought to be practical and easy to use. It can be read from beginning to end, but it can also be used to quickly look up a topic of interest. Therefore, this guide contains links to resources and tools.

Please consult the [overview](#) for a complete picture of the content. The overview on the right of each page allows you to navigate through the document.

“Equality is not just the right thing to do. It is smart economics. How can an economy achieve full potential if it ignores, sidelines, or fails to invest in half the population?”

Robert Zoellick
Former World Bank President

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01 The foundation The feminist development policy

This chapter gives an overview of the political foundation for a focus on gender and provides key definitions and concepts.



02 Women in the agri-food sector

Chapter 2 touches upon the roles of women in the agri-food sector, some definitions as well as the rationale for supporting women. It provides an excursus on women and climate.

05 Case studies

Chapter 5 presents concrete examples from GIZ projects on how to foster access to finance for women in the agri-food sector.

03 Women and access to finance

Chapter 3 shows the importance of access to finance for women, the current status, as well as barriers, especially linked to gender norms.

06 Lessons learned

Chapter 6 summarizes lessons learned collected over the past couple of years.

04 Tools and frameworks

Chapter 4 presents tools and frameworks to support analysis and implementation.

07 Further resources

The final chapter 7 provides information on further resources and presents focal points within GIZ.



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The foundation: The feminist development policy

Chapter 01

This chapter gives an overview of the political foundation for a focus on women and provides definitions and gender-related concepts.

The chapter is subdivided into two chapters:

- The feminist development policy
- Gender-related frameworks

BMZ's feminist development policy: The "three Rs"

▶▶ In March 2023, the German government presented its Feminist Development Policy. By 2025, the BMZ aims to allocate 93% of newly committed project funding to projects and programmes which promote gender equality, compared to around 64% in 2021. In pursuing this approach, the BMZ differentiates between measures whose principal objective is gender equality, and those for which it is a significant objective. BMZ will undertake regular reviews to determine which measures promote gender equality most effectively.

Rights

This includes the elimination of discriminatory laws and norms and strengthening rights and access to justice for women and marginalized groups.

Examples:

- Development and implementation of gender-equitable laws and equality legislation, including heritage law, land ownership, etc.
- Targeted provision of legal information and removal of legal and social barriers
- Support to formal judicial system or informal dispute resolution mechanisms

Resources

This includes the access to and control over resources for women and girls and marginalised groups and individuals.

Examples:

- Access to education, the formal labour market and decent work
- Specific promotion of **female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses**, access to markets, women's participation in training, reskilling, etc.
- Financial protection against climate risks, promotion of food security, food sovereignty, better access to land and land ownership for women
- **Access to the formal financial system**



▶▶ BMZ's policy refers to marginalized groups in all their diversity and aims at eliminating discriminatory structures to build a society which enables equal participation by all people. However, **with women and girls being the largest group** facing discrimination worldwide, they are the **focus of BMZ** as well as this guidance document.

Representation

This includes strengthening full, equal and meaningful participation of women and marginalised groups and their role as decision-makers in key social, political and economic decision-making processes at all levels.

Examples:

- Fair representation in political and corporate decision-making bodies, local and regional planning and budgeting processes
- Strengthen the role and representation of women in the administration and judiciary
- **Stronger alignment of financial and non-financial services with women's needs**

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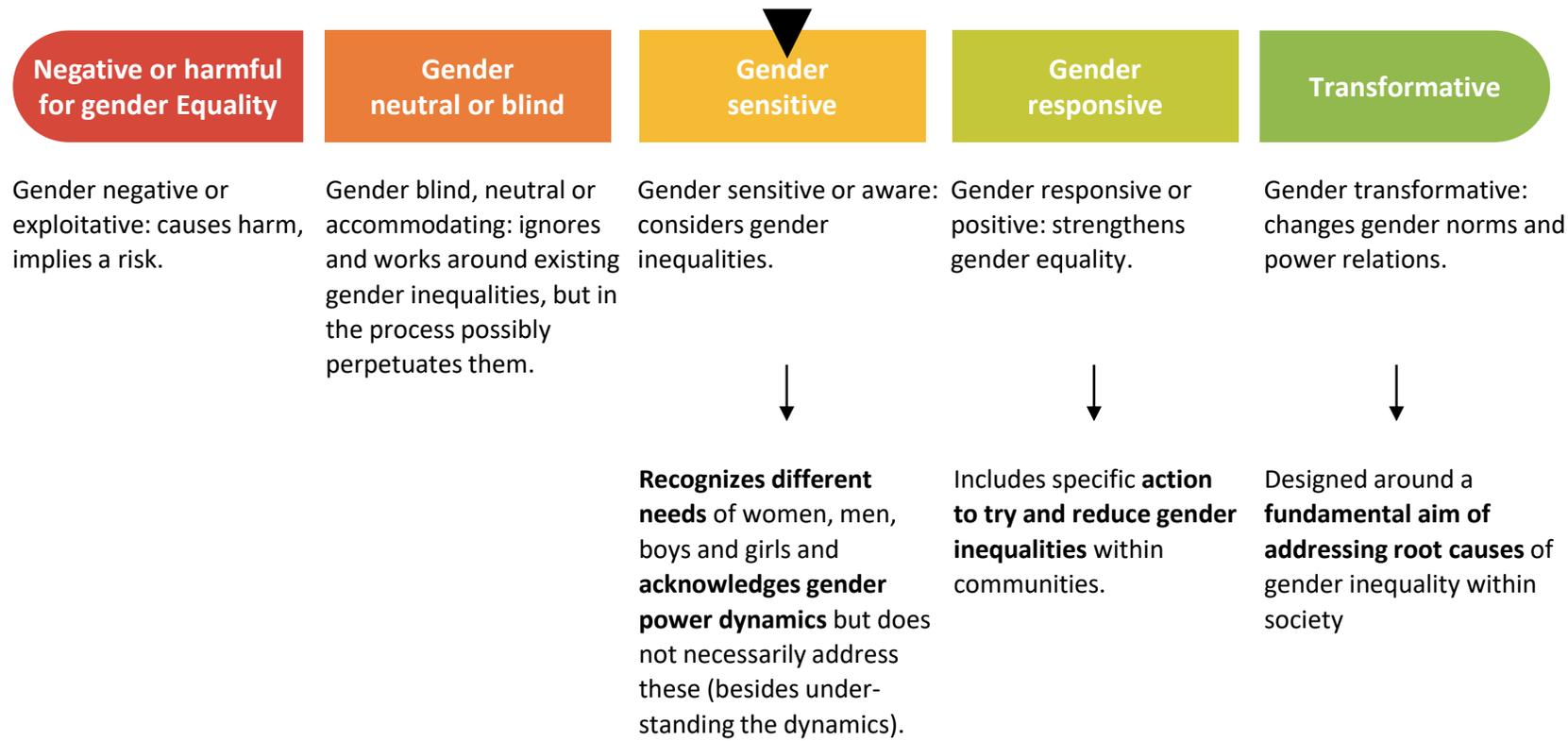
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The gender continuum of change

▶▶ Different categories of change have different impacts. According to the BMZ's Feminist Development Policy, gender-sensitive approaches are a minimum standard for cooperation projects.

Does your intervention have impacts that are:



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The reach-benefit-empower-(transform) matrix

▶▶ The gender continuum of change can be plotted to the reach-benefit-empower-(transform) matrix. This framework helps clarify project objectives.

	REACH	BENEFIT	EMPOWER	TRANSFORM ¹
	Reaches women by including them actively	Benefits women by designing activities considering women's needs, preferences and constraints	Empowers women by strengthening their abilities to make strategic life choices and to put them into action	
	Gender sensitive		Gender responsive	
			Gender transformative	
Activities	Inclusion of women in project activities , e.g., in trainings	Development of trainings which take into account gender-specific needs, preferences and constraints to assure that both, women and men, benefit from project activities	Reinforcing women's abilities to make strategic life choices and to implement these	Strengthening of organisations/ networks which advocate for gender justice and equality or LGBTI-organisations
	Awareness campaigns for women as target groups	Women apply learned techniques, tools, know-how , etc.	Strengthening of women's decision-making power in households/ communities/politics , etc.	Facilitation of a dialogue on gender norms , involvement of men as change agents , removal of structural barriers to gender equality (e.g., discriminatory laws, practices)



Further resources

Click [here](#) to watch a short video on the reach-benefit-empower-matrix

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1) The competence centre "Rule of Law, Gender and Security" at GIZ is currently working on a matrix including the dimension "transform".
GIZ (2023): Gender-Wirkungen messen, Das WARUM, das WAS und das WIE von Genderindikatoren in der GIZ

Social norms and gender norms

What are social norms?

Social norms are the implicit and informal rules that most people accept and follow. They are influenced by our beliefs, economic circumstances and sometimes by the rewards and sanctions we might expect for either adhering to or disobeying them. Norms are embedded in formal and informal institutions and produced and reproduced through our social interactions. They only change when enough of us choose, or are compelled, to act in a different way, creating a new norm.

Gender Equality

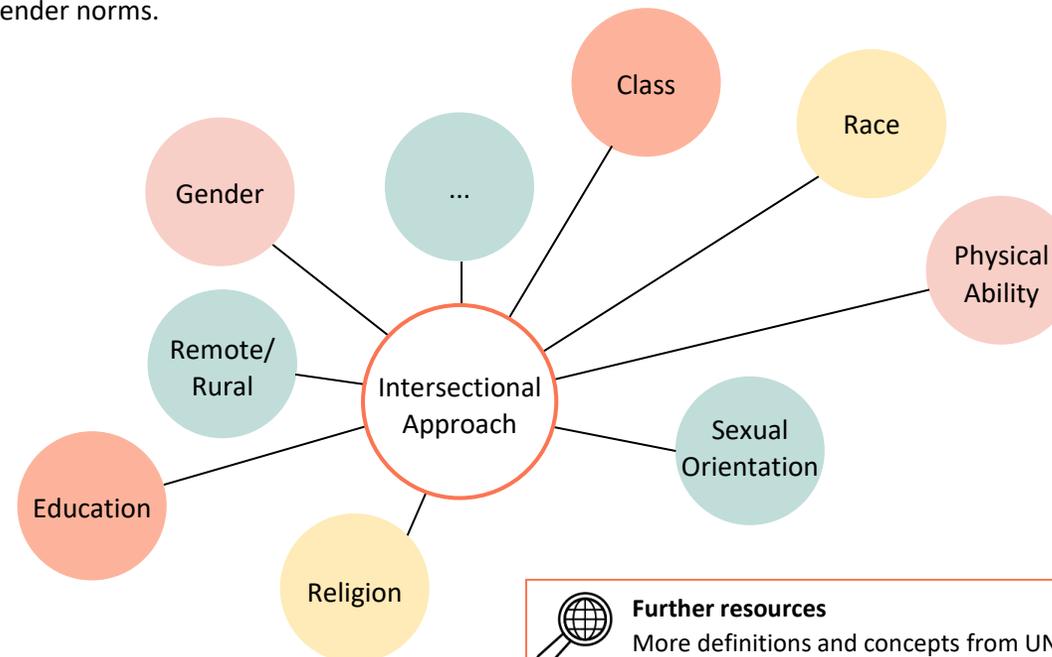
Gender equality refers to the principle that all individuals, regardless of their gender, should have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources and benefits in society. Gender equality recognizes that everyone should have equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and participation in decision-making processes, among other areas. Gender Equality is a critical part of the 2030 Agenda's Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.

What are gender norms?

Gender norms are a sub-set of social norms. They describe how we are expected to behave as a result of the way we or others identify our gender. Gender norms often reflect and reinforce unequal gender relations, usually to the disadvantage of women and girls, but also to those men and boys and people of diverse gender identities who do not conform to prevailing gender norms.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the overlapping and simultaneity of different forms of discrimination. Women often combine several factors of discrimination. Moving beyond addressing symptoms requires capturing this intersectionality.



Further resources

More definitions and concepts from UN Women can be found [here](#).
Click [here](#) to see how gender norms in agriculture and finance play out.

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The gender quadrants of change

Contributing to change in social norms is complex and multidimensional. The Gender quadrants of change can help to assess:

- How the four dimensions influence each other
- Whether they support each other to increase impact of interventions
- Or whether they hinder each other

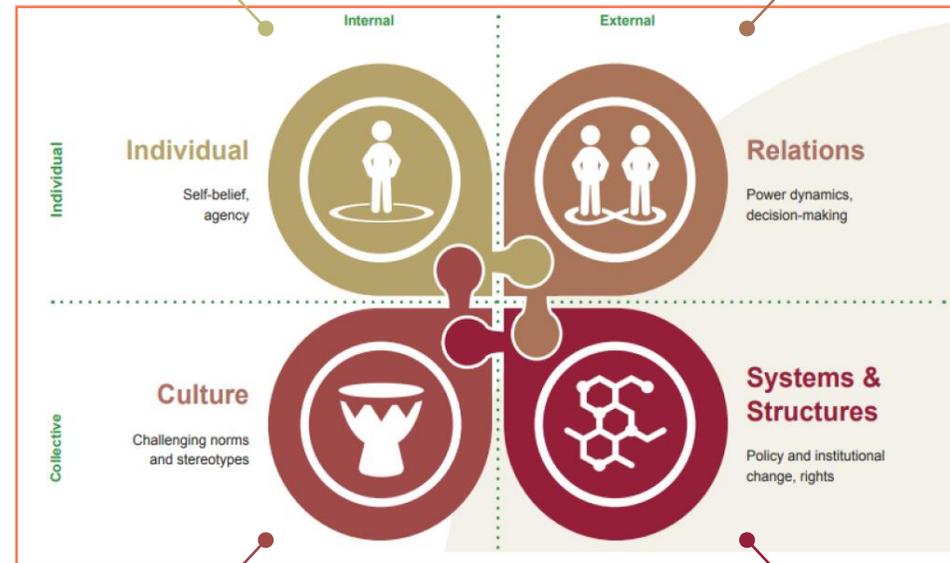
▶▶ For change to be more lasting and profound, one hypothesis is that the organization and the agents of change should aim at a multiple or multi-faceted strategy that affects all quadrants

Examples:

- Women increased their knowledge of their rights and learned how to exercise these rights
- Increased confidence

Examples:

- Men and community leaders with decision making power were sensitized
- Women from different regions came together and formed alliances



Examples:

- Involvement of key decision makers at community level
- Dismantling of myths and stereotypes around women

Examples:

- Analysis of structural inequalities and obstacles was carried out
- Involvement of public and private sector experts engaged with stakeholders

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Women in the Agri Food Sector

Chapter 02

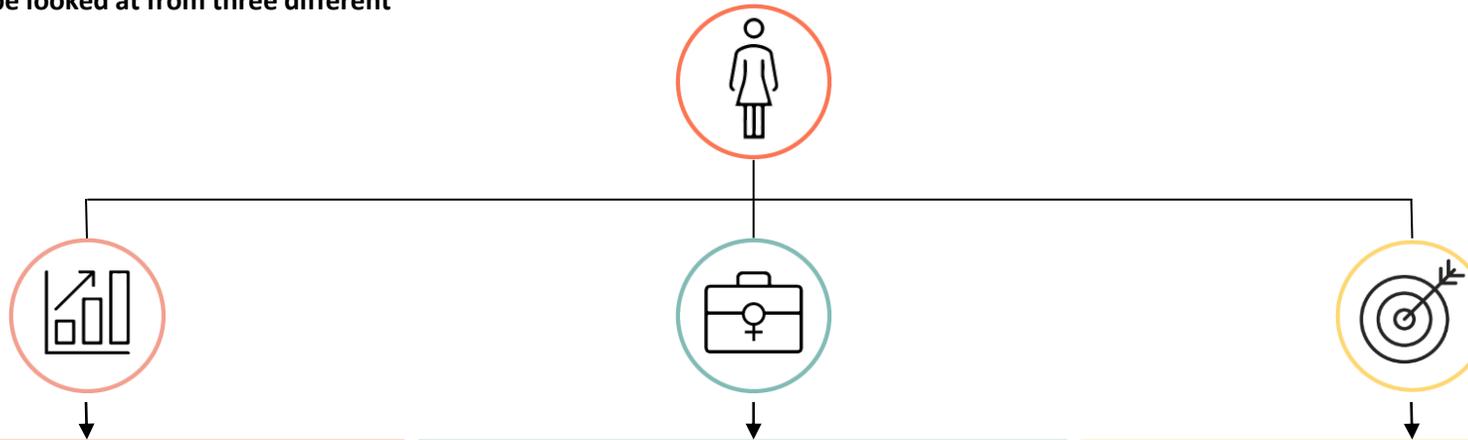
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The chapter is subdivided into three chapters:

- Impact of women entrepreneurs
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The positive impacts of women's entrepreneurship

►► Women's entrepreneurship in all sectors, including the agri-food sector as a farmer or in other roles in an agri-food business, creates positive impact which can be looked at from three different perspectives.



