



GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

Recommendations for Empowering Small-Scale Producers in ASEAN

This briefing paper contains a set of recommended policies and innovations that ASEAN and its member states may consider to empower women and men small-scale producers in agricultural value chains. By supporting social enterprises, inclusive businesses, and social innovation platforms promoting transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment, ASEAN and its member states can enable small-scale producers to become food secure, resilient, and empowered stakeholders of sustainable consumption and production systems in a green economy.

About the Paper

This paper is developed by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) as part of a regional initiative on Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia (GRAISEA) that is being supported by Oxfam and the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok.

This paper aims to (1) look at the imperatives for an enabling policy environment and ecosystem to support and incentivize agricultural value chain practitioners to engage women and men small-scale producers in ways that would empower them and transform their lives, livelihoods, and communities; (2) review the gaps of current ASEAN policies related to small-scale producers and cooperatives, recovery from COVID-19, women's economic empowerment, and the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals in the food, agriculture, and forestry sectors; and (3) present recommendations on a set of Guidelines for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains for the consideration of ASEAN and its member states.

Acknowledgments

This paper was developed through a series of policy research and multi-stakeholder consultations conducted by ISEA, with the support and participation of the WE LIVE FOOD^[1] Multi-Stakeholder Platform and its members, namely: Oxfam; Trubus Bina Swadaya and Yayasan Dompot Dhuafa in Indonesia; Change Fusion Institute and Green Net Foundation in Thailand; Center for Social Initiatives Promotion in Vietnam; and Alter Trade Foundation, Bote Central, Gandang Kalikasan, Negros Organic and Fair Trade Association, Philippine Business for Social Progress, Philippine Coffee Alliance, and Philippine Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture in the Philippines. Our partners' rich experience and partnerships with women and men small-scale producers have made this paper more relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

We also acknowledge the inputs and institutional support of the following during the stakeholders' consultation series: ASEAN Secretariat, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)-Southeast Asia Office, GROW Asia, Trubus Bina Swadaya, and Yayasan Dompot Dhuafa.

Summary

The Guidelines for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains (Transformational AVC Guidelines) are a set of policies and incentives being proposed for adoption by the ASEAN and its member states. The proponents are part of a multi-stakeholder platform who conducted research on practices and policies affecting agricultural value chains (AVCs) in the region. Their study showed how AVC stakeholders and policymakers could contribute to inclusive recovery, building back fairer, and accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Transformational AVC Guidelines aim to supplement existing ASEAN policies to become more responsive to the needs of women and men small-scale producers in AVCs. These are a set of guidelines that support and incentivize AVC stakeholders to practice a set of Benchmarks. These Benchmarks were developed from best practices of social enterprises and inclusive businesses that successfully transformed the lives and livelihoods of women and men small-scale producers in the ASEAN.

