

TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS and WOMEN EMPOWERMENT in AVCs SCORECARD for CORPORATE AGRIBUSINESS

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WEE IN CORPORATE AVCS

Productivity and competitiveness of small producers in AVCs are typically constrained by barriers to technology, access to quality farm inputs equipment, finance and markets. These barriers are compounded by poor entrepreneurial capacity and negotiating power. Small women producers and farmers are at a more disadvantageous position compared to men. Women's home and care responsibilities leave them with less time for economic activities, limiting them to activities with lower economic returns. Men have better access to assets such as land compared to women. Thus, women have poorer access to opportunities such as contract growing and certification schemes. Although research and experience show that women are afforded access to trainings, their lack of assets and decision-making power in the households and communities inhibits them from fully enjoying the benefits of trainings.

Sustainability, managing risks and ethical business principles are the key drivers that have resulted in a wealth of commendable practices by large corporations in engaging small producers in their respective value chains. The emergence of international frameworks like UN SDGs, certifications, codes of conduct and various voluntary standards are a testament to the growing platforms that has made engaging small producers a business imperative across global value chains. Despite the well-known benefits of working with small producers, many businesses are reticent to work with small producers due to inherent risks and perceived costs of engagement. For companies who work with small producers, on the other hand, there remains the question of whether such engagement has brought about transformational changes in the lives of producers' households and communities.

For most companies, their starting point for investing in women's empowerment is a fundamental commitment to gender quality. Women's rights are human rights; not only do companies have an obligation to respect those rights, but that respect also aligns with core company and individual values.

Women's Empowerment in Global Value Chains: Framework for Business Action, BSR, 2016.

The Business for Social Responsibility¹ has stated that the case for investing in women has largely been made.² Several studies have confirmed the multiplier effect of women in the broader economic growth of communities and households. With thousands of corporations signing the UN Women Empowerment Principles and the SDGs, WEE actions are at the fringes still: the breadth and depth of women in AVCs are spotty at best. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) further reports that despite their heavy involvement in agriculture, women are disproportionately represented. To date, many women economic empowerment efforts are focused on the formal sector and less on women small producers in the agriculture sector. Notwithstanding the paucity of transformational cases of engaging small women producers, SMEs and corporates remain in a very strategic position to address inequities and close the gender gap in AVCs.

EVOLUTION OF THE SCORECARD FOR CORPORATE AGRIBUSINESS

The Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) is implementing the Women's Economic Empowerment Transformational Initiatives in Agricultural Value Chains (WEE TRAIN in AVCs), a component of Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia (GRAISEA-Phase 2). The project is a partnership between Oxfam Great Britain and ISEA with funding support from the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok. In Phase 1, ISEA conducted an action research among social enterprises and inclusive businesses in the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. From this action research, ISEA has put together a set of aspirational standards, or Benchmarks for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains (BTP-WEE in AVCs). With additional insights from roundtable discussions with SMEs and corporate agribusinesses during Phase 2, scorecards have been developed to serve as guideposts for evaluating to what extent agricultural value chain stakeholders adhere to these aspirational standards.

Key research insights that underpin the development of the corporate agribusiness scorecard are:

- Directly engaging small producers as suppliers is important in addressing traceability and quality issues required by certain markets specially those linked to sustainable consumption and production, in accessing resources for SME development and growth that require such and/or in substantiating one's desire/projection to be a responsible business.
- Small producers are able to provide the needed quality, quantity and delivery requirements of the market when they are effectively enabled to do so with adequate inputs, appropriate technology and community-based innovations
- The best supplier communities are those that are organized into self-governing producer organizations that have achieved high levels of empowerment.
- Responsible businesses have an important role as markets, social investors and partners of small producers in agricultural value chains.
- Small producers' cooperatives, social enterprises and non-government organizations have an important role as enablers of women and men small producers
- Women small producers are playing various roles in agriculture and agricultural value chains but are usually not recognized, unpaid or underpaid or when engaged, participation is limited/constrained by organizational/socio-cultural barriers including their responsibility for unpaid care work
- Responsible businesses that succeed transform themselves and their partner producers with the support of enabling institutions.

As a tool for assessing corporate policy and practice on small producer engagement, the scorecard can help agribusiness enterprises improve and expand on their efforts towards building a critical mass of empowered small women producers.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE PILOT PHASE

This scorecard is intended not as an exhaustive tool for corporate agribusinesses to assess gender dynamics that impact their operations. As an aspirational set of standards, the scorecard will identify gaps on how best to engage small producers and the women among them to strengthen their supply chains. Results of the scorecard will serve both as planning and awareness -raising tool to promote WEE across AVCs, and unlock the power of women producers. The scorecard for corporate agribusiness is undergoing a pilot phase up to July 2021. Partner corporate agribusinesses willing to pilot the use of the scorecard as an evaluation, planning and learning tool shall have the opportunity to suggest changes to make the scorecard more responsive. During the pilot phase, any gaps in policy and/or practice assessed shall be the basis for providing technical assistance by ISEA's partner resource organizations to address those gaps.