The Economic Growth Case¹

The agri-food sector is central to food security, job creation and inclusive growth in many low-income countries. If women had access to resources to the same extent as men, on-farm yields could increase by 20-30% which could raise agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4%.

The Business Case²

In terms of profitability, research shows that globally in all sectors, women-founded start-ups generate 78 USD-cents of return for every dollar of funding, whereas male-founded start-ups generate just 31 USD-cents.

The Impact Case³

Increasing yields and agricultural output could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%. In addition, women invest significantly more of their income back into their families than men. They invest in education, healthcare, and healthier food for their children.



Further resources

If you want to learn more about the Business case, you can find more evidence [here](#).



Further resources

If you want to learn more about the Impact Case, you can find more evidence [here](#).

¹ GIZ (2023): [Women Entrepreneur Financing and Investment Toolkit](#)

² Boston Consulting Group (2018): [Why Women-Owned Startups Are a Better Bet](#)

³ The Clinton Global Initiative

FAO (2010): [The state of food and agriculture 2010-2011](#) (these numbers although rather old, are still being cited in current publications)

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Characteristics of women in the agri-food sector?

▶▶ **Women play an important and valuable, but often invisible, un(der)valued and unrecognized role in agriculture.**

In developing countries,
on average 79%
of economically active women
work in agriculture

- Smallholder farming families produce a significant share of global food, and women contribute substantially
- Women's work in family production is often unpaid
- Women mostly work in primary production (in invisible parts of the value chain) and are often not involved in marketing or sales of crops even if they carried out a large share of the work earlier
- Women are more often engaged in loose value chains than in structured value chains
- Women are more often involved in food crops than in cash crops, the former being considered "women's crops" and the latter "men's crops"
- Women are engaged in the agri-food sector in different roles, as smallholder farmers, or as owners, managers or employees of agri-businesses of different sizes along the entire value chain, from input provision, production transformation to packaging, marketing and sales (see here for [definitions](#) or for [examples of classifications](#))



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Smallholder farmers versus farming enterprises (SMEs)

▶▶ There is no global definition of a smallholder farmer; they vary considerably between countries with some common characteristics. At the same time, it is not entirely clear when a smallholder becomes an enterprise, as much as the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises depends mostly on national contexts. There are few, if any, agriculture-specific definitions of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

▶▶ The focus of this guide is on smallholder farmers, micro and small businesses.

Smallholder farmer

Farming business (MSME)

Micro enterprise

Small enterprise

Medium-sized enterprise

Smallholders and micro enterprises mostly:

- Are **family-owned** enterprises that produce crops or livestock on **< two hectares**
- Have a **limited asset base**
- Family members provide most of the labour
- However, the household may derive income from multiple sources
- Many smallholders are **not farmers by choice**, but rather because they lack more lucrative opportunities

Small and medium-sized enterprises:

- Are **profit-oriented enterprises** that are involved in the **agricultural value chain** either directly or by providing enabling services to value chain actors (legal structure and level of formality do not matter)
- They can be classified in many ways depending on the objective, i.e., by size, value chain, role, financing needs etc.
- A possible classification (called “work in progress”) is along the ability to **service an investment of 50,000-2M USD**, as indicated by at least two of the following :
 - Between 5 and 250 employees (at least 25 members for coops)
 - Annual turnover between 100,000 and 5 million USD
 - Total assets > 20,000 USD
- **Cooperatives** should have at least 25 members and farmers should sell at least 50% of their production

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Where are women in the agri-food sector?

▶▶ There is no global definition of a so-called **women-led enterprise**, and many terms are used to describe women's involvement in (agricultural) business activities, i.e., **women entrepreneur, women-owned business, women-owned SME**.

▶▶ Two initiatives developed definitions including thresholds which can serve as a basis for discussion and reflection. These definitions are a pragmatic approach and some only shed light on quantitative aspects while leaving aside qualitative questions such as working conditions, gender pay gap, etc

2X Challenge ¹		IFO	
Women can be owners, board member, or member of the management (leadership role) or as suppliers, employees or consumers (participation role)		An enterprise qualifies as a woman-owned enterprise if it meets the following criteria:	
Direct Criteria	Entrepreneurship	▶ 1/A Share of women ownership	51%
		▶ 1/B Business founded by a woman	Y/N
	or		
	Leadership	▶ 2/A Share of women in senior management	30%
		▶ 2/B Share of women on the Board or IC	30%
	or		
Employment	▶ 3/A Share of women in the workforce	30-50%	
	▶ 3/B One "quality" indicator beyond compliance	Y/N	
or			
Consumption	▶ 4 Product or service specifically or disproportionately benefits women	Y/N	
		≥ 50% owned by woman/women	
		or	
		≥ 20% owned by woman/women	and
		≥ 1 woman as CEO, COO, President or Vice-President	and
		≥ 30% of the Board of Directors composed of women (where a board exists)	and

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¹ 2X global is an initiative created by the DFI's of the G7 to unlock resources that will help advance women's economic opportunities

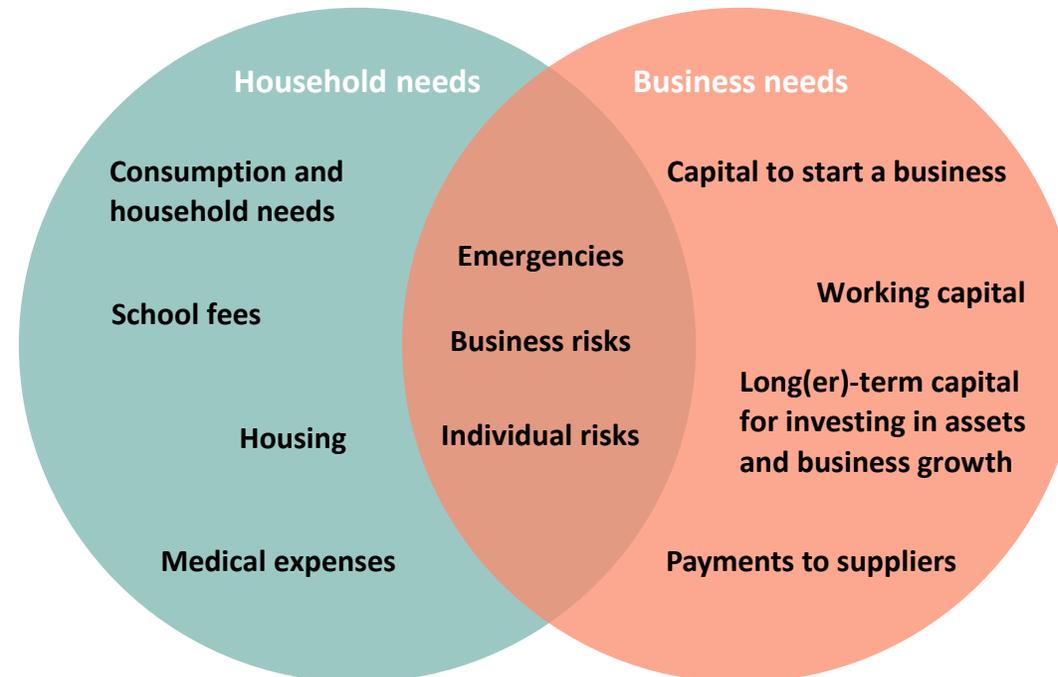
2X Challenge (2022): [Invest in women. Invest in the world.](#)

IFC/World Bank: [IFC's Definitions of Targeted Sectors](#)

Differences of women and men farmers and agri-food entrepreneurs

▶▶ What is the difference between women and men farmers/agri-food entrepreneurs?

- Research shows that **business and personal needs are perceived and prioritized in a different way by women compared to men**
- **Women usually prioritize household needs over business needs.** They reinvest large shares of their incomes back into their families (approx. 90%, compared to just 30-40% by men¹). They invest in education, healthcare, and healthier food for their children
- **Women are reported to take less risks in their business which results in reduced growth rates**



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Excursus: Women's exposure to climate change

Women in the agri-food sector are disproportionately affected by climate change

- Climate change risks disproportionately affect rural and agricultural areas and are projected to affect women because of pre-existing gender inequalities (i.e., asset ownership, access to information, labour availability, as well as financial and market access)
- In most emerging markets, gender gaps in access to finance tend to be exacerbated by climate change and existing vulnerabilities
- Gender inequalities in accessing and having control over assets, and increased household burdens due to male out-migration are amplified by reduced food and water access and increased disaster exposure



Gender-smart climate investments can help build resilience

- Understanding and addressing the cause of specific gender-based vulnerabilities is crucial for the design of agricultural adaptation interventions to protect livelihoods and increase economic opportunities
- Gender-smart climate investments can help build resilience for women and strengthen farming and agri-enterprises as they adjust to the impacts of climate change

Cost of climate change

According to the Network for Greening the Financial Sector (NGFS), **17% of financial value is at risk** from the physical impacts of climate change, and the agricultural, food and forestry sector is one of the most vulnerable.

In Zambia, where 78% of small-scale farmers are women, severe droughts and weather patterns have recently **cost the country more than US\$ 13.8 billion in crop failures**.

Why are rural women over-exposed to climate change?

- Due to the roles females hold in society and existing gender and cultural norms (e.g., duties women and girls carry out, the clothing they wear, the way they are expected to behave, etc.)
- Rural women are less mobile and spend more time at home
- Women dedicate large amounts of time to domestic duties which will become more tedious in the future, e.g., fetching water
- As a result of this, during extreme weather events, the death toll for women is often higher



Further resources

CGAP [research](#) on women in rural and agricultural livelihoods

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Chapter 03

Chapter 3 shows the importance of access to finance for women, the current status, as well as barriers, especially linked to gender norms.

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The impact of access to finance for women

▶▶ Access to finance is one important element in fostering women's entrepreneurship at all levels, from micro businesses to small and medium-sized enterprises. Research shows that lack of access to finance is one of the major barriers that entrepreneurs face in managing and growing their business. Financial services can boost resilience and help benefit from opportunities.

Positive effects of financial accounts:

- Having their own account gives women more say on their households' finances. Financial accounts can enable financial independence and strengthen economic empowerment of women
- Having a financial account makes it easier, safer, and cheaper to receive wage payments from employers, to send remittances to family members, and to pay for goods and services
- Mobile money accounts also make it possible, even for those living in poverty, to save and cope with adverse shocks



Further resources

If you are interested in learning more about the positive effects that women entrepreneurship has, check out [here](#).

Resilience

Prepare against and manage risks
Recover from shocks

+

Opportunity

Ability to invest in professional and personal future

On a global level, the **60 Decibels Microfinance Index 2023** found that of women MFI clients:

83% report

an improvement in their **confidence**

67% report an improvement in their ability to make independent **financial decisions**

88% say that they experience an improvement in their ability to achieve **financial goals**

Impact evidence of women's access to financial services

Kenya

In Kenya, women-headed households spent 15% more on nutritious foods after receiving free savings accounts.

India

A government workfare program that reached over 100 million people showed that paying women their benefits directly into their own account (and not into the account of a male household head) increased women's financial control, influenced gender norms preventing women from working, and incentivized women to find employment, compared with those paid in cash.

Philippines

Women who used commitment savings products that encouraged regular deposits into a personal bank account increased their household decision-making power and shifted their spending to household goods relevant to their needs, such as washing machines.

Chile

In Chile, a study of more than 3,500 low-income members of microfinance institutions found that women who received free savings accounts reduced their reliance on debt and improved their resilience.