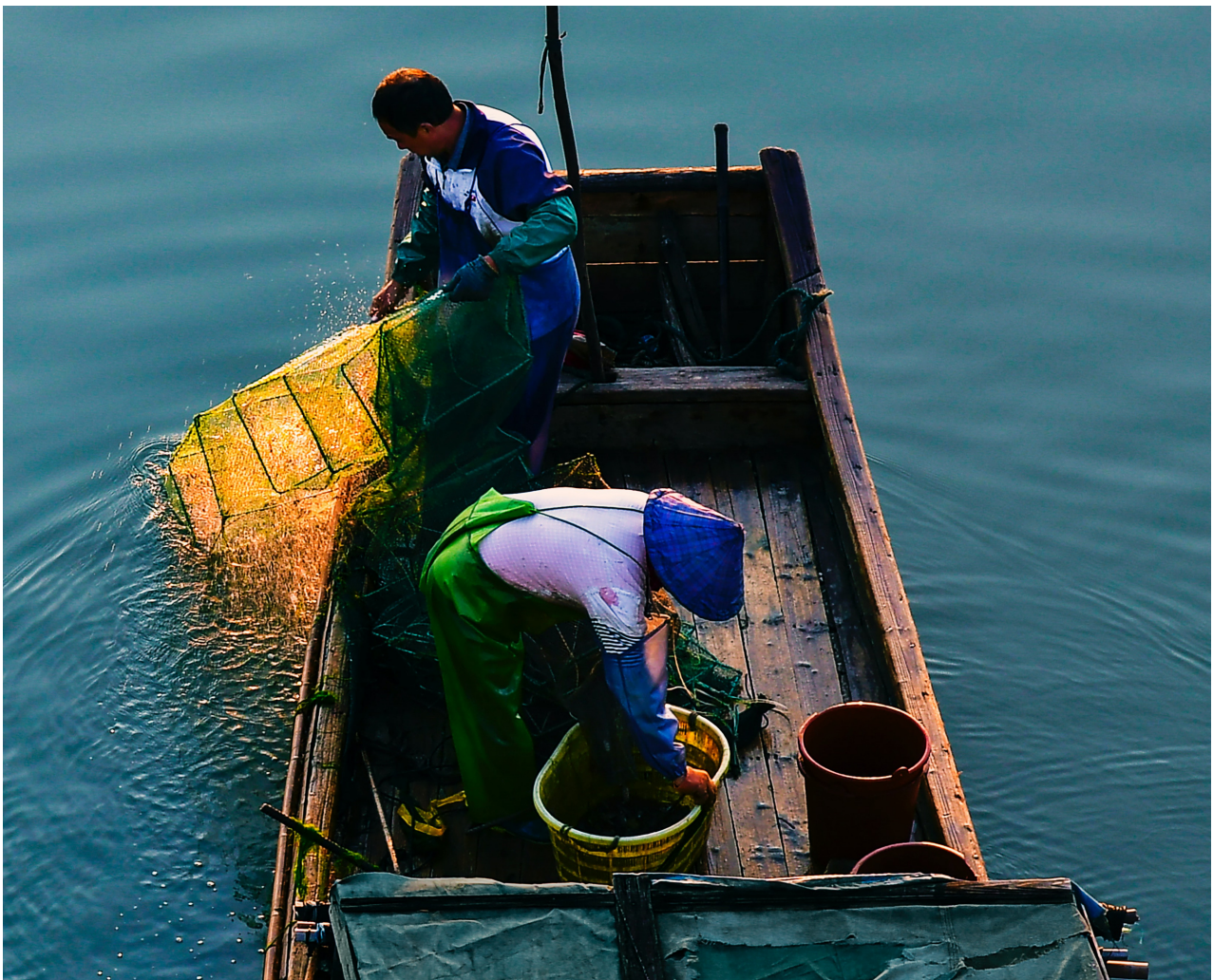
The following are the critical elements of the Transformational AVC Guidelines:

1. Enabling innovations that support AVC development for food secure, resilient, and empowered small-scale producer communities
2. Enabling women's economic empowerment that spans all functions and organizations engaged in AVC development, management, and governance
3. Mobilization of investments on sustainable consumption and production systems that enable women and men small-scale producers as stakeholders in achieving a climate-resilient and green economy
4. Recognition and support for social enterprises and inclusive businesses as innovators and key enablers of women and men small-scale producers in AVCs
5. Mobilization of support for social innovation platforms that mainstream sustainable agriculture, transformational partnerships, and women's economic empowerment in AVCs toward measurable social impact and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs

The Transformational AVC Guidelines promote food security, social protection, and resiliency that are critical in the effective recovery of women and men small-scale producers from COVID-19 and similar disasters or crises. These provide policy support to women in agriculture and the informal sector as subjects for empowerment beyond women in the formal economy and entrepreneurs that current policies on women's empowerment in ASEAN focus on.

The Transformational AVC Guidelines also promote inclusive economic growth that reduces poverty in the food, agriculture, and forestry sectors, supplementing what is not adequately tackled by the *ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry* (2018) or the ASEAN Guidelines on RAI. Moreover, the Transformational AVC Guidelines recognize and support critical stakeholders such as social enterprises and inclusive businesses in the process fostering mutually beneficial partnerships to transform the lives and livelihoods of small-scale producers.

By adopting the Transformational AVC Guidelines, ASEAN and its member states would pave the way toward empowering women and men small-scale producers in AVCs as stakeholders in a poverty reduction and inclusive growth agenda that would accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.



Small-scale producers harvesting with traditional fishing gear in municipal waters
[Photo by **Chasing Lyu** from **Pexels**]

Elevating Agricultural Value Chains in the ASEAN

Agriculture sustains ASEAN economies in ways more than one. It has huge potential to contribute to the realization of sustainable development that will address poverty and inequality in the region. The agriculture sector continues to significantly contribute to employment in ASEAN member states: 47.6% in Myanmar, 45.4% in Lao PDR, 35% in Thailand, 34.7% in Vietnam, 27.3% in Indonesia, and 22.9% in the Philippines.[2] The relevance and importance of agriculture as a sector in the ASEAN and its member states were underlined when the COVID-19 pandemic threatened food security and livelihoods, and exposed the vulnerability of dependence on global agri-food systems.

Women play an important role in agriculture and agricultural value chains (AVC) in the ASEAN, with 48–75% of employed women working in the sector in Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Vietnam.[3] Data show that one-third of ASEAN workers in agriculture are women, although this figure could be higher as women are usually part of unpaid family labor. At the same time, 58% of women in the ASEAN are paid less than their male counterparts.[4]

When women are engaged, their participation is often limited or constrained by unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities and other barriers, such as limited access to resources, services, and under-representation in producers' groups. In terms of land ownership, only 13% of agricultural land title holders in the ASEAN are women.[5] Credit for agricultural purposes becomes highly inaccessible for women in this context.