Given the onslaught of COVID19 and its negative impact on agricultural value chain stakeholders, ISEA and its partners shall also offer technical assistance to do a study on the impact of the pandemic on the women and men small scale producers in the supply chain of the corporate agribusiness. Simultaneously, a baseline study to determine the extent that the corporate agribusiness practices the benchmarks, from the perspective of the small producers shall be undertaken. The COVID19 impact study shall serve as input to the corporate enterprise in undertaking inclusive recovery planning or developing a plan that would take into account the needs of the women and men small producers to recover. The baseline study on the other hand would be used as starting point for the evaluation of the corporate agribusiness in terms of its practice using the benchmarks as standard. A planning process taking off from using the benchmarks scorecard as basis for determining gaps shall complete the use of the tool for planning.

4 KEY RESULT AREAS

1



ALIGNMENT [20 POINTS]

Companies support rural communities in a variety of ways to respond to the economic and social issues that impact on their well-being. This Element looks into how corporate agribusiness deliver their community development projects in terms of responding to the needs of small producers in a systemic way. Alignment of philanthropic and social investment looks into how community development efforts of the company brings about, not only social welfare improvements but also improved economic opportunities for small producers and women.

2



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS [20 POINTS]

To address needs and inequities faced by small producer communities in a systemic way requires participation of multiple actors. This KRA inquiries into how agribusiness corporations partner and invest with groups such as cooperatives, social enterprises, non-government organizations to achieve mutually reinforcing goals: enabling small producers and promoting women's empowerment along the agriculture value chains. As the ISEA research has found, small producers' cooperatives, social enterprises and non-government organizations have an important role as enablers of women and men small producers.

3



WEE AND SUPPLY CHAIN [40 POINTS]

This third KRA is the heart of the scorecard with the highest score assigned relative to the other KRAs. Corporate agribusinesses who are either planning or sourcing from small women producers as suppliers, either directly or indirectly, will be able to examine whether their programs and practices are consistent with the desired engagement process and results leading to the participation and empowerment of small women producers. It is worth noting that while there are other gender dimensions such as workplace gender equality and investing in women entrepreneurship, this KRA is focused on how corporate agribusiness intervenes to enable women producers hurdle the barriers to participate in the supply chain.

4



RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS OUTCOMES [20 POINTS]

This fourth KRA is about how corporate agribusiness measures, accounts for and communicates outcomes of their interventions for small producers. Outcome indicators that are gender-sensitive and substantiate improvements across men and women in the value chains – whether in the share of supply, increased yield, increased income, increased women membership in associations -- are best evidences of success for WEE. Likewise, this KRA includes communicating outcomes to the corporates' stakeholders as a way of accountability and an opportunity to influence others in taking action along the same outcome pathway.

Maximum Total Points: 100



ALIGNMENT

Alignment of philanthropic and social investments towards developing small producer communities to participate in the company's supply chain [20 points]

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

POINTS

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1.1 Corporate commitment in developing small producers to participate in our supply chain. | 0-4 |
| 1.2 Investment in providing small producers access to appropriate technologies ³ , technical support, and coaching/mentoring, and timely information to understand critical ecosystem, economic, social, health, and political shocks/risks to meet the needed volume, quality and on-time delivery of agricultural products. | 0-4 |
| 1.3 Investment in community-based innovations, strategies or approaches that helps small producers ensure food security, access production inputs and financing, improve market access, increase their productivity and income and adapt to climate change and uncertainties arising from economic crises, political instability, health pandemics and the like. | 0-4 |
| 1.4 Support to small producers to effectively utilize and benefit from sustainable production methods and technologies, ⁴ linking such to established systems of sustainable consumption and production (SCP). ⁵ | 0-4 |
| 1.5 Programs or initiatives enable the meaningful participation of women as partner suppliers | 0-4 |



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic partnerships with cooperatives and social enterprises of small producers and their enablers to achieve mutually beneficial objectives [20 points]

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

POINTS

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 2.1 Commitment to develop strategic partnerships with cooperatives, associations and other self-governing organizations of small producers, and their enablers to become self-governing institutions. | 0-4 |
| 2.2 Facilitation of or direct investment in small producers to consolidate production, undertake marketing, perform value-adding functions and create business opportunities for the mutual benefit of the enterprise and small producers towards achieving food security and increasing their income, assets | 0-4 |
| 2.3 Facilitation or co-investment with cooperatives or associations in assisting small producers to undertake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3.1 Initiatives in addressing issues of ownership or control/stewardship over land and other forms of tenurial rights 2.3.2 Initiatives on capital build-up and ownership of productive assets (e.g., farm and off-farm equipment, warehouse, etc.) | 0-4 |
| 2.4 Support to cooperatives or associations of small-scale producers to achieve food security, to better manage risks in the face of climate change, natural hazards, social and economic crisis, and environmental degradation including linking them to disaster preparedness and resiliency-building programs offered by governments and NGOs, as may be available and appropriate. ⁶ | 0-4 |
| 2.5 Investment in transformative partnerships with women small-scale producers or women-owned/managed community enterprises. | 0-4 |



WEE IN SUPPLY CHAIN

Engagement in Value Chain Practices that Enhance Women's Participation and Economic Empowerment [40 points]

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

POINTS

3.1 Company undertakes assessments of the current and potential roles of women in the enterprise and enterprise supply chain and the current and potential impacts of the business on women small producers and their communities as input to planning WEE interventions.