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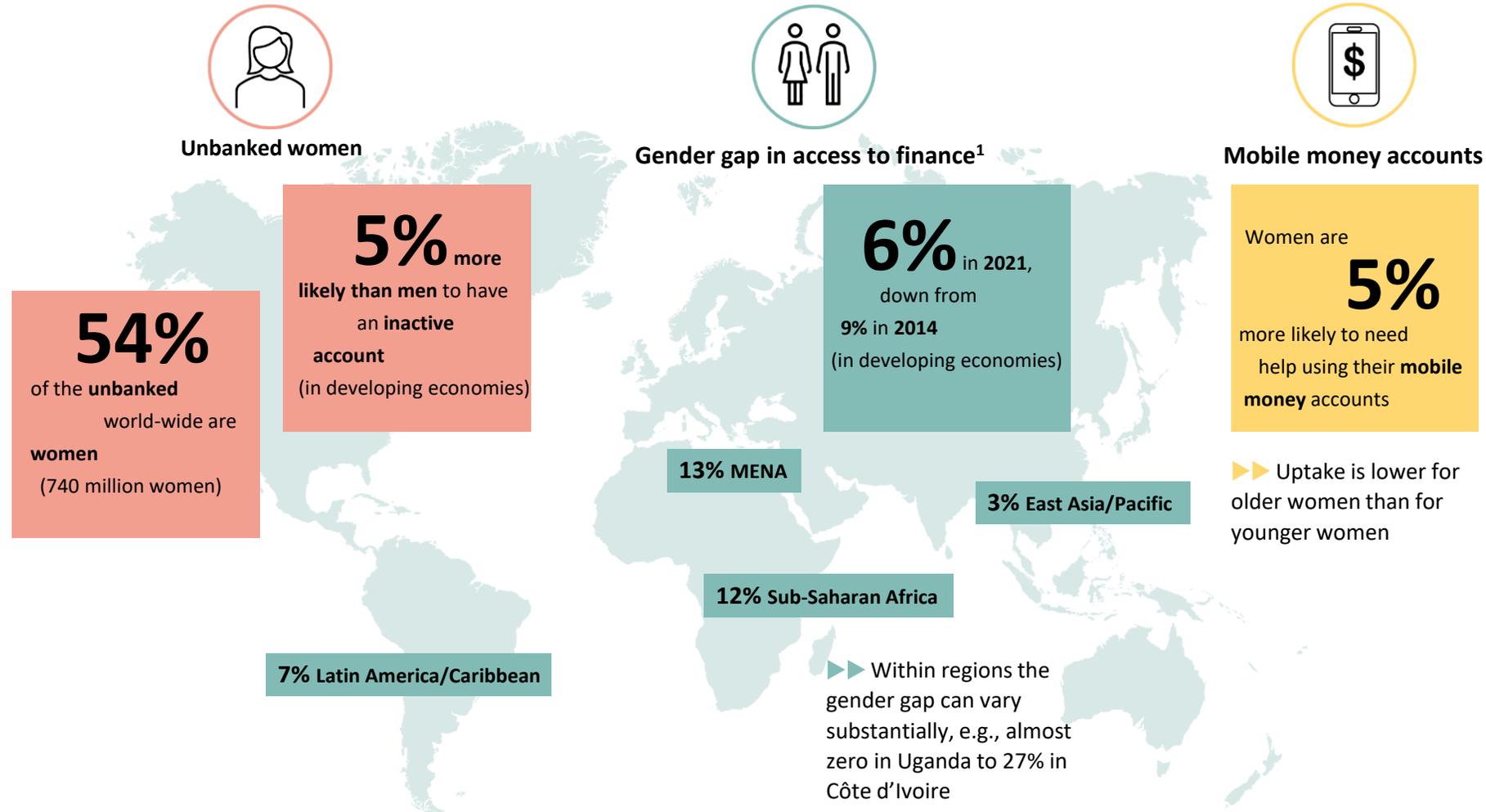
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Status of women's access to finance

▶▶ Overall, access to finance (measured by account ownership) increased by 8 percentage points from 63% of adults to 71% between 2017 and 2021.



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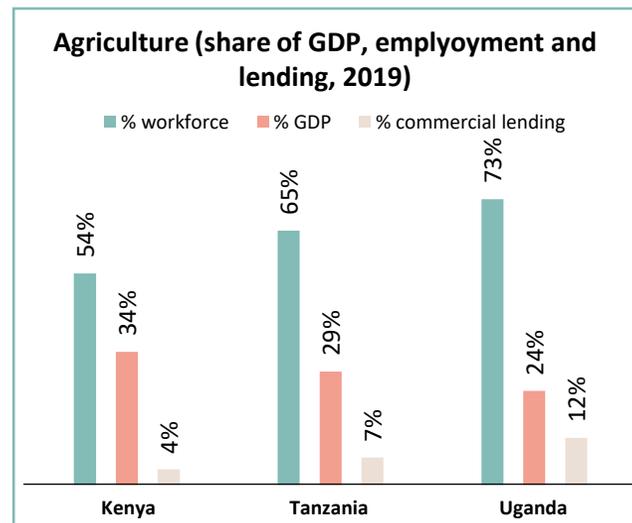
¹The gender gap in access to finance is the difference of account ownership/usage between men and women.
The World Bank (2022): [Global Findex 2021](#)

Lending to the agri-food sector

▶▶ Agriculture contributes in low- and middle-income countries on average approx. 14% to GDP and provides 35% of employment. Especially in low-income countries (as per GDP/capita), the share of agriculture in GDP and employment is even higher.

In Sub-Saharan Africa 22% of GDP is produced by agriculture which provides approx. 50% of employment, but less than 10% of commercial bank lending goes to the sector; an estimated 3 out of 4 agricultural SMEs lack sufficient access to finance

The total annual financing gap for agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 180 billion USD



Lending to the agri-food sector: a profitable business for financial institutions?

- Aceli Africa's research in East Africa found
 - (Approx. 2x) higher non-performing loans in the agri-food sector compared to other sectors
 - Loans to agriculture incur higher operational costs (loan officers can serve less clients in agriculture than in other sectors)
 - This results in a negative return on assets of -1% versus 3-5% for lending to other sectors
- Findings confirm that financial institutions' lending to agriculture need support; particularly when compared to investing in government treasuries or lending to more profitable segments of the economy
- Financial institutions need to understand the individual value chains or sectors and the context-specific underlying assumptions for a profitable business case to invest in the agri-food sector

Summary of challenges FSPs face financing the agri-food sector

- **Agricultural production and access to market**
 - Diseases and pests
 - Adverse weather & climate (change)
 - Lack of labour/expensive labour
 - Dependence on (international) volatile market prices
- **FSPs' internal policies and procedures**
 - Lack of knowledge about crop production cycles, inputs, seasonality and related cash flows and no tools to assess related risks
 - Lack of tailored products and services, policies and procedures
 - High operational costs and smaller loan sizes
 - Lack of alternative distribution channels
 - Lack of incentives to serve the sector (on the institutional and individual level)
- **The policy environment**
 - Concessional lending by state-owned institutions
 - Unstable agricultural policies

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The business case for financial service providers (FSPs) to serve women 1/2

▶▶ It might be beneficial to face the existing **challenges** because understanding and serving female clients better can lead to positive outcomes not only at the level of operations, but also at the internal level of a financial service provider.



The Business Case

Internal improvement within an institution: Benefits of an inclusive working environment

- Wider and more diverse talent pools and an inclusive work environment lead to **improved employee morale**, which then leads to **increased engagement**, reduced turnover, lower absenteeism and thus increased **productivity and value** for the institution
- Studies show that having diverse teams improves performance and innovation, as it allows for pooling of **different perspectives** on the same topic
- “Walking the talk” with regard to gender finance on an institutional level can benefit an institution – also on the public side. **Stakeholders, prospective clients, and employees** might be more interested in working with (or for) an institution because of its **efforts in gender inclusion**
- Gender equality has sparked increased interest in global debates; as such increased engagement by an institution might lead to **better access to donor funds**

Improved operations: Better portfolio quality and lower risk

- Women are the **single largest underserved group of customers** in the financial services industry (representing an untapped revenue opportunity of USD 700 bn)
- Research and customer data from FSPs have shown that **women-led businesses have lower non-performing loan rates** than men (see more details [here](#))
- Several banks that have focused on the women-led businesses segment show **greater opportunities for cross sales**¹
- Women **outpace men in overall growth** in volume of credit and volume of deposits
- **Women are strong savers**, with lower loan-to-deposit ratios than men

¹ Cross selling is the process of encouraging customers to purchase products or services in addition to the original items they intended to purchase. Oftentimes the cross-sold items are complementary to one another, so customers have more of a reason to purchase both.

Oliver Wyman (2020): [Women in Financial Services](#)

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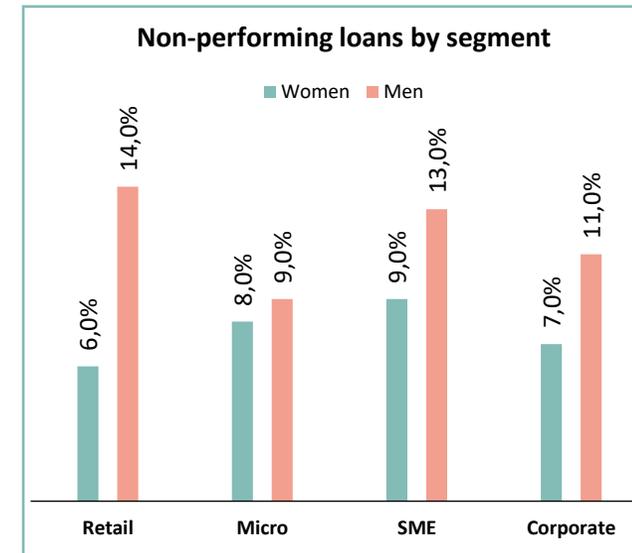
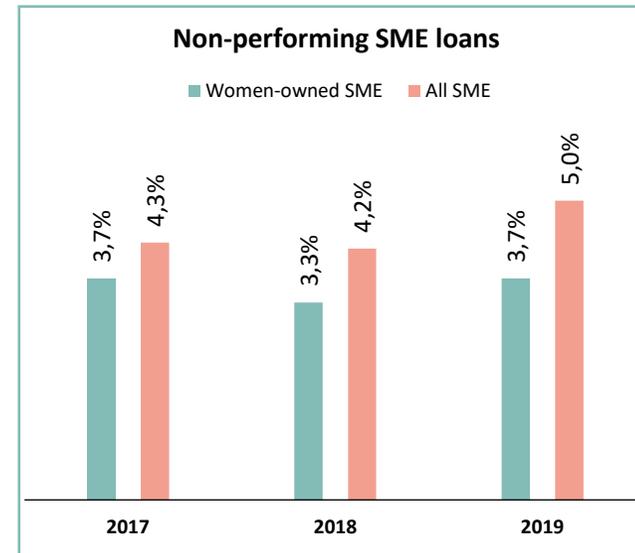
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The business case for financial service providers (FSPs) to serve women 2/2

Women are better credit risks

- Women are less risky customers because they are more risk averse than men and therefore invest in less risky ventures
- Results from an empirical study (2020) show that women are better credit risks. The findings also reveal that women borrowers have a positive impact on self-sufficiency and profitability of microfinance organizations¹
- Women have proven to be reliable (and better) repayers²:
 - In a surveyed sample of 136 IFC client financial institutions in 2019, the average non-performing loan ratio for loan portfolios of women-owned SMEs was significantly lower (better) with 3,7% than the average NPL ratio for total SME portfolios (which stood at 5.0%) comprising men- and women-owned SMEs (left chart)³
 - Data from an analysis based on reports from 43 financial service providers, that actively target and serve women across 31 countries, shows that women tend to pay back loans at a higher rate than men. The higher pay-back rates from women hold across all market segments, including SMEs (chart to the right)⁴



Further resources

Listen to why [KCB, a bank in Kenya](#), decided to step up their services offer to women, how they did it, as well as their results.

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¹ Financial Alliance for Women (2021): [Measuring the Value of the Female Economy](#)

² Zainuddin, M., Yasin, I. Md. (2020): [Are Women Better Borrowers in Microfinance? A Global Analysis](#)

³ Women's World Banking (2013): [Gender Performance Indicators: How well are we serving women](#)

⁴ World Bank/IFC (2021): [IFC – Banking on Women: Business Case Update #3 – Lower NPLs for Women-owned SMEs](#)

Digital financial services: A promise for inclusion, but gaps affecting women

▶▶ Digital payments are an important enabler for financial inclusion, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa – and for women. They are a driver of account ownership and account usage through mobile payments, savings, and borrowing. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to all 11 economies in which a larger share of adults has only a mobile money account rather than a bank or other financial institution account.



The rural-urban gap

▶▶ Rural-urban and gender gaps are only slowly decreasing or even increasing again, showing that women in rural areas are doubly affected and lack behind.

“Women and people living in rural areas are **increasingly aware** but still lag behind men and those living in urban areas.”

(GSMA 2022)

Rural populations in LMICs are 33% less likely to use mobile internet than those in urban areas

- Overall, the rural-urban usage gap has remained relatively unchanged since 2019
- Developments differ by region:
 - Rural populations in LDCs are 50% less likely to use mobile internet than urban populations
 - In Sub-Saharan Africa, the rural-urban usage gap reduced to 54%
 - In South Asia and the MENA region, the rural-urban usage gap has widened again, after narrowing in the past, to 38 % in South Asia and 34 % in the MENA region
- This does not necessarily mean that nothing has happened in rural areas, but developments have been much slower in rural areas than in urban areas

94% of the 400 million people living in areas without broadband coverage live in LMICs

- Mobile broadband coverage continues to slowly expand, with the coverage gap (those living in areas without mobile broadband coverage) representing 5% of the world’s population (400 million people) in 2021
- The coverage gap has only reduced by 1 percentage point per year between 2018 and 2021, showing how challenging it is to cover the remaining population, who are predominantly poor and rural
- In the least developed countries (LDCs), more than one in six people live in areas without mobile broadband coverage

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Digital financial inclusion: The gender gap

▶▶ More women in low- and middle-income countries are using mobile internet than ever before, but their rate of adoption has slowed for the second year in a row and a significant gender gap remains.

The gender gap

Mobile internet usage

Women in LMICs are **19% less likely than men to use mobile internet** and of the 900 million women who are still not using it, almost two-thirds live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where mobile gender gaps are widest.

Mobile ownership

In LMICs, women are **7% less likely to own any type of phone** and 17% less likely than men to own a smartphone

LAC

77% mobile internet usage¹
2% gender gap²

85% mobile ownership³
2% gender gap⁴

MENA

56% mobile internet usage¹
15% gender gap²

Sub-Saharan Africa

32% mobile internet usage¹
36% gender gap²

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

74% mobile internet usage¹
5% gender gap²

80% mobile ownership³
9% gender gap⁴

69% mobile ownership³
13% gender gap⁴

88% mobile ownership³
-1% gender gap⁴

86% mobile ownership³
2% gender gap⁴

East Asia

78% mobile internet usage¹
6% gender gap²

South Asia

46% mobile internet usage¹
41% gender gap²

77% mobile ownership³
15% gender gap⁴

1 Proportion of women using mobile internet

2 Gender gap in mobile internet adoption

3 Proportion of women who own a mobile phone

4 Gender gap in mobile phone ownership

GSMA (2023): [The mobile gender gap report 2023](#)

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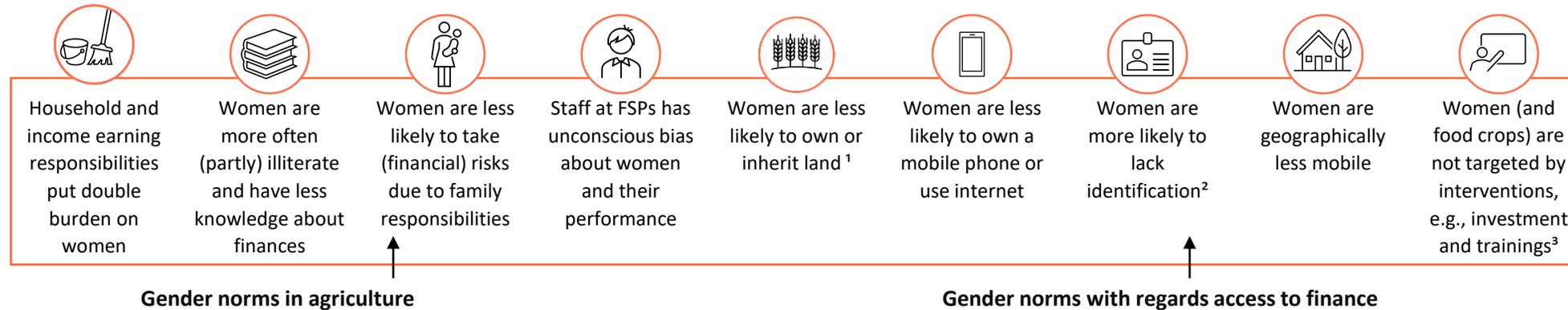
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Gender norms and resulting obstacles

▶▶ Gender norms describe how we are expected to behave as a result of the way we or others identify our gender. They can result in obstacles for women on many different levels, including managing businesses and accessing financial services.