Even though women and men small-scale producers are the pillars of the agriculture sector, poverty has remained significantly higher among them and is expected to increase with the overall impact of COVID-19 on the region's economy. Existing studies on AVC interventions in the region have revealed mixed results in terms of outcomes for small-scale producers.[6,7] Although ASEAN member states have invested in promoting inclusive agribusinesses, studies characterized these efforts as disjointed and not directed at key constraints that impact women and men small-scale producers.[8]

It was in this context that a scoping of best practices in AVCs that have significantly and positively impacted the lives and livelihoods of women and men small-scale producers was conducted by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) between 2015 and 2017.

The ISEA research started with a rapid appraisal that identified eight best practices among social enterprises and inclusive business models in AVCs in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. These models were considered as best practices because of their significant impact in improving the lives, livelihoods, and position of small-scale producers in their respective supply chains.

The factors of success from these best practices were synthesized into a set of Benchmarks for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in AVCs (Benchmarks). These Benchmarks serve as an aspirational standard for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), corporate agribusinesses, and AVC program holders and supporters, so they are able to contribute to the realization of the SDGs that will positively impact on marginal and small-scale producers, especially women.

Table 1. Benchmarks and the SDGs they are addressing

Benchmarks	SDGs
1 Promotes appropriate technology and community-based/oriented innovations that are friendly to women and men small producers.	Goals 9 (<i>Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure</i>), 5 (<i>Gender Equality</i>) and 10 (<i>Reducing Inequalities</i>)
2 Progressively positions women and men small producers to reap a more substantive share of value created over time.	Goals 5 (<i>Gender Equality</i>) and 10 (<i>Reducing Inequalities</i>)
3 Proactively ensures food security and builds the resilience of women and men small scale producers to health pandemics, natural, social and economic disasters.	Goals 11 (<i>Sustainable Cities and Communities</i>), 1 (<i>No Poverty</i>), 2 (<i>Zero Hunger</i>) and 13 (<i>Climate Action</i>)
4 Paves the way for the empowerment of small producers to become actors in their own development and that of their community and sector.	Goals 1 (<i>No Poverty</i>), 2 (<i>Zero Hunger</i>), 8 (<i>Decent Work and Economic Growth</i>), 10 (<i>Reducing Inequalities</i>), 11 (<i>Sustainable Cities and Communities</i>)
5 Proactively chooses value chains and invests in transparent and accountable value chain development practices that enhance women's participation and empowerment.	Goals 5 (<i>Gender Equality</i>) and 10 (<i>Reducing Inequalities</i>)
6 Practices sustainable consumption and production and paves the way for women and men small producers to become stewards of the natural resource base sustaining their livelihoods and enterprise.	Goals 2 (<i>Zero Hunger</i>) 12 (<i>Responsible Consumption and Production</i>), 13 (<i>Climate Action</i>), 14 (<i>Life Below Water</i>), 15 (<i>Life on Land</i>)
7 Provides a combination of Transactional and Transformational Services among women and men small scale producers to more effectively participate in value chain development and community/sectoral development that is equitable and sustainable.	Goals 1 (<i>No Poverty</i>), 2 (<i>Zero Hunger</i>), 5 (<i>Gender Equality</i>), 8 (<i>Decent Work and Economic Growth</i>), 10 (<i>Reducing Inequalities</i>), 11 (<i>Sustainable Cities and Communities</i>)
8 Produces measurable outcomes of transformation at the level of women and men small producers, households and communities, and value chains and subsectors.	Goals 16 (<i>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</i>) and 17 (<i>Partnerships to Achieve the Goals</i>)

The Benchmarks aspire to improve the quality of participation and benefits of women and men small-scale producers in AVCs, with emphasis on interventions that will enable their inclusion and participation in the ASEAN's economic development agenda. These interventions aim to address systemic barriers that impede small-scale producers in substantially pursuing their own development and in purposively enhancing women's participation and empowerment in agricultural enterprises, in the households, and in the larger community and ecosystem in which they operate.

To elevate the Benchmarks to the level of policy in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), ISEA conducted an appraisal of ASEAN policy frameworks where the Benchmarks might contribute in addressing possible gaps. ISEA identified the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (ASEAN Guidelines on RAI) that was adopted in 2018 to have the most comprehensive provisions for women and men small-scale producers in AVCs. However, the ASEAN Guidelines on RAI did not take into account the fact that small-scale producers, especially women, are starting from a position of marginalization and capability deprivation. An enabling policy and program support is warranted to transform small-scale producers into effective market and economic players in agriculture and AVC development. As such, investments championing small-scale producers will have to inadvertently compete with other stakeholders from a position of disadvantage.