0-4

3.2 Company has a formal Gender Equality or Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) policy that ensures fair and non-discriminatory principles such as (a) equal pay for equal work, (b) equal opportunities for women to avail of services and programs; and (c) providing/promoting women-friendly spaces/culture in the workplace.⁷

0-4

3.3. Company recognizes the importance of women and invests in value chain development efforts that improve the position and well-being of women workers and small producers resulting to their substantive contribution to household income.⁸

0-4

3.4. Company invests in technologies and/or community-based innovations (CBI) that consider and address the needs of women small producers, in the process expanding their participation and the benefits derived from such.

0-4

3.5 Company recognizes and undertakes efforts to enable women small producers as co-equal stakeholders in legally and formally representing households and/or becoming leaders and members of production groups and of self-governing institutions of small producers, whether as mixed or women-only organizations.

0-4

3.6 Company supports women to have equal rights over land and other forms of tenurial rights, to engage in capital build-up and to own productive assets.

0-4

3.7 Company contributes or invests in building the capability of the enterprise and its partner small producers to address barriers to women's economic empowerment.⁹

0-4

3.8 Company undertakes affirmative action to achieve WEE such as a) promoting community and co-equal responsibility of women and men in unpaid care work, b) addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and c) developing role models of empowered women and women small producers (e.g. mentorship program for women, giving recognition and awards to women leaders)

0-4

3.9 Company supports women small-scale producers through their cooperatives and associations to better manage risks in the face of climate change, natural hazards, social and economic crisis, and environmental degradation including directly investing in or linking them to disaster preparedness and resiliency-building, and food security programs offered by governments and NGOs, as may be available and appropriate.¹⁰

0-4

3.10 Company builds evidence on benefits and outcomes of actions through an M&E System that uses gender-responsive tools to provide results that improve WEE interventions.

0-4



RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS OUTCOMES

Measurement and communication of responsible business outcomes at the level of the company, its supply chain, partner women and men small producers and their organizations [20 Points]

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

POINTS

4.1 Goals and targets on creating value for small producers are linked to business performance.	0-4
4.2 Company invests a percentage of its revenue or operating budget to achieve its social outcomes.	0-4
4.3 Company has a system for planning, M&E and reporting on progress of initiatives related to transforming small producers and contributing to WEE.	0-4
4.4 Transformational outcomes achieved: Combined enterprise interventions result to improved position and well-being of small producers in the value chain and communities.	0-4
4.5 WEE outcomes achieved: Combined enterprise interventions result to improved position and well-being of women small producers in the value chain and communities.	0-4

ENDNOTES:

1 BSR <http://www.bsr.org/> is a leader in corporate social responsibility since 1992; works with its global network of 250 companies to develop sustainable solutions through consulting, research and cross-sector collaboration.

2 https://www.bsr.org/reports/BSR_Women_and_Sustainability_Economic_Empowerment2.pdf

3 Includes indigenous knowledge & practices such as sustainable agriculture and fishery practices.

4 Examples of sustainable production methods and technologies: Natural, low external input, organic and/or sustainable/ ecological/ biodiversity-friendly agriculture; organic or sustainable fishery; utilization of renewable energy technologies in production, processing or semi-processing; transformation of waste materials into useful products promoting sustainable consumption.

5 Established sustainable consumption and production systems include: Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification, sustainable agriculture-related Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS); Rainforest Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture (RASA), Bluebrand of Thailand

6 Examples of efforts to develop their resilience to various risks are: (a) diversifying income sources, (b) putting in-place benefit and insurance schemes, (c) undertaking capacity building and planning for climate change and (d) undertaking capacity building for disaster risk reduction, mitigation and adaptation.

7 Examples are child minding centers, breastfeeding stations, flexible working hours. etc.

8 For women-headed households, contribution to household income may reach 100 percent for scores of 3 and 4

9 Examples of actions include setting of women committee, conduct of gender sensitivity training, actions that improve women's mobility and increase access to maternal and child health services.

10 Examples of efforts to develop their resilience to various risks are: (a) diversifying income sources, (b) putting in-place benefit and insurance schemes, (c) undertaking capacity building and planning for climate change and (d) undertaking capacity building for disaster risk reduction, mitigation and adaptation.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS USED:

AVC – Agricultural Value Chains
BTP – Benchmarks for Transformational Partnerships
CBI – Community Based Innovations
CCA DRR – Climate Change Adaptation – Disaster Risk Reduction
EMS – Environmental Management System

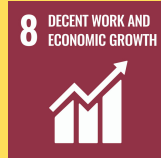
MIS – Management Information System
M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
PGS – Participatory Guarantee System
Security of Tenure – Legal rights or the nature of the right to the use of land
WEE – Women's Economic Empowerment

ALIGNMENT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1



ALIGNMENT



2



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



3



WEE IN SUPPLY CHAIN



4



RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS OUTCOMES



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