- Women are often perceived as “farmer’s wife” and not farmers on their own
- Perception of “women’s crops” (food crops) and “men’s crops” (cash crops) whereby cash-earning crops have a higher social value
- Paid work viewed as more important than (unpaid) reproductive and caregiving responsibilities which are viewed as women's domain



Further resources

Click [here](#) for definitions of social and gender norms, as well as intersectionality

- Social interactions between unrelated men and women can be viewed negatively or are prohibited
- Moving outside the village (or even the house) without a male accompanying can be a challenge
- Women are rarely viewed as heads of household with control over productive resources
- Girls’/women’s education is given less importance



Further resources

Listen to what [women farmers have to say](#) about the obstacles they face

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¹ FAO: globally less than 15% of land is held by women, MENA <5%

² Thirty percent of unbanked adults in the Sub-Saharan region reported they do not have the documentation needed to open a mobile money account.

³ Women in agriculture, food, forestry and fisheries receive only about 7% of total agriculture investments worldwide and 5% of agricultural extension services in developing countries. (FAO 2010)

The effects of gender norms and how they link to constraints

Gender norms



Behaviour of other system actors



Constraints in the system

«Women should not make financial decisions independently»



Financial service providers (FSPs) do not regard women as potential clients



FSPs do not develop suitable financial services that consider and respond to the needs of women

«Women should not have assets in their own name»



Heritage laws and customs disadvantage women as do rules about asset acquisition and land registries



Women are not able to take out loans since they do not possess assets suitable as collateral

«Women should not talk to men outside their family»



FSPs do not focus on recruiting female staff since women are less likely to work outside their homes



Women clients are less likely to approach a financial institution if there are few female bank staff

«A man has to be the head of the household»



Household decisions are mainly taken by men and men's consent is regarded as necessary for women



FSPs often request a women's husband (father or brother) to sign a loan contract

«A man should not take care of children; this is women's work»



Other men disrespect men carrying out tasks perceived as "women's tasks"



Lack of role models who share the care and household burden with women



Gender norms influence incentives and capacities of system actors and are the basis for constraints women face



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Tools and Frameworks



Chapter 04

Chapter 4 presents tools and frameworks to support analysis and implementation.

The chapter is subdivided into five chapters:

- GIZ project analysis
- Overview context analysis
- Demand side assessment
- Supply side assessment
- Project management tools

Analysing a project's possibilities and internal limitations

▶▶ Before starting to implement any activity to support women's access to finance in the agri-food sector, an analysis to define the framework for implementation is key. This analysis should include internal possibilities and limitations as well as a context analysis.



Internal

+



Context



Project's internal possibilities and limitations

Feasibility

Available time	→	Assess realistically the time that is left before you have to start planning for e.g., a final evaluation and/or design mission for a new project and before you wrap up activities
Available funding	→	Assess whether your implementation plans correspond to the available funding
Relevant experience	→	Assess whether financial systems development (FSD) and local gender expertise are available within the project team and/or if this expertise needs to be added (from headquarters or via consultants)

Mandate and scope

Strategic objectives/mandate	→	Assess if a planned activity fits your overall goals and potentially that of your funder
Predefined scope	→	Check any aspects predefined by the overall scope of the project, such as partners, geographical area, etc.

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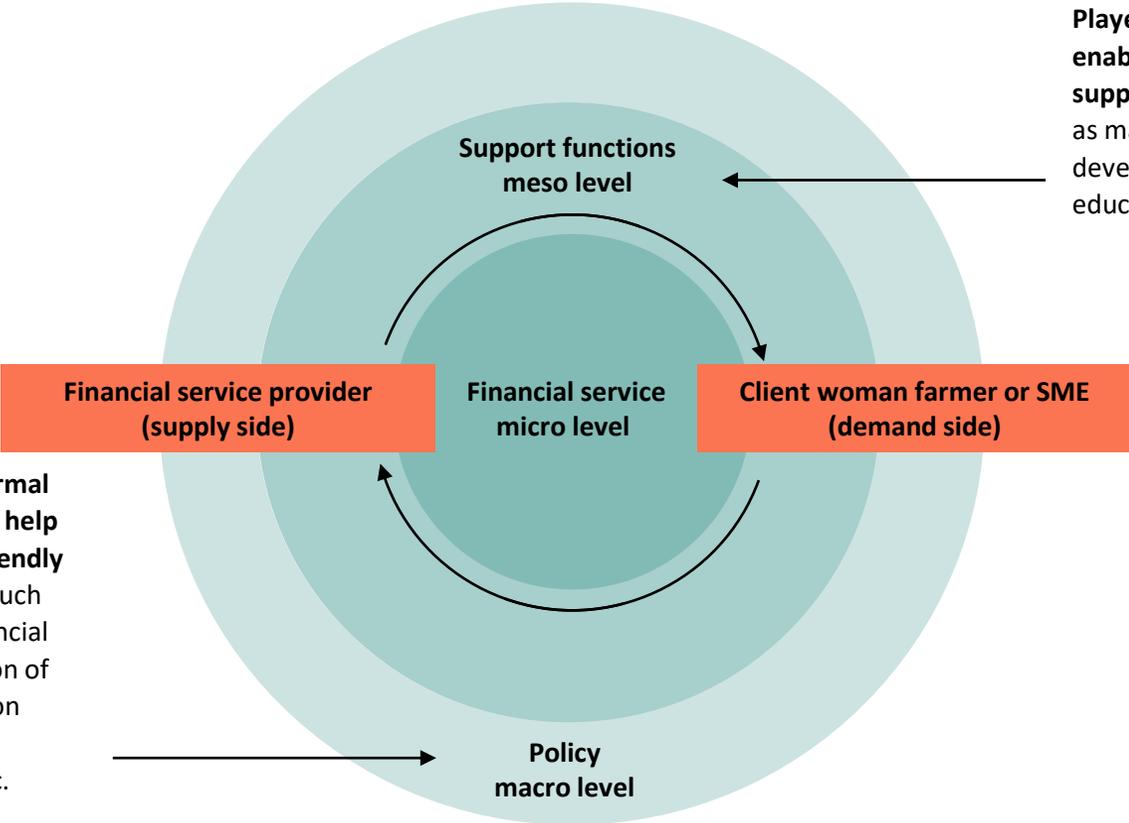
Context analysis: The financial ecosystem framework

▶▶ Following the internal assessment, it is recommended for projects to analyse the context in which a project is active. For this, the financial ecosystem framework can be helpful. It comprises the demand side (client/women farmer or SME), the supply side (financial service provider, FSP), as well as ecosystem functions, i.e., support functions at the meso level and rules and norms at the macro level.



Context analysis

Formal rules and informal norms/ practices that help create a consumer-friendly and safe ecosystem, such as regulations for financial institutions, supervision of FI, consumer protection laws, laws to prevent money laundering, etc.



Players and functions that enable the link between supply and demand, such as market research, skills development, financial education, etc.

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Context analysis: Overview

Demand side (client: women farmer or SME)

Client: women farmer or SME

→ Assess/analyse the characteristics, context and needs of women farmers or SMEs and/or the specific segment(s) you are working with

- ▶ Check [here](#) for ideas on data sources
- ▶ Check [here](#) for a guide on how to carry out a segmentation exercise
- ▶ Check [here](#) for specific gender assessments on the demand side (the mandatory gender analysis at project inception can be a good start)

Supply side (financial service providers)

Existing financial service providers and their offer

→ Assess/analyse the providers of financial services in the country or region and the services they offer, including access conditions, pricing and delivery channels and if possible, usage patterns

- ▶ Once a partner has been identified, an institutional gender assessment is recommended.
- ▶ Check [here](#) for a specific gender assessment tool

Meso and macro level

Ecosystem

→ **At the macro level**, assess applicable regulations (agricultural sector, financial sector, communications sector, and other areas of interest), the applicable policy environment and legal situation, the digital

infrastructure (network coverage, phone penetration, etc. **At the meso level**, assess available market research functions, availability of skills development, including financial education

Further context

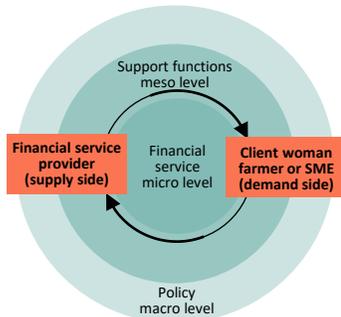
Value chains

→ Assess if the crop or value chain that you want to support is a profitable business, ideally also assess women's role in the value chain

- ▶ Check [here](#) for external resources on value chain analysis, including in regard to gender

Climate assessment

→ Assess how your project's beneficiaries are affected by climate change and adverse weather conditions as well as anticipating potential climate-related impacts of the project activities



Examples: GIZ's Global Project AgFin

Togo – developed business model analyses including value chains with high female participation, such as shea butter, rice and casava

Nigeria – developed a scoping report for the rice value chain

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Demand side analysis: Available data sources

▶▶ Not every project will have the available resources in terms of time and funding or even the explicit need to carry out its own primary research. Most projects might at least partly rely on available data resources, complementing these with their own targeted data collection.

And national statistics from

- Statistics offices
- Relevant ministries, central bank
- Other projects, other donors, etc.

Although these might often lack gender-disaggregated data.

Potential sources for demand side data:



Global Index

- Provides detailed data points on access to finance (including database to download)

- Approx. every three years, newest edition with 2021 data

www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalindex



- CGAP smallholder household surveys
- Includes a limited number of countries (6)
- Database to download, analyses and papers available
- Analysis on women in rural contexts

CGAP Smallholder Families Data Hub



- In-depth research on how people living in poverty manage their money
- On a limited number of countries (8+)

<https://financialdiaries.org/>



- Includes a limited number of countries
- Specific surveys for MSME and consumers
- Data can be disaggregated for women, youth, rural population

<https://finmark.org.za/data-for-financial-markets>



- Data on digitalization, e.g., ownership of phones, connectivity, use of digital services, etc.
- Specific data on “connected women” and smallholder farmers

<https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/>

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Demand side analysis: Segmentation of project beneficiaries

What?

Segmentation is the practice of placing a group of people or businesses into distinct subgroups based on pre-defined criteria to enable a deeper understanding of their challenges and needs which allows for more targeted, effective solutions.

Why?

Neither women, women-led businesses nor women working in the agri-food sector are a homogeneous group. Therefore, there is no standardized solution in working with women in the agri-food sector. Looking closely at their specific characteristics is essential to understanding barriers and developing tailored solutions.

How?

There is not one single way to segment women or women-led businesses in the agri-food sector. A critical first step is to clarify the objective of segmenting, e.g.:

- How can agricultural and financial services be designed for better uptake?
- How can training programs best meet the different needs?
- Which type of product will work for whom?

The following criteria can be used for segmentation:



Demographic and household factors, such as age, gender, literacy, educational attainment, and household structure



Lifecycle stage is especially relevant for women and includes stages such as being in education, getting married, having children, etc.



Income potential based on estimated potential of making a profit with their farming activities, e.g., productive resources, productivity, pricing and access, constraints



Degree of professionalization including topics such as proportion of crop sold, income diversification, level of market access, etc.



Attitudes, beliefs and values Attitudes are often to determine reluctance/ openness to change. Motivations are equally important as actual behaviour. Attitudes are often influenced by factors that go beyond the incentive of potential income gains (e.g., economic risks, social and cultural factors,)

▶▶ It is recommended to use a combination of these criteria

▶▶ Also refer to the concept of intersectionality



Further resources

- Check [here](#) for CGAP's segmentation of small-holder farmers
- Check [here](#) for CGAP's segmentation of rural women
- Check [here](#) for ISF Advisors' development trajectories for smallholder households, including women

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Segmentation of smallholder farmers (CGAP)

Example 1

Commercializing

Commercializing small-holder households are the primary market for financial service providers offering solutions for agricultural goals.

- Perceive their agricultural activities as a business
- Better connected to value chains and sell to wholesalers and retailers

Subsistence

Subsistence smallholder households benefit from comprehensive approaches that offer both financial and nonfinancial services.

- Farm largely to feed their families, with some sales and other income from casual labor
- Farm small plots and live in rural areas



Diversifying

Diversifying smallholder households are in transition and generally value the standard portfolio of financial services.

- Derive most of their income from their own business and regular or casual employment, including some from agriculture
- Farm smaller plots and more likely to be found in peri-urban or urban areas

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Segmentation of rural women (CGAP)

Example 2

This segmentation is built on **persona research¹ with the intention to help financial service providers to build a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities rural women face.** Rural women have different motivations, behaviors, needs, and aspirations.

Rural women have different motivations, behaviors, needs, and aspirations.

Understanding these differences enables service providers to reach and cater to rural women more effectively. The distinct personas of rural women represent three behavioral sub-segments of rural women, highlighting differences relevant to service provision.



Ambassadors ...

have diverse and stable sources of income, including in agriculture. They **have agency** over their finances and **make decisions** in their households, enabling them to learn about and engage with services that can help them in their pursuit of opportunities for self-development and livelihood improvement.



Skeptics ...

mostly rely on agricultural activities as a means of generating income, with few alternative sources available to them. When aware of services that interest them, they base their decision to use them on a thorough **observation and inquiry process**. They look to trusted community members to observe or inquire about the benefits and risks of the services and then decide whether to use them.



Traditionalists ...

have intermittent income sources and mostly rely on their families for financial support. They are comfortable with the services they already use and are less likely to proactively look for new services. But they will **follow the advice** of the head of household to discover and explore approaches to improve their productivity and income.

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¹ Personas are fictional characters, which are created based upon qualitative research to represent the different user types that might use a service, product, site, or brand in a similar way. They are not exhaustive.