Taking this into account, a need to address the gaps is proposed through a set of guidelines that will promote the empowerment of women and men small-scale producers in AVCs by promoting and incentivizing the adoption of the Benchmarks in the region with the following considerations:

- Responding effectively to the effects and impacts of COVID-19 and similar disasters on women and men small-scale producers and their need for food security, social protection, and resiliency
- Enabling an inclusive economic growth pathway that reduces poverty in the food, agriculture, and forestry sectors
- Accelerating the attainment of SDGs among poverty sectors, in general, and marginalized small-scale producers, in particular
- Including women in agriculture and the informal sector as targets for empowerment

Following consultations with ASEAN stakeholders and member organizations of a multi-stakeholder platform called Women's Empowerment, Livelihood and Food in Agricultural Value Chains (WE LIVE FOOD in AVCs), the following elements for a proposed complementing set of guidelines were distilled:

- Enabling innovations that support AVC development for food secure, resilient, and empowered small-scale producer communities
- Enabling women's economic empowerment that spans all functions and organizations engaged in AVC development, management, and governance
- Mobilization of investments on sustainable consumption and production systems that enable women and men small-scale producers as stakeholders in achieving a climate-resilient and green economy
- Recognition and support for social enterprises and inclusive businesses as innovators and key enablers of women and men small-scale producers in AVCs
- Mobilization of support for social innovation platforms that mainstream sustainable agriculture, transformational partnerships, and women's economic empowerment in AVCs toward measurable social impact and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs

Guidelines for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains

The objective of a proposed Transformational AVC Guidelines is to enable small-scale producers to overcome barriers to development through more inclusive AVCs in the food, agriculture, and forestry sectors toward contributing to the attainment of the SDGs.



A woman farmer harvests tea leaves [Photo by **Quang Nguyen Vinh** from **Pexels**]

The Transformational AVC Guidelines are voluntary in nature and designed to enhance and complement relevant ASEAN policies, approaches, and other guidelines. In particular, these are meant to substantiate and augment the following through a multi-sectoral approach:

1 ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework from the COVID-19 Pandemic [9]

2 ASEAN Guidelines on Responsible Agricultural Investments [10]

3 Roadmap for enhancing the role of agricultural cooperatives in AVCs [11]

4 Strategic Action Plan for SME Development [12] and Chapter 11 of the SME Policy Index [13]

5 Action Agenda on Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment in the ASEAN [14] including the AMAF's Approach to Gender Mainstreaming in the Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sector [15]

6 ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Inclusive Business [16]

The added value of the Transformational AVC Guidelines is to complement current policy and program support to ensure the realization of inclusive agribusiness and equitable growth aspirations in the ASEAN by addressing the following needs of small producers:

1 The Transformational AVC Guidelines would put women and men small-scale producers as the top priority in a sustainable poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth agenda. Central to the principles behind supporting and incentivizing the practice of the Benchmarks is its focus on small-scale producers and addressing the systemic barriers affecting their meaningful inclusion, especially of women, and participation in AVCs. This will enable them to become significant contributors to and major beneficiaries of economic growth and sustainable development.

2 The Transformational AVC Guidelines would expand the women's economic empowerment agenda to cover all gender and development issues in AVCs not only those affecting women entrepreneurs and women workers in the formal economy but also women in agriculture and the informal economy, in households, in communities, and in the broader ecosystem in which these women operate. A set of guidelines enabling and incentivizing the practice of the Benchmarks will promote affirmative action in addressing gender issues in households (i.e. unpaid care

and domestic work, gender-based violence, decision making), community organizations (i.e. leadership, participation, and representation of women), and the broader ecosystem (i.e. participation of other stakeholders and capacity building in sustainable consumption and production). Support and incentives for the practice of the Benchmarks would also include the promotion of gender-disaggregated data and information as an integral part of program and project evaluation and accountability system in AVCs.

3

The Transformational AVC Guidelines would provide a way for critical stakeholders, such as social enterprises and inclusive businesses, to be supported as they foster mutually beneficial partnerships with women and men small-scale producers toward bringing about inclusive, equitable, and sustainable growth. The Benchmarks were culled from the best practices of social enterprises and inclusive businesses that have forged successful partnerships with small-scale producers in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Their experiences showed the importance of recognizing and incentivizing social enterprises and inclusive businesses as key partners in the promotion of the Benchmarks.

The Transformational AVC Guidelines are meant to enjoin ASEAN and its member states to provide an enabling environment and ecosystem, including appropriate policies, incentives, and support programs, that would encourage and promote the practice of the Benchmarks.