CGAP (2023): [Resilient Rural Women: Applying Personas and Insights for Climate-Smart Innovation](#)

“Pathway to prosperities” (ISF Advisors)

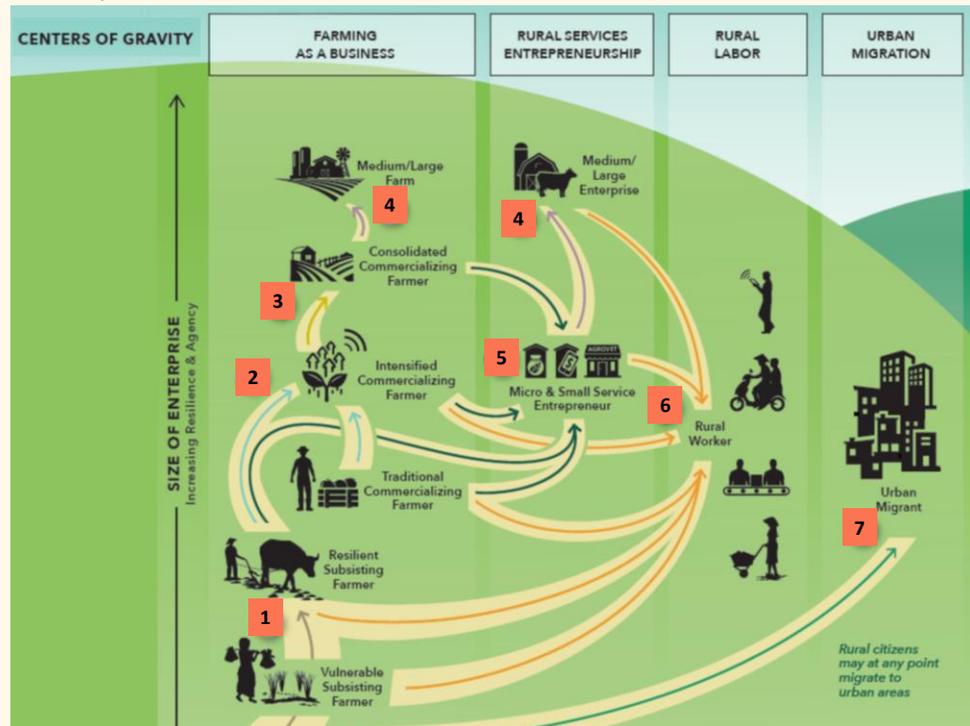
Example 3

The Rural Pathways Model

The Rural Pathways Model aims to capture predictable development trajectories smallholder households may take as they pursue greater resilience and agency. These pathways can offer insights into how smallholders’ needs may evolve over time and how that will shape the rural economy.

Women through a pathway lens

Women often face significant and unique barriers in accessing the skills, networks and assets needed to transition through the rural pathways; effectively reducing their mobility or making their journey more precarious.



1 Developing a Resilience Buffer

The smallholder farmer continues to farm primarily for subsistence, has little or no surplus but is able to improve farming practices and build assets to strengthen their resilience to shocks.

Women: improving their access to productivity-boosting assets, including land, credit, social networks, and information.

2 Farm Intensification

The smallholder farmer takes a business-oriented approach, is able to generate a surplus and increase production value through improved inputs, better farming practices, and regular sales.

Women: adapting service delivery channels, market access, and collateral requirements so that women can accumulate the productive assets needed to intensify their farm operations.

3 Land Consolidation

The farmer takes a business-oriented approach and is able to consolidate multiple plots of land for more efficient,

cost-effective and competitive commercial production.

Women: opportunities for women to secure leased, joint ownership, or sole ownership of land.

4 Transition to Formal Enterprise

The farmer or service entrepreneur consolidates their activities into a formal enterprise that is fully integrated into the value chain and relies primarily on hired labour and mechanization.

Women: lack access to financial services and face non-financial constraints such as negative stereotypes relating to women as business owners. Service providers can make concerted efforts for women to access financing and capacity building.

5 Transition to Service Provision

The smallholder farmer shifts away from agricultural production and instead pursues an entrepreneurship livelihood strategy in rural services, either related to

agriculture (e.g., agro-vet) or not (e.g., mobile money agent).

Women: are more likely to start enterprises with low capital costs and barriers to entry, often relying on informal sources of finance. Service providers should strive to design products that can overcome the constraints female entrepreneurs typically face, such as savings accounts or credit with flexible collateral requirements.

6 Conversion to Rural Employment

The smallholder farmer remains in rural areas but shifts away from self-production or entrepreneurship to provide labor for on-farm or off-farm activities.

Women: need efforts aiming to reduce the gender wage gap, improve working conditions, and address occupational segregation.

7 Migration to Urban Areas

The smallholder farmer migrates to urban centers, transitioning to non-agricultural activities.

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Demand side analysis: Gender assessment tools

▶▶ CGAP as well as GIZ offer toolkits for the analysis of the demand side. These toolkits span from gender norms diagnostics to broader entrepreneurship and financial inclusion topics.



CGAP Gender Norms in Financial Inclusion: Diagnostic Guidance

This toolkit is a methodology for unpacking the behavior of women as customers/users of financial services, assessing how these behaviors are shaped by gender norms, and establishing how women's financial inclusion is impacted. It was developed by

incorporating a financial inclusion lens into existing social norms research methods. Here is an example of how GIZ in Mozambique implemented this.



GIZ Women's Financial Inclusion Toolkit (2021)

This toolkit helps practitioners working in developing countries to navigate and address barriers. It provides readers with an overview of women's financial inclusion, covering topics of project scoping, design, and implementation as well as impact

measurement. It features practical tools, guidance, and specific project ideas. It contains seven detailed case studies from various countries with challenges, target groups, and activities.



GIZ Women Entrepreneur Financing and Investment Toolkit (2023)

The Women Entrepreneurs Financing and Investment toolkit has been designed to bring together evidence, approaches, and examples on how to address the financing and investment needs of women-led businesses in a structured and easy to use framework. The toolkit allows practitioners to understand the key characteristics of women-led businesses, including constraints, challenges, and opportunities

they face in accessing and using finance at each step of the SME journey (from start-up, to growth and expansion, and finally maturity); learn about validated approaches and promising strategies to address the barriers and constraints in the financial system; and access tools and resources that can be used to develop programs or interventions, as well as monitor and measure their impact.

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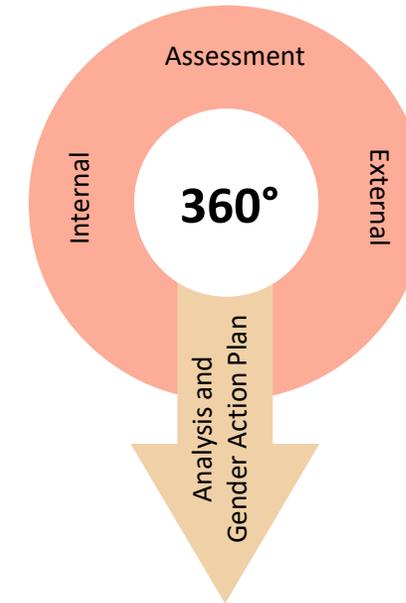
Supply side analysis: Institutional gender assessment

▶▶ A gender assessment analysis helps an institution understand its current state, strengths, and areas of development in relation to gender. It is an opportunity to reflect on the institution's readiness to promote services tailored to women, its available resources (human and financial) including internal capacities and expertise. It includes a 360° perspective on gender issues, including both internal and external aspects.

- **Internal assessment** addresses questions such as:
 - Is our institution a workplace that attracts, retains, promotes and pays women employees equally to men?
 - Do we deliberately unlock the potential of all employees, particularly women?

▶ Documents and numbers to be analysed are (but not limited to) HR policies and processes, gender balance at staff, management and board level and gender pay-gap, code of conduct and policies around discrimination and sexual harassment, internal expertise and awareness on gender issues, etc.
- **External assessment** addresses questions around female clients and partners:
 - How many female (smallholders/SME) clients do we reach?
 - How many of our partners are women (e.g., agents)?

▶ Documents and processes to be analyzed are (but not limited to) data collection methods and tools, monitoring tools, reporting systems, client segmentation, products and services (policies and procedures), etc.
- **Target group:** For both assessments, internal and external, it is important to include the target group (women) actively in the analysis, e.g., through focus group discussions



- **Gender action plan**
 - Sets out a tailored set of recommendations, including priority actions
 - Defines key performance indicators and accountability mechanisms
 - This ideally includes the development of a gender strategy

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Supply side analysis: Gender assessments tools

▶▶ Several organisations offer online tools and assessments helping to assess institutions' internal gender diversity as well as their approach towards diversity in serving their clients.

 <p>Women's World Banking</p>	<p>Women's World Banking Online Gender Assessment Methodology</p>	<p>This <u>online assessment</u> provides a survey that addresses internal gender diversity, workplace policies and market-facing strategy (a tailored survey for FinTechs is available as well). It is designed to provide companies with actionable insights on their</p>	<p>state of internal gender diversity and outreach to the women's market. Companies that complete the assessment in its entirety receive a summary report that includes an overall gender diversity result and recommendations based on responses.</p>
 <p>75 British International Investment</p>	<p>BII Gender Toolkit</p>	<p>British International Investment (former CDC) provides a <u>range of tools</u> around gender-smart investing, such as a fund manager's guide, including sector briefs on how to assess, for</p>	<p>example, <u>financial institutions</u> or companies in the <u>agrifood-sector</u>, as well as a <u>guide</u> on how to become the employer of choice for women.</p>
 <p>2X GLOBAL</p>	<p>2X Gender and Climate Finance Toolkit</p>	<p>This toolkit helps stakeholders to identify and prioritize gender-smart climate finance investment risks and opportunities throughout the investment cycle, as well as in existing portfolio. In addition, it</p>	<p>contains <u>sectoral guidance</u> and <u>example due diligence questions</u> which can be used to engage in discussions with financial institutions</p>
 <p>ICR INVESTMENT CLIMATE RISK POLICY atingi</p>	<p>Gender Mainstreaming in Development Finance Institutions</p>	<p>In this <u>3-hour self-paced course</u>, the staff of development finance institutions (DFIs) will learn how to develop a gender finance approach in their institution. Participants who have successfully completed this course will have a good overview of the main steps a DFI can take to promote gender</p>	<p>mainstreaming, will have reflected on the key lessons learned and takeaways from the course and will be equipped with additional resources to continue their gender mainstreaming journey. (This course also exists in <u>French</u>)</p>

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Supply side analysis: Helping FSPs analyse their service journey for women

▶▶ The rural women's service journey framework and related research can help financial service providers to understand and consequently improve their service delivery at the different stages. For different segments of women different characteristics might be more or less relevant.

1

Awareness

How do rural women discover a new service and understand its value proposition?

- Reflect about realities and priorities of rural women (esp. lack of time and mobility constraints) when tailoring messaging on the value proposition
- Leverage and involve trusted community members or existing groups (e.g., savings groups)

2

Access

How do rural women start to use a service at the right time, in the right place, and with the right technology?

- Include time, mobility, literacy and device ownership constraints in design
- Assure accessibility through different touchpoints and in different forms (in-person and digital interactions)
- Engage influential family and community members for buy-in (husbands, mothers/fathers-in-law)
- Provide safe onboarding spaces to learn and make mistakes (demos, test payments, role-playing, etc.)
- Engage women facilitators and organize peer support

3

Early use

How do rural women engage with the service's different features, troubleshoot issues, and find support in exploring the full breadth of the service?

- Offer clear and customized channels for troubleshooting and problem-solving support (e.g., all-women call center)
- Include strong feedback loops in a variety of mechanisms (women agents, calls, messaging)
- Offer effective mechanisms to manage more complex interactions to build confidence in usage

4

Sustained use

How do rural women commit to engaging with a service consistently over time, and find value in extended usage to the extent that they even recommend it to others?

- Use regular users as advocates and trainers
- React flexibly and empathetically to women suffering from unexpected shocks (e.g., renegotiation of terms)
- Build women's capacity on topics beyond the financial service, such as cash management, business planning, etc.
- Monitor unintended negative consequences and follow-up/react

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Project management tools: Identifying key actors for gender activities

▶▶ Actor (or stakeholder) maps are usually drafted at overall project level when a project kicks off. For certain activities, it can however be crucial to think about actors and map them with a specific activity in mind. This certainly is the case for gender-related activities.

Objectives of a map of actors

- Visualizing relevant actors and their relationships allows for first conclusions and hypotheses concerning the respective influence of the various actors on the issues at stake
- It helps to analyse relationships and mutual dependencies and thus can shed light on alliances and problematic relationships
- The potential impact on women and reactions to them should be anticipated and analysed
 - ▶ In essence, drafting and analysing a map of actors can help to avoid doing harm

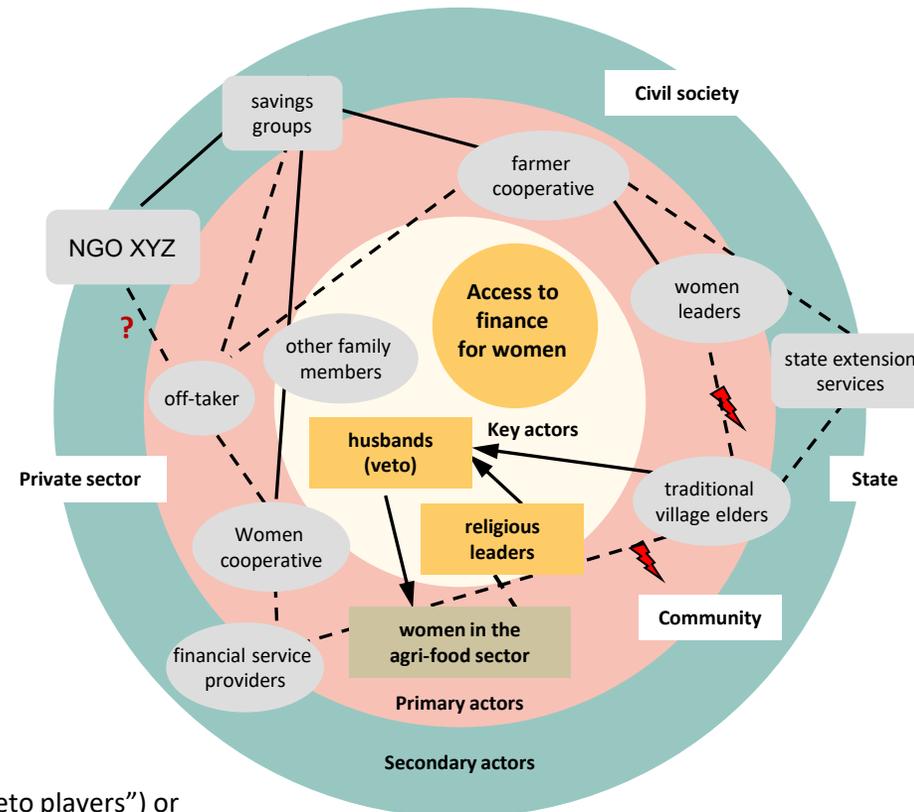
Components of a map of actors

- **Primary actors.** Actors who are directly affected by the project as designated project beneficiaries
 - ▶ Women in the agri-food sector (or a specific segment the activity is aimed at)
- **Key actors.** Actors who are able to use their skills, knowledge or position of power to significantly influence an activity. Without their support and participation, the targeted results of an activity normally cannot be achieved. They may even be

able to veto the project (“veto players”) or support the project with their power and influence (“enablers”)

▶ These can be male or female family members, such as husbands, brothers or mothers-in-law, as well as influencers in a community, such as religious or traditional authorities, etc.

- **Secondary actors.** Actors whose involvement in the project is only indirect or temporary



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Project management tools: Working with a financial service provider

▶▶ Taking enough time to assess and select a financial service provider to partner with is crucial for the success of an intervention, as is thorough planning of the collaboration.