The overall impact of its successful adoption and implementation could generate transformational partnerships and mainstream women's economic empowerment in AVCs that, in turn, would significantly contribute to accelerating the achievement of 13 out of the 17 SDGs: **Goals 1** (No Poverty), **2** (Zero Hunger), **5** (Gender Equality), **8** (Decent Work), **9** (Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure), **10** (Reducing Inequalities), **11** (Sustainable Cities and Communities), **12** (Responsible Consumption and Production), **13** (Climate Action), **14** (Life Below Water), **15** (Life on Land), **16** (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and **17** (Partnerships for the Goals).

Table 2. Transformational AVC Guidelines

Main Guidelines	Sub-Guidelines
<div data-bbox="129 439 312 620" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Enabling innovations that support AVC development for food secure, resilient, and empowered small-scale producer communities</p>	<p>Promote appropriate, affordable, and accessible technology and community-oriented innovations that build on indigenous knowledge systems and are friendly to small-scale producers, especially women</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Enable women and men small-scale producers to reap their fair share of the wealth generated by AVCs</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Ensure food security and nutrition and the resilience of both women and men small-scale producers to health pandemics and natural, social, and economic disasters</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Enable the empowerment of small-scale producers in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors to be the main actors of their own development</p>
<div data-bbox="129 994 319 1178" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Enabling women's economic empowerment that spans all functions and organizations engaged in AVC development, management, and governance</p>	<p>Invest in transparent and accountable value chain development practices that enhance women's participation and empowerment as stakeholders in production, consolidation, processing, marketing, and other functions that produce and deliver agricultural, forestry, and fishery products to markets</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Invest in transforming women small-scale producers in agriculture, forestry, and fishery, individually and in groups, into entrepreneurs, leaders, and stakeholders of enterprises and organizations promoting women's economic empowerment</p>
<div data-bbox="129 1498 319 1682" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Mobilization of investments on sustainable consumption and production systems that enable women and men small-scale producers as stakeholders in achieving a climate-resilient and green economy</p>	<p>Invest in and enable sustainable consumption and production systems that will empower women and men small-scale producers to become stewards of the natural resource base that sustains their livelihoods and enterprises</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Support investments and interventions that enable enterprises of small-scale producers to effectively adopt and adapt sustainable consumption and production technologies and practices in value chain functions beyond production</p>

Main Guidelines	Sub-Guidelines
<div data-bbox="135 378 320 562" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="135 584 619 763">Recognition and support for social enterprises and inclusive businesses as innovators and key enablers of women and men small-scale producers in AVCs</p>	<p data-bbox="691 344 1422 439">Recognize and enable social enterprises as key stakeholders in empowering women and men small-scale producers in AVCs</p> <p data-bbox="691 501 1428 595">.....</p> <p data-bbox="691 501 1428 595">Enable transformational models of inclusive businesses engaged with women and men small-scale producers by supporting their partnership with social enterprises and NGOs</p> <p data-bbox="691 658 1428 752">.....</p> <p data-bbox="691 680 1409 801">Invest in and incentivize AVC interventions that support transactional and transformational services among women and men small-scale producers through inclusive and hybrid financing</p>
<div data-bbox="135 931 320 1115" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="135 1137 612 1456">Mobilization of support for social innovation platforms that mainstream sustainable agriculture, transformational partnerships, and women's economic empowerment in AVCs toward measurable social impact and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs</p>	<p data-bbox="691 1010 1393 1167">Invest in and incentivize programs that support AVC stakeholders to co-create social impact and measure outcomes of transformation at the level of women and men small-scale producers, households, and communities, and value chains and economic subsectors</p> <p data-bbox="691 1229 1409 1323">.....</p> <p data-bbox="691 1254 1420 1348">Enable cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder platforms that promote the practice and mainstreaming of the benchmarks toward accelerating the SDGs</p>

GUIDELINE 1



ENABLING INNOVATIONS THAT SUPPORT AVC DEVELOPMENT FOR FOOD SECURE, RESILIENT, AND EMPOWERED SMALL-SCALE PRODUCER COMMUNITIES

Sub-Guideline 1.1

Promote appropriate, affordable, and accessible technology and community-oriented innovations that build on indigenous knowledge systems and are friendly to small-scale producers, especially women

Access to appropriate technology and community-based innovations are building blocks for enabling effective participation and increasing the benefits derived by women and men small-scale producers in AVCs. Governments can play an important role in partnership with various AVC stakeholders in the research, development, and dissemination of these technologies and innovations that are friendly to women and men small-scale producers.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to enable and encourage investments in:

- Developing and disseminating appropriate technologies and community-based innovations in strategic AVCs that have the potentials for equitable and sustainable growth, and where women and men small-scale producers are concentrated
- Setting-up and capacitating a network of farmer field schools and small-scale producer-based learning centers in strategic AVCs through partnerships with NGOs and resource institutions to ensure participatory development and dissemination of appropriate technologies and community-based innovations, which build on indigenous knowledge systems, are environmentally sustainable and able to address accessibility issues and other constraints faced by small-scale producers, especially women
- Improving the access of women and men small-scale producers, their organizations, and communities to digital technologies and e-commerce platforms appropriate to their situation, including the development, replication, and scaling up of community-based connectivity initiatives that will bridge the digital divide

Sub-Guideline 1.2

Enable women and men small-scale producers to reap their fair share of the wealth generated by AVCs

Enabling women and men small-scale producers and their organizations to have greater bargaining power and to demand a fair price when they sell their produce in bulk is a precondition to empowering them as stakeholders in AVCs. This entails developing their capacities to perform functions beyond production, such as semi-processing and processing, distribution, marketing, and allied services.

A substantive reduction in poverty and inequality is possible when women and men small-scale producers and their organizations, including assetless agricultural workers, are effectively engaged as stakeholders and can equitably partake of the wealth created in strategic AVCs where the rural poor are concentrated.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to enable and encourage investments in:

- Strategic partnerships to identify and develop AVCs where major multi-year investments could be placed to demonstrate substantive poverty reduction among women and men small-scale producers as stakeholders in a combination of value chain functions
- Developing, replicating, and scaling-up of AVC models that effectively engage cooperatives, women-led small-scale producer associations, and enterprises that are partly or fully owned by small-scale producers and have the capability to undertake not only the functions of production and consolidation but also semi-processing, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of agriculture produce in a manner that addresses systemic social, economic, and environmental risks
- Developing innovative public investment schemes that would create endowments or hasten capital build-up among women and men small-scale producers and enable them and their organizations to own enterprises or co-own shares in agribusiness ventures where they are serving as suppliers
- Developing innovative programs that organize, capacitate, and transform agriculture and fishery workers to own or co-own assets and manage or co-manage household and group enterprises in strategic agriculture and fishery value chains, in the process providing gender-responsive legal, technological, infrastructure, and other support services and incentives

- Developing an ecosystem of service providers among NGOs and resource institutions that will support and incentivize agribusiness corporations and SMEs to undertake sustainable and gender-inclusive partnerships with small-scale producers and their organizations in their respective supply chains
- Promoting fair trade laws, regulations, and practices in AVCs to protect small producers from unscrupulous practices that depress the prices of their produce at the farm gate and fish landing

Sub-Guideline 1.3

Ensure food security and nutrition and the resilience of both women and men small-scale producers to health pandemics and natural, social, and economic disasters

Small-scale producers are one of the most vulnerable segments of the population during pandemics and natural, social, and economic disasters. The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework for the COVID-19 Pandemic could be strengthened in terms of giving more attention to women and men small-scale producers as stakeholders in the recovery process. At the same time, the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management (2016–2020) may be revisited and extended, with enhancements on provisions for women and men small-scale producers as key stakeholders in developing food secure and resilient rural communities.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to enable and encourage investments in the following:

- Developing innovative AVC models and mainstreaming complementary programs that promote sustainable farming systems involving a combination of family farms and home, school, and community gardens toward diversified income streams and household food security and nutrition among small-scale producer communities
- Developing innovative models on social protection and subsidizing the mainstreaming of provisions for life and health insurance, crop and livelihood insurance, pre-positioned relief or emergency assistance, and food stockpiles in partnership with agribusinesses, SMEs, cooperatives, microfinance institutions, mutual benefit associations, and other intermediaries to ensure the well-being of small-scale producers engaged in various supply chains in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors

- Enabling an ecosystem of service providers to implement effective capacity building programs on food security and nutrition, production and income diversification, disaster risk reduction and management, climate change adaptation, and business continuity planning toward realizing resilient organizations and communities of women and men small-scale producers in partnership with NGOs, the private sector, and local governments
- Enabling policies on gender-responsive vulnerability assessments, risk financing, and market governance that empower women small-scale producers to effectively recover and bounce back from disasters, pandemics, and other shocks
- Conducting research on the impact of COVID-19 on women and men small-scale producers in strategic agriculture, forestry, and fishery value chains to inform policy and program development with the aim of realizing inclusive recovery and building back fairer

Sub-Guideline 1.4

Enable the empowerment of small-scale producers in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors to be the main actors of their own development

Empowerment is about women and men small-scale producers gaining control over productive resources, being in a position to make decisions, and having the capacity to manage such resources and decision-making processes effectively and sustainably. A prerequisite for small-scale producers to achieve empowerment is to have effective control over their land, their municipal fishing waters, and their ancestral domain, with their self-governing institutions effectively positioned to access markets as well as financial and technological resources.