	Key steps 	Tool(s)/sources 	Consideration(s) 
1	Identify potential partners	Political partners, ministries or central banks, associations of banks or microfinance institutions	Elaboration of a first list of potentially interesting and interested financial institutions. This could also be done via a call for proposals stating concrete selection criteria
2	Assess whether the selected partner financial institution(s) fulfil basic criteria for collaboration, especially regarding openness to promote gender issues	Rapid appraisal tools An overview of institutional gender assessment tools is available here	Before engaging with any institution, it is essential to get to know the institution and understand its major challenges and opportunities, and what is needed to unlock its potential. Whereas investors providing refunding to an FI would carry out a complete due diligence, TA implementers are advised to carry out a rapid appraisal that balances the need to understand whether basic criteria for collaboration are met with constraints around timing and funding
3	Understand the needs of the partner FI in terms of capacity building	Diagnostic of capacity building needs (see here)	It is important to look at the overall institution and jointly assess the areas in which it needs capacity building support, even if not all areas can be covered
4	Jointly structure areas of support	Template of an action plan	Together with the partner institution and taking into account a project's objectives and budget as well as the results of the needs assessment, the areas to be supported should be defined
5	Decide on modes of collaboration		Based on the areas to be supported and other criteria, such as budget and timing, the type of support will be defined (e.g., short-term consultancy, training, long-term consultancy or embedded staff)

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Project management tools: Rapid appraisal of financial service providers

▶▶ Rapid appraisals can be structured around five areas that apply to most financial institutions (including private and public ones) with tailored questions within each area focusing on specific sectors or types of institutions.

Area	Specific sub-areas
Governance, statutes and controls	Includes areas such as the Board of Directors and its composition (e.g., sector knowledge of its members, number of independent Directors), the shareholder structure, the legal status of the institution and its regulatory or supervisory body as well as the way internal controls are set up (independent audit, audit committee, etc.)
Strategic fit and capacity	Fit of institution's mandate and strategy with a funder or implementer's priorities, current or future strategy and activity in sector/segment, buy-in from top management and Board, potential budget and resources to develop women clients in the agri-food sector, technical knowledge and capacity of staff
Reputation and track record	Public perception and reputation in the country, previous achievements and partnerships with other donors, potential previous allegations or other reputational issues and their resolution, particularly in terms of money laundering and terrorist financing (AML/CFT), as well as consumer protection (if any)
Financial soundness	Quick analysis of audited financial statements (overall profitability, equity position and quality of loan portfolio, etc.), stability and diversification of funding sources
Commitment and openness to cooperation	Openness to change and introducing new approaches, willingness to cooperate, willingness to contribute with own resources (financial and in-kind)

Sources of information/verification: Documents/reports from the institution, web searches, discussions with colleagues and other partners in-country, consultation with headquarter, etc.

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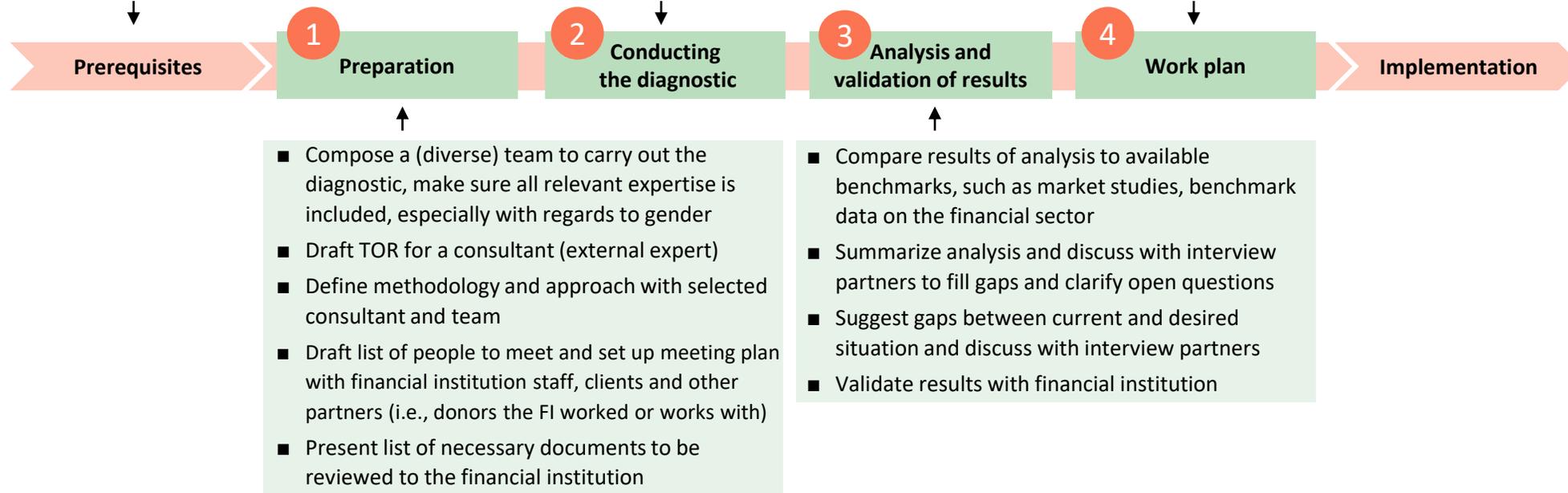
Project management tools: Diagnostic of capacity building needs of FI

►► The objective of the capacity building needs analysis is to identify strengths and weaknesses of a financial institution's organization and functioning, taking into account elements of the regulatory framework to be able to develop an action plan.

- Inform the sector about the project
- Define a selection process for candidates
- Launch a call for Expressions of Interest (if necessary) clearly stating the conditions for financial institutions to apply
- Preselect applicants based on criteria defined ahead of time

- Review provided documents
- Draw up interview guidelines for different departments
- Carry out interviews according to schedule
- Visit operations (or branch offices) to compare documentation and reality

- Develop an action plan jointly with financial institution
- Prioritize actions and compare with other available support to assure synergies and additionality
- Add budget to action plan items (consultant days or investments)
- Define contribution by financial partner
- Validate the action plan with senior management/ Board of Directors to assure buy-in at all levels



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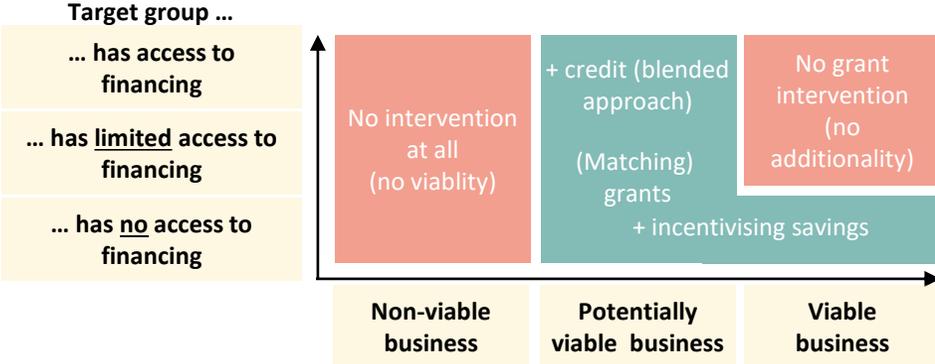
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Project management tools: Grants or loans?

▶▶ Often, grants (one-off, non-reimbursable transfers) are not considered a viable and sustainable instrument. However, certain types of grants can work well in circumstances where incentives are necessary for investments (e.g., climate adaptation for women farmers). Mostly, matching grants for a specific purpose (and matched with an own contribution by the recipient) are preferred, as is a blended approach of grants and loans.



- **Guidelines for designing (matching) grants**
- Create additionality
- Carefully structure grant mechanism
- Carefully design of level of matching
- Transparency about grant features and the selection of beneficiaries
- Accompany with skills development
- Exit and transition strategy
- Link to the financial sector (blended approach)

For sustainability reasons, a blended approach of grants and loans is recommended. The following table shows the difference between micro loans and micro grants and when either instrument is preferable.

	(Micro) loan	(Micro) grant
Requirement	Pre-existing level of economic activity as a basis for productive use	Too poor to invest loan in income generating activity
Type of population/ use case	Economically active low-income population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Widely dispersed populations, crisis or immediate post-crisis situations, e.g., temporarily displaced people ▪ In combination with loans when a certain behaviour is encouraged (e.g., investment in climate-friendly assets)
Characteristics	Long-term, continuous instrument	Short-term, one-off instrument
Potential harm caused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk that loan will be used for immediate necessities pushing people into debt ▪ If loan is not paid back, this can create loss of discipline affecting other FIs 	Farmers might rely on non-viable business model that will not continue to generate income after grant scheme comes to an end

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Project management tools: Interventions along the financial ecosystem

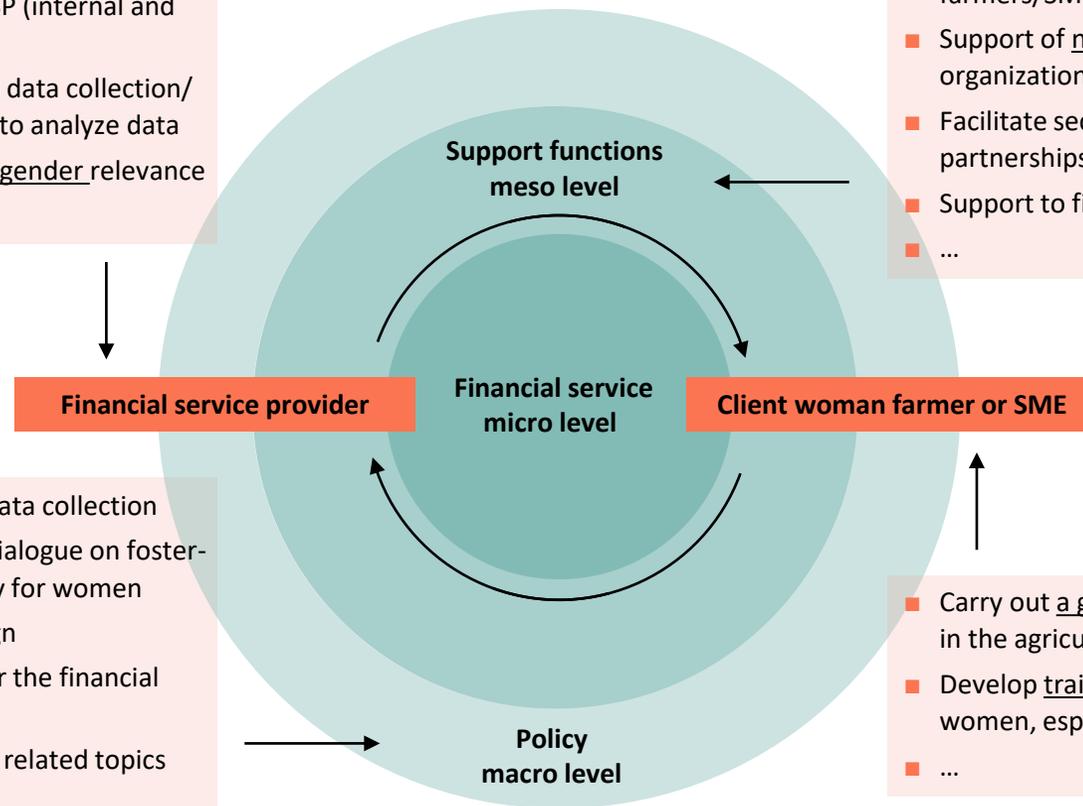
►► The financial ecosystem framework can help a project to identify potential entry points for activities. It also provides examples of potential interventions at the different levels.

- Assess current situation in regard to gender in the FSP (internal and client-related)
- Draft a gender strategy for an FSP (internal and client-related)
- Develop a gender-disaggregated data collection/monitoring system and capacity to analyze data
- Revise process and products for gender relevance
- ...

- Carry out a market analysis, analysis of specific value chains or needs assessments for women farmers/SMEs
- Support of networks, associations, farmer organizations
- Facilitate sector dialogue and setting up partnerships
- Support to financial infrastructure
- ...

- Support gender-disaggregated data collection
- Support (public-private) policy dialogue on fostering financial inclusion specifically for women
- Support policy and subsidy design
- Support conductive regulation for the financial sector
- Support relevant ministries with related topics
- ...

- Carry out a gender norms assessment for women in the agricultural sector
- Develop trainings that specifically address women, especially in rural areas
- ...



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Case studies



Chapter 05

Chapter 5 presents concrete examples on how to foster access to finance for women in the agri-food sector.

These case studies are from different GIZ projects and cover topics such as consumer protection regulation, training, coordination platform, gender norms diagnostics, savings groups, adapted financial products, institutional gender assessments or development of a gender strategy.

Enhanced consumer protection regulation in Uganda

Supporting financial inclusion in Uganda

GIZ supported the Ugandan financial sector from 1998 through 2017 on all three levels of the financial system, with a focus on rural and agricultural finance.

Within the component «Financial Literacy and Consumer Protection» several activities were implemented to facilitate transparency and access to financial products for low-income and semi or illiterate people (often the case for women), including people in rural and agriculture-focused regions of the country.

“Key facts document” on financial products

- To operationalize the Consumer Protection Guidelines, GIZ supported the central bank of Uganda to develop a template “Key Facts Document” to enhance transparency of conditions for all financial products offered by regulated financial institutions in the Ugandan financial sector
- These key facts documents are two-page standardized forms which need to present product information for consumers in a concise and comprehensible manner and thus enable customers to compare products across institutions

Financial Consumer Protection Guidelines

- In 2011, the central bank of Uganda issued financial consumer protection guidelines which regulated financial institutions are encouraged to follow. These guidelines were developed with the support of GIZ and promote fair and equitable service practices, increased transparency, and mechanisms to handle consumer complaints.
- They require financial service providers to share information about products with consumers, including the total cost of credit and to prominently display standard fees and charges at all its branches, in promotional materials, and any other communication channels which it uses
- In addition, GIZ supported the training of 1,300 staff from financial institution branches nationwide on how to comply with the guidelines, as well as 100 people who were trained as trainers using a ToT approach.
- The implementation was also accompanied by a “Know your rights”-themed communications campaign



Implementation in progress, but still lacking behind

In 2019, IPA (funded by FSDA and FSDU) undertook an evaluation and mystery shopping exercise to check on implementation status of Financial Consumer Protection Guidelines and Key Facts Documents and, in summary, found that supervision of guidelines is necessary to assure the consistent application. As such, the level of transparency depended strongly on the level of experience of consumers and the total cost of credit was not consistently provided by loan officers, while printed material was absent in the branches. Find more details [here](#).

GIZ supported the training of **1,300 staff** from financial institution branches nationwide.



Gender aspects

Consistent and transparent communication of conditions and prices of financial products is above all helpful for women who often lack general and financial literacy



Further resources

[Bank of Uganda](#) (Ugandan central bank)
[Q&A on Guidelines by BoU](#)

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Training farmers in SmartFarming in Uganda

SmartFarming was initially developed by GIZ as part of the Strategic Alliance 'Farmers as Entrepreneurs' (develoPPP) for smallholders in coffee and banana value chains in Uganda, targeting approx. 28K smallholders.

Creation and content

- Needs-based co-creation with future audience and other actors, including several rounds of testing and adjusting have proven beneficial
- Use segmentation results as basis for content creation and reduce content to what is absolutely necessary and most relevant for the target group, get rid of what is "nice to have"
- Include contextualised agronomy and financial literacy elements with cross-cutting topics such as gender and household decision-making

Methodology

- Storytelling based on typical characters (names, age, features, clothing, etc.) who reflect farmers' reality allows for strong identification (the couple "Rose and Musoke" became role models)
- Weather-proof, light-weight and non-shiny materials with pictorials which allow for inclusion of illiterate people
- Assess mix of in-person and digital delivery methods (be mindful of excluding less digital-savvy people or those without connectivity)

Delivery

- Alignment of trainings with the agricultural calendar encourages participants to apply learnings immediately (e.g., delivering savings module after harvest when farmers have money available to save), include demonstration gardens
- Schedule trainings (time, duration and place) according to women's availability and possibilities, consider that women need to take care of household and childcare chores, potentially spread training over a longer period of time
- Existing trusted groups can be a good vehicle for delivering trainings
- Make sure there is follow-up, repetition and coaching capacity available
- Train women as trainers/coaches and assure the conditions of training delivery are adapted to them
- Assure training quality when delivery is organized in a cascading way (master trainers, lead trainers, field trainers), consider social dynamics
- Use digital tools to monitor attendance and evaluate satisfaction



Results shown by an evaluation

Between **37%** and **57%** of couples made decisions on saving, budgeting and borrowing **jointly** by the end of the project.

15% - 88% increase in **productivity** among the trained farmers.



Integrating gender aspects into trainings

- Gender aspects are woven into SmartFarming through examples of how "Rose and Musoke" work together in their farming business, discuss and make decisions jointly (role model approach), without being labelled as such and without being negatively perceived as "lecturing"
- Take strongly into account the context and its social norms (social/gender norms assessment!)
- Gender-related topics require a trusted relationship between trainer and participants
- Assure men (husbands, brothers, community leaders) do not feel left aside or fear for their role
- Evaluate whether including both men and women in trainings, train them individually or employ a mix of individual and joint training

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Coordination platform for agricultural financing in Mozambique 1/2

Improving the Framework Conditions in the Private and Financial Sector

ProEcon Mozambique (09.2021-05.2023)

ProEcon contributes to an improved business environment, the development of private agribusinesses and the improvement of the financial system in Mozambique.



Context

- The Mozambiquan government launched the initiative with a strong push to finance the agricultural sector (around 2020/21)
- Within the framework of its project, GIZ started talking to stakeholders, especially providers of financial services, which made evident that financial institutions had not been part of the discussion and did not have access to information in the sector, such as available credit lines, etc.
- The need for a platform for exchange beyond the possibilities of what a donor coordination group can do became evident

Objectives

- A public-private dialogue platform that hosts thematic technical working groups on promoting financing for agriculture involving key stakeholders
- The goal of the platform was to increase transparency and flow of information between actors
- Push reforms in agricultural policies that support access to finance
- The specific objectives of the platform are:
 - (a) promote innovative approaches and practices in agricultural finance;
 - (b) encourage gender-sensitive approaches (including female representation in the platform); and
 - (c) strengthen the capacity of national public and private partners and stakeholders



Gender aspects

- Active monitoring of women's participation in the platform at all levels
- Agreement that all recommendations issued from the group need to have undergone a gender lens analysis



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Coordination platform for agricultural financing in Mozambique 2/2

Process

- The platform (Intersectoral Coordination for the Financing of the Agricultural Sector in Mozambique, CIFAM) was initiated in autumn 2022 and launched in May 2023 with the support of GIZ and hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture
- Participants include: three ministries (Agriculture and rural development, Industry and commerce, as well as Economy and Finance), the central bank, the banking association and the Confederation of economic associations (CTA)
- KPIs include indicators on female participation in the steering of the platform and in the membership.
- The platform comprises four working groups (participants: 2-3 financial institutions, CTA and government entity representatives):
 1. Collaterals and Guarantees
 2. Fiscal Incentives and Banking Policies
 3. Digitalization of Agricultural Ecosystem
 4. Formalization and Business Development Services



One women in steering group and
28% of female
membership

Results

- Currently, there is one women in the steering group and 28% of female platform membership
- Training participation is at about 25-30% women (objective was between 30-35%)
- Every policy and recommendation issued from the platform needs to have gone through a gender lens analysis and include public and private sector views
- Currently, the platform working on a list of available funding for agriculture (Who is doing what? Available products for which target group?)

Challenges and lessons learned

- GIZ currently is de facto the knowledge manager and manages the platform's secretariat. The secretariat needs to be fully handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture to assure sustainability.

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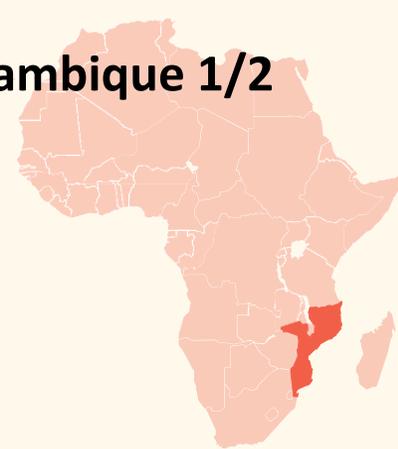
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Gender norms diagnostic in Mozambique 1/2

Context

- The reported gender gap of 5% in Mozambique seemed too small based on experience and anecdotal evidence the GIZ team had collected over time
- Therefore, GIZ started collecting available supply side data to compare with existing FinScope and Index data from Mozambique
- GIZ realized that digital finance (mobile money) allowed for increasing financial inclusion in the country, but that at the same time, the gender gap had increased again (from 6% in 2017 to 11% in 2021)
- At the same time, around 70% of financial institutions in the country were not able to present gender-disaggregated data
- The Banking Association as well as the Central Bank became interested in the topic and asked GIZ to explore this further to understand the real gender gap and develop recommendations



GIZ managed to lobby for **including gender indicators** in the annual financial sector survey



1

Research and design
planning

2

Desk review

3

Behaviour and gender
and norms exploration

4

Deep dive

5

Analysis and
synthesis

Process

- GIZ started engaging with CGAP on the [gender norms diagnostic toolkit](#)
- Additional funding was necessary to carry out the diagnostic
- Also, GIZ started to analyze its own portfolio according to the gender continuum and realized many activities took place at the levels of pre-reach, reach and benefit, but not enough at the level of empowerment of women

Lessons learned and challenges

- The GIZ team will start to integrate other activities in its new project, such as engaging with male role models, influencers of communities, husband and brothers by talking to them about benefits for themselves if they allow their wives, daughters and sisters to have a bank account
- The project did not use the word “gender” when [communicating](#) about these activities since it remains a red flag in many conservative societies; they replaced it with the word “women”
- Even though Mozambique would need a gender data policy, mandates for this topic must first be clarified between the different ministries and the central bank

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Gender norms diagnostic in Mozambique 2/2



Results

Based on the impact gender norms have on the behaviors of women, and the access to and use of formal financial services, four market segments were identified



Persona 1: Urban women MSE

- Small businesswoman, married, with medium income
- Use FFS to manage day-by-day issues and make some suppliers' payments
- Request loans in savings groups because lengthy process and the need for collateral in formal financial institutions

Persona 2: Urban women smallholder

- Married with children with some knowledge of formal financial services
- She can make financial decisions as long as she informs her husband, to open a bank account the husband must authorize
- She thinks that she needs a lot of money to open a bank account
- The main source of income is the farm



Persona 3: Rural women MSE

- Faces difficulties in expanding her business due to the existence of a small market
- All financial decisions must be authorized by the husband
- Prefers to use savings groups because he approves, and she thinks the money circulates better

Persona 4: Rural women smallholder

- Married with children, low-income, no education
- With resistance, her husband allowed her to participate in a savings group
- Needs her husband's authorization to make any financial decisions
- Lack of ID to open an account



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Savings groups in Madagascar 1/2

Fandriaka II - Bridging the Generation Gap in the Vanilla Sector in Madagascar

Fandriaka II contributes to creating more resilient futures for all generations in the vanilla producing communities of the SAVA region.

Fandriaka II is implemented in the framework of the develoPPP project Bridging the Generation Gap in the Vanilla Sector in Madagascar (02/2020-06/2024) together with Symrise and Unilever

Context

- Savings groups are seen as a powerful strategy to create savings and borrowing capacity, they often address populations that otherwise do not have access to financial services
- Savings groups are often linked with basic financial literacy training
- GIZ developed savings groups (or VSLAs, village savings and loan associations) in partnership with Save the Children (STC) and Unilever; STC has been active setting up savings groups in the region since 2017
- The villages where savings groups should be set up were defined by GIZ's intervention areas and Symrise, the private sector partner, was already known in these communities



In a **second phase**, specific groups for youth (male and female) have been set up with **lower weekly contributions**



Process

- The partners met with local authorities early in the process to explain the objective and benefits of savings groups and to get local leaders' and authorities' buy-in
- In general, interest in joining groups was high, but even higher if people knew a functioning group
- Several preparation and information meetings were held to inform community members about the objectives, benefits, rights, and duties of group members
- Groups of 15-25 members constituted themselves (auto-selection) and defined the rules of the group together



Gender aspects

- Women represent approx. 80% of savings group members worldwide
- Reasons specifically for rural women: low legal, economic and social barriers to entry, no documentation requirements, proximity to home, small flexible transactions
- Reported positive impact on women's earnings and control over these earnings (empowerment)

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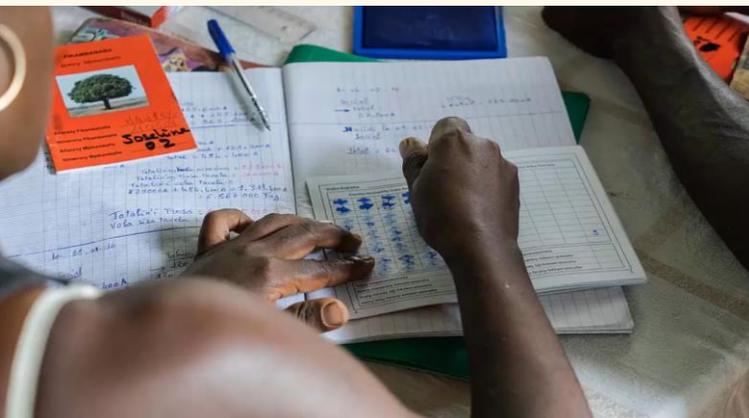
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Savings groups in Madagascar 2/2

Characteristics of groups

- Group members meet once a week, the same day at the same time for a whole cycle (9 or 12 months)
- Each member can contribute savings up to a defined multiple of the minimum savings amount
- The maximum loan amount is three times the amount of the accumulated deposits with a maximum of 12 weeks maturity
- All transactions are done in front of group members, a lock box with three keys is used to store funds safely
- At the end of a cycle, the fund is shared out (savings and interest earned on loans)
- Some groups engage in other activities to



Results

- For sustainability purposes, platforms (federations) consisting of one representative of each savings group are set up in villages; these platforms act as “advisors” to newly created savings groups, and also train members
- GIZ/STC only train platform members which then train new savings group members (ToT approach)
- Some savings groups started links to microfinance institutions, i.e., they have opened accounts and deposit funds for security reasons (instead of using the box)
- Some deposit funds in a mobile wallet and store the mobile phone in the box with the code for the phone shared between 4 members

Innovations in savings groups

- Save rice and sell it with a margin when prices rise
- Engage in income-generating activities to earn money for the group, e.g., selling food at village parties
- Set up additional funds for life events (e.g. funeral, birth, etc.), an environmental fund for nature protection (e.g. tree planting) or a mutual fund (like a health insurance)

GIZ project examples

A number of GIZ projects work with savings groups, such as: Uganda, Mozambique, India, and Indonesia, Philippines and India (already in the 1980s)



Further resources

[CARE VSLA 101](#)

[VSLA tools and trainings](#)

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Providing guidance on gender-lens investment to financial institutions in Nigeria

Supporting agricultural finance for agri-based enterprises in rural areas in Nigeria

The Global Project AgFin supports access to and utilisation of financial products for the agriculture sector in predominantly underserved rural areas of Nigeria. This includes support for financial institutions in the development of needs-based financial services and support for farmers and MSMEs in capacity building. Women are a particular focus of the project.

Nigeria is one of nine country packages of the project working on building a bridge between the agricultural and financial sector.



Context

- The project wanted to better understand obstacles and opportunities of addressing gender in partner financial institutions' (PFI) operations. The aim was to support PFIs in a practical manner to tackle the lack of expertise on gender among PFIs
- Even though the Central Bank of Nigeria issued its 2019 Framework for Advancing Women's Financial Inclusion in Nigeria, there are no binding measures that push commercial banks to address gender-related challenges
- The prevailing view among Microfinance Banks (MFB) is that a large share of their customers are already rural women. Therefore, they often do not see any need to improve their services to better meet women's needs
- Commercial banks tend to see women's financial inclusion as a way of getting women to fulfil the bank's requirements, rather than supporting women's specific needs and to see how they can accompany them

What is Gender Lens Investment (GLI)?