Women and men small-scale producers also need to have the capability to manage their self-governing institutions sustainably and to make independent and sound decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods. Small-scale producer organizations likewise need to be empowered in engaging and influencing local governance structures and processes, including budgeting, to support their needs and aspirations.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to enable and encourage investments in:

- The full implementation of agrarian reform and asset reform programs for indigenous communities with ancestral domain claims as social justice measures for women and men small-scale producers

- The full implementation of policies that protect the rights of local small-scale fishers in the preferential and sustainable use of municipal or artisanal fishing waters
- Enabling an ecosystem of service providers to sustainably and effectively deliver leadership formation and organizational development, capacity building on strategic entrepreneurial management, and various forms of agricultural loans and enterprise financing to women and men small scale producers, their groups, and enterprises



Roasting coffee beans adds value to the incomes of small-scale coffee farmers
[Photo by **Pixabay** under **Creative Commons Zero (CC0) License**]

GUIDELINE 2



ENABLING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THAT SPANS ALL FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN AVC DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE

Sub-Guideline 2.1

Invest in transparent and accountable value chain development practices that enhance women's participation and empowerment as stakeholders in production, consolidation, processing, marketing, and other functions that produce and deliver agricultural, forestry, and fishery products to markets

Women's economic empowerment in agriculture may be fast-tracked by prioritizing interventions that respond to enabling women's inclusion and meaningful participation not only in production but also in all functions of AVCs. This entails mapping the current and potential roles of women in AVCs and better understanding the constraints or restrictions they face in terms of access to resources or opportunities. Unleashing their potentials for equitable and sustainable development in AVCs would entail perspectives for more shared roles between women and men, addressing unpaid care and domestic work, and providing equal access to productive resources and important support services such as agricultural extension.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to enable and encourage investments in:

- Research on the state of women small-scale producers in agriculture, forestry, and fishery, as well as the issues, constraints, and opportunities they face as current and potential stakeholders in strategic AVCs, including underpaid and unpaid labor for production and unpaid care and domestic work, to inform policy development, planning, and budgeting
- Agricultural, fishery, and forestry value chains that provide opportunities for substantive outcomes in improving women's position, well-being, and contribution to household incomes

- Scaling-up AVC models where empowered women comprise a significant percentage of the leaders, managers, and stakeholders in cooperatives, small-scale producer associations, and enterprises, undertaking not only the functions of production and consolidation but also semi-processing, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of agriculture produce
- Mainstreaming innovative models that have demonstrated the transformation of assetless women agricultural and fishery workers into empowered leaders and stakeholders in agriculture and fishery value chains
- Innovations that would hasten capital build-up and provide endowments to women small-scale producers and enable them and their organizations to own enterprises or co-own shares in agribusiness ventures
- Strategic partnerships with NGOs, resource institutions, and intermediary organizations to support a community of practice among AVC actors to promote equal pay for equal work; equal opportunities for women to avail services, learning events, and programs; women-friendly spaces and culture in workplaces; equal distribution of care and domestic work; mechanisms addressing gender-based violence; role models of empowered women and women small-scale producers; and programmes encouraging positive social norms that support women's empowerment
- Strategic partnerships with resource institutions to assist AVC program holders and stakeholders to undertake gender-disaggregated data collection and adopt gender-responsive tools in their planning, monitoring, and evaluation, and management information systems toward tracking transformation outcomes among women small-scale producers at the individual, household, and community levels

Sub-Guideline 2.2

Invest in transforming women small-scale producers in agriculture, forestry, and fishery, individually and in groups, into entrepreneurs, leaders, and stakeholders of enterprises and organizations promoting women's economic empowerment

The achievement of women's economic empowerment in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors needs to be based on addressing systemic barriers that prevent women's inclusion and meaningful participation at the household, enterprise, value chain, community, and society as a whole. A big part of this is addressing legal, political, and cultural barriers, as well as enhancing women's capability to become co-equal stakeholders.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Enact and/or fully implement policies that recognize the rights of women to own land, continuously expand and improve the security of tenure of women small-scale producers, empower women in fisheries and coastal resource management, and ensure that fisheries management decisions reflect the roles that women play in the sector
- Enact or strengthen policies and programs that recognize women as legal representatives of households, and promote equal rights and opportunities among women and men small-scale producers to access financial support, legal services, information, appropriate digital technology, and extension services in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors
- Forge strategic partnerships with NGOs, resource institutions, and intermediary organizations to support the development of women entrepreneurs; enhance women's leadership, representation, and voice in farmers' and producers' organizations and local governance mechanisms; sustain women-led mentorship programs in AVC development, management, and governance; and ensure the sustainability of gains made through succession planning, partnership building, and network support
- Conduct research and support programs for reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work among women in agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors toward contributing to the realization of an inclusive care economy that is supportive to women's economic empowerment
- Contribute to an enabling environment that holistically advances women's economic empowerment by investing in girl's education, ensuring adequate and accessible health services for women and girls, and strengthening mechanisms to address violence against women and girls