- Deliberate incorporation of a gender lens into investment cycles, analysis, decisions
- Investing with the aim of addressing gender challenges and contributing to social and business outcomes
- Includes actions, policies, processes which are internal or client-oriented

GIZ approach

- The project hired a team of consultants to conduct research on gender lens investment in Nigeria, develop guidelines for PFIs and offer one-on-one advisory sessions on the guidelines to selected PFIs
- PFIs were involved in the research early on
- Guidelines were presented to PFIs and other banks. PFIs were then invited to apply for direct advisory sessions, highlighting their motivation and key points they would like to address

Results/Lessons learned for financial institutions

- There are no quick fixes. Approaches need to be intentional, phased, integrated and long-term
- Sufficient time, human and financial resources are needed. Under-resourcing leads to lack of progress
- Buy-in, consultation and engagement of key stakeholders – men and women – is essential, including top management and operational staff
- Internal expertise and capacity needs to be built, including continuous data collection and analysis to inform decisions and strategies



Further resources

[Global Project AgFin](#)

Find [here](#) common findings from institutional gender assessments

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Tailoring a financial product to fit women's needs in Nigeria

Tailoring a financial product to women rice processors' needs in collaboration with Jaiz Bank

- GIZ started by analysing the rice value chain in North-West Nigeria which highlighted the strong economic involvement of women in rice processing
- Following this, GIZ conducted a Business Model analysis which revealed the profitability of the rice value chain; when presented to partner financial institutions, this analysis rose their interest
- GIZ partnered with Jaiz Bank, a Nigerian bank functioning on Islamic banking principles (see box on the right)
- Jaiz Bank tweaked internal account opening process to align with needs of women
- They accepted voters' cards and one passport photograph for account opening instead of using proof of identity that women have less access to
- Accounts were opened remotely in the field at the same venue of capacity building trainings
- Loans are structured as a combination of cash loan (10%) and in-kind loan (90%) allowing more flexibility
- Jaiz Bank accepted group cross-guarantee as form of collateral
- Community leaders, husbands of the women processors and village head approved the product developed with GIZ's support



Implementation challenges

- Lack of own phone - some women did not own a mobile phones which led to a delay in account opening
- Lack of Bank Verification Numbers – some women lacked BVNs which also delayed the process
- Cultural issues – some women deferred to their husband and gave credit-financed inputs to spouse rather than process themselves which led to recovery challenges
- Some women decided to sell at a higher price to the open market, which led to price discussions



Murabaha is an Islamic cost-plus financing scheme

- The customer proposes his/her needs to a bank to purchase goods on their behalf
- They draft a contract which defines the goods, the price and the operational fee. Due to riba (the prohibition of usury under Islamic law) the customer will pay a predefined operational fee, instead of an interest rate, plus the price of the goods
- The bank undertakes the role of the buyer and purchases the good
- After the pre-defined time (e.g., after harvest) the customer repays their loan

Excuse on Islamic Finance



Further resources

[Global Project AgFin](#)

[Video about the project](#) (including the Jaiz Bank example)

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Supporting financial institutions by carrying out a gender scan in Zambia

Global Project Promotion of Agricultural finance for agri-based enterprises in rural areas (GP AgFin)

GIZ's GP AgFin aims at improving the supply of financial services tailored to the business models of farms and agri-based enterprises in rural parts of selected regions of Zambia.

The GP AgFin in Zambia is one of nine projects working on the transformation of AgriFood Systems. GP AgFin is bridging the agri-food and financial sectors.

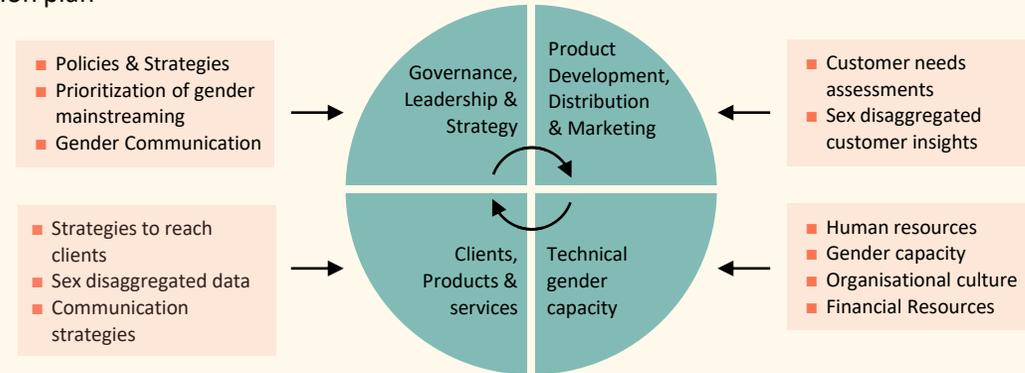


Context and process

- Discussions about how to increase outreach to women and young farmers had been started already with partner financial institutions (PFIs)
- The project hired two consultants to conduct an assessment of three PFIs' status of internal gender aspects and make recommendations for the future
- An adjusted version of the full gender audit tool from EIGE (see below) was used in a snap-shot scan exercise focusing on four aspects
- The exercise consisted of a document review, a survey, follow-up interviews as well as follow-up workshops and culminated in the development of an action plan

Lessons learned

- The activity needs to be organized as a participatory exercise, involving PFI staff beyond agricultural sector experts, e.g., marketing, HR, risk management
- Top management buy-in from the beginning is key
- The timing of the activity needs to be well-planned to have needed attention at all levels of the PFI
- Allow time and resources to follow-up after the assessment to accompany implementation of the action plan



Further resources

Find [here](#) common findings from institutional gender assessments

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Lessons learned



Chapter 06

Chapter 6 summarizes lessons learned from various project examples.

These lessons learned are divided into specific learnings regarding gender-related activities, general things to keep in mind when financing the agri-food sector and recommendations on how to work with financial service providers.

Specific learnings regarding gender-related activities 1/2

▶▶ The following two pages summarizes key lessons learned with regards to implementing gender-related activities. They are of course not exhaustive and depending on the context further lessons will need to be added or existing lessons refined.



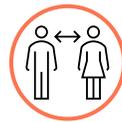
Understanding the context is key

- When developing approaches around the feminist development policy, it is key to understand well the context within which this is happening
- Wherever feasible gender-responsive or gender-transformative approaches tackling root causes of structural discrimination and biases should be used, however it is important to note that the level of ambition depends on the context



Further resources

Check out [gender norms diagnostic tools](#) to learn more about the context
 Check an [example](#) from Mozambique here
 Check considerations on the [business case](#) here
 Check out an [online role play](#) on facilitation between partners



Pay attention to communication

- Be careful/thoughtful about what wording and terms you use. Some terms, like gender, might not be accepted or misinterpreted in some conservative contexts
- Narrative: Develop narrative for gender-related projects based on the specific counterparty. As such, narratives might slightly differ and put focus on different aspects. The narrative and approach are opening or closing doors!
 - For financial service providers a focus on the business case including the importance of women in terms of half of the population and profitability of the women's segment might work best
 - For communities, their openness to gender-related aspects and women empowerment might determine the specific narrative (see point 1 above)



Identify suitable entry points

- Since empowering women and improving their access to financial services can be a sensitive topic, in few cases, it will provide for an entry point by itself (with the exception of national financial inclusion strategies which could be such an entry point)
- In many cases, the entry point will be an economic need. Given the negative impact climate change has on large parts of the population in partner countries, and most importantly on the many people deriving their livelihoods from agriculture. There won't be a choice other than supporting women's entrepreneurship and access to financial services, not least to adapt to changing weather conditions and build resilience. The harsh economic need will drive women's empowerment!

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Specific learnings regarding gender-related activities 2/2



Explicitly include men and leaders/influencers

- Gender is about relations between men and women at family and community level. Men play important roles in the lives of women and girls; especially in a patriarchal environment, men wield significant power and influence over women's lives and traditionally make major decisions on behalf of female family members, e.g., if women can access a loan. Also, as traditional and religious leaders, men have influence on many issues affecting their communities.
- As such, engaging men, from husbands, to brothers, sons, community leaders and other influencers, is key to empowering women
- Developing a convincing narrative why (financially) independent women benefit the whole household is important

Further resources



Check out [examples](#) on how gender norms work
Check out how a [map of actors](#) can help



Engage role models

- Role models help women and girls to project themselves into more influential and powerful roles and to gain trust that they can progress. Role models can be successful agri-food female entrepreneurs, farmers and women leaders, etc.
- Involve these role models in the analysis and jointly develop solutions, approaches and action plans



Internal project set-up: "Live what you preach!"

- Mainstream gender at all levels of the project, from design (results framework) to work planning, activity definition and implementation, M&E, and knowledge dissemination through a participatory approach
- Include gender considerations in project team composition and organization



Project management

- Use a participatory approach, including women beneficiaries in planning, designing and implementing activities
- Generate gender-disaggregated data from your activities and try to collect data that helps generate evidence on what works and what does not work
- Monitor unintended positive and negative consequences of your approaches and react quickly, if necessary

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Financing the agri-food sector: Things to keep in mind in general

▶▶ Some of the issues that women active in the agri-food sector face, are also relevant for men. However, women are usually exposed to a larger number of issues and are exposed more severely and thus face altogether a bigger burden. It still makes sense to not lose sight of overall learnings.

Profitability of value chains important

- Supporting the agri-food sector only makes sense – as is the case in other sectors – if the business can be run in a profitable way
- Thus, it is key to carry out viability/profitability analyses of value chains/business models. Also, to make the case to a financial institution, numbers say more than words!

Single value chain perspective often not sufficient

- Especially at the level of smallholder farming households, agriculture is often only one of various economic activities of the household
- In addition, usually more than one crop is produced by a family. Therefore, it is not enough to look at a single crop, but to be able to assess the characteristics of a household and its needs, a holistic look at all economic activities is needed (even if your project is focused only on one specific agricultural value chain)

Assess household needs

- Especially micro enterprises and smallholder farmers in general do not differentiate between funds used for business and funds used for household needs. Both is usually paid out from the same pocket!
- And money set aside for a business investment might well be used for a medical urgency or school fees. Therefore, both, business and household needs need to be considered

Support demand and supply sides

- It is important, if possible, to work with both sides, the agri-food actors and the financial service provider(FSP)
- If you work with the farming side and do not provide product development support to the FSP, there is a good chance, they will not have the right products or processes in place.
- If you develop a tailored financial product with an FSP but you do not work with farmers (on productivity, financial literacy, etc.) the results will most probably be mediocre.
- However, of course, not in all cases, all projects can work on both sides with the same intensity. But both sides need to be taken into consideration. Partnerships can be solutions!

Seasonality

- Seasonality is key to agriculture. Certain processes for certain crops need to be carried out at specific points in time of the year with very little flexibility to postpone.
- This is essential to be taken into consideration when planning to work with farmers as even a short delay in a promised training or loan product, can jeopardize the farmer's business, i.e., if the loan for buying fertilizer comes too late, the product might be applied to late and put harvest at risk

Leverage partnerships

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation models are needed to push financing
- This also includes partnerships within the extended agricultural financing ecosystem, for example, training providers, providers of digital solutions and manufacturers and/or suppliers of (climate-friendly) technical equipment, devices and environmentally friendly inputs.
- In addition, partnerships with political actors such as ministries and authorities (agriculture, environment, finance, etc.) as well as insurers and the civil society might not be underestimated.
- Setting up working relationship, especially if several partners are included, will take time. Be prepared!

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Working with financial service providers 1/2

▶▶ Every type of organization has its own language and codes which might not necessarily be understood by other actors coming from a different perspective. The same is true for financial service providers. The following provides a summary of recommendations for how to work with a financial service provider (FSP) and what to take into account.

Before partnering...

- Rapid appraisal or due diligence. In order to assure sustainable success of an intervention, it is important to know well any partner institution, including any financial service provider. Therefore, it is recommended to undertake a (rapid) appraisal or due diligence which is an assessment based on a set of criteria to get to understand how a financial institution “ticks”, where its strategic priorities lie, if it is financially healthy, if it has a good reputation, etc.
- Understanding the FSP’s take on gender. Part of the appraisal and specific to the topic of this guide is to understand how the gender topic is dealt with at the internal and the client level of the FSP.
- Make sure there is a business case for the FSP. For a project to be sustainable and continue beyond a donor intervention, an FSP must be convinced about the long-term business case. Make sure this is the case and rather abstain from having a project located in the CSR department of an FSP.



Further resources

Check the [rapid appraisal](#) tool



Further resources

Check the [institutional gender assessment tools](#) and examples from [Zambia](#) and [Nigeria](#)



Further resources

Check out how the GIZ’s GP AgFin in [Zambia](#) and [Nigeria](#) implemented institutional gender assessments.



Institutional gender assessments: Common findings

- A gender-balanced management team does not necessarily guarantee internalized gender awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming efforts; self-perception in that sense might be too optimistic within some financial institutions
- Especially financial institutions that already have a considerable female client base tend to think that gender specific product design or delivery is not necessary – without questioning if their products and services really serve women best
- Financial institutions rarely have staff with specialized gender knowledge
- There is a lack of gender-disaggregated data in financial institutions
- Product design processes are rarely informed by research on women’s needs and constraints
- To progress on implementation, relevant staff need incentives, e.g. via gender targets

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Working with financial service providers 2/2

When developing a project together...

- **Buy-in of staff at all levels (including incentives at branch level).** Assure buy-in from the top and from the bottom to avoid unpleasant surprises later. Top management (or even Board of Directors') approval is needed mostly if the FSP invests own resources. This might need more time for approval at the beginning but assures that the project is part of the main business processes.
- **Work based on findings, not on assumptions.** Carry out a thorough assessment on social norms, women's needs and identify barriers and root causes for women in the agri-food sector before starting to design a product or service; convince your financial institution partner about the necessity if not used to such an approach.
- **People need a range of financial products.** Do not only focus on loans, but think about savings, payments, leasing, or insurance.
- **Adopt a “pilot, test and learn, adapt and scale” approach.** Be prepared and prepare your partner to test and adjust approaches and plan for sufficient resources and time to support implementation.
- **Request own contribution.** A financial service provider should be able to commit to financing part of the TA, a new staff position, provide operational budget (e.g., transport, safety gear, etc. for staff moving around to visit clients).

Further things to consider...

- **Implementation of new financial products goes beyond the product's conditions, i.e. interest rate, maturity, and collateral requirements!** Make sure people from all relevant departments are involved in developing and implementing new financial products and services, including accounting, HR, marketing, risk management.
- **This might lead to changes in policies and procedures** which might need top management or even Board of Director's approval and thus will need time. Be prepared and do realistic planning.
- **Develop adequate distribution infrastructure to reduce operational costs.** Without digitizing processes and most probably introducing digital financial services, serving smallholder farmers and micro entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector will be very challenging.



Further resources

Check out [gender norms diagnostic tools](#) and potential [sources](#) for demand side data

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Further resources

Chapter 07

This final chapter 7 provides information on further resources and presents focal points within GIZ.

Your contact persons within GIZ

▶▶ The following colleagues at GIZ are your contact people at headquarters with regards to agricultural finance overall and specifically access to finance for women in the agri-food sector. They are at your disposal if you have any questions!



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Acknowledgements

This guide is a collaborative effort. It has been developed jointly by the Sector Project Agriculture, the Competence Center Financial Systems Development and the Global Project Promotion of Agricultural Finance for Agri-based Enterprises in Rural Areas.

We would like to thank everybody who has contributed their time and expertise to this guide. You have enriched it by providing us with your insights and by sharing your experience with us for the case studies, by reviewing parts of or the entire guide and giving us valuable feedback, and by supporting us with various other pieces of (technical) advice.

On a personal level, we would like to thank: Birte Brecht-Drouart (GP AgFin gender focal point), Stephanie Mumenthaler (KC Rule of Law, Gender and Security), Bastian Domke (MOVE), Gabriela Rosales-Rogge (VaMoz Competir Mozambique), Maya Henssen (ICR Facility), Fenomanantsoa Andriamaroson (Fandriaka II Madagascar), Tatiana Dasy (Save The Children Madagascar), Ruskiyat Titilola Badmus (GP AgFin Nigeria), Cornelia Ehlers (GP AgFin Zambia), Florian Berndt (KC FSE), Valentin Hopf (KC FSE) and Kim Hillenbrand (SP Agriculture).

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Imprint

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices

Bonn and Eschborn

Sector Project Agriculture

Competence Center Financial Systems Development

Global Project Promotion of Agricultural Finance for Agri-based Enterprises in Rural Areas

On behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

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GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

Eschborn 2024



**Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**

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