GUIDELINE 3



MOBILIZATION OF INVESTMENTS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION SYSTEMS THAT ENABLE WOMEN AND MEN SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS AS STAKEHOLDERS IN ACHIEVING A CLIMATE-RESILIENT AND GREEN ECONOMY

Sub-Guideline 3.1

Invest in and enable sustainable consumption and production systems that will empower women and men small-scale producers to become stewards of the natural resource base that sustains their livelihoods and enterprises

Degraded land and water resources supporting agricultural production systems need to be regenerated to provide sustainable livelihoods and ensure the health and well-being of women and men small-scale producers and their communities.

As women and men small-scale producers are engaged in functions beyond production in AVCs, they need to be enabled not only as climate-smart environmental stewards but also as stakeholders of sustainable consumption and production systems. These will promote resource efficiency and conservation, waste management, and enterprise practices and lifestyles that contribute to a green economy and a healthy planet.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Enact and fully implement policies for the development and mainstreaming of an agricultural extension system that promotes regenerative agriculture technologies including but not limited to organic and low external input agriculture; sloping agricultural land technologies; the use of open-pollinated, in-bred, and indigenous varieties of seeds; and community-based seed banking
- Enact and fully implement policies for the development of location-specific piloting and scaling up of climate-resilient agriculture technologies through the promotion of climate-smart villages and establishment of climate resiliency field schools that demonstrate farmer-based knowledge sharing and innovation in adapting and mitigating the impact of climate change on agriculture and food production

- Mainstream area-based models for achieving food security and nutrition through a system of family farms, as well as home, school, and community gardens, adopting regenerative and climate-smart agricultural technologies
- Mobilize multi-year investments in community-based coastal resource management and integrated social forestry programs that will enable women and men small-scale producers to adopt and benefit from the practice of sustainable fishery and forestry technologies
- Enact and/or fully implement policies and programs that recognize and promote participatory guarantee systems that assist women and men small-scale producers and their organizations in obtaining certification for organic, fair trade, and good agricultural practices

Sub-Guideline 3.2

Support investments and interventions that enable enterprises of small-scale producers to effectively adopt and adapt sustainable consumption and production technologies and practices in value chain functions beyond production

Small-scale producers and their organizations need support to develop and install appropriate environmental management systems as they move up the value chain to perform functions beyond production.

Governments can play an important role in this effort by enabling an ecosystem of service providers among NGOs, resource institutions, and intermediary organizations that could provide capacity building and program implementation support for the development and installation of environmental management systems that are adapted to the needs of enterprises owned and managed by small producers. These need to be complemented by investments in the participatory development and dissemination of appropriate waste management, renewable energy, and other sustainable technologies and practices relevant to value chain functions beyond production.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to enable and encourage investments in:

- Supporting a community of practice for developing and installing environmental management systems that are responsive to the needs of small-scale producers and their enterprises in strategic AVCs in partnership with NGOs, resource institutions, intermediary organizations, and the private sector

- Scaling up of smallholder-based AVC models and innovations that effectively demonstrate sustainable consumption and production technologies especially but not limited to waste management and renewable energy
- Conducting participatory action research on sustainable consumption and production systems and the development of standards based on small-scale farming and fishing, as well as community-based forest management, to inform policies and programs in AVC development
- Effectively integrating sustainable consumption and production systems in land use and physical framework planning in ways that recognize the role of women and men small-scale producers and their communities as environmental stewards
- Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships to develop policies and programs for greening AVCs in ways that meaningfully engage women and men small-scale producers as environmental stewards



Indigenous women farmers care for their children even as they work in their farms
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GUIDELINE 4



RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND INCLUSIVE BUSINESSES AS INNOVATORS AND KEY ENABLERS OF WOMEN AND MEN SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS IN AVCS

Sub-Guideline 4.1

Recognize and enable social enterprises as key stakeholders in empowering women and men small-scale producers in AVCs

Social enterprises have taken various legal forms and may be cooperatives or associations; non-stock, non-profit organizations, or foundations; stock, for-profit corporations, limited companies, or single proprietorships; or partnerships. The more mature social enterprises take on a combination of these forms. Whatever their legal form and whether micro, small, medium, or large in asset size, social enterprises trade for a social purpose and, as such, create and distribute economic and social value among marginalized small-scale producers.

Social enterprises and their partner NGOs have demonstrated best practices in pursuit of the Benchmarks, including the realization of women's economic empowerment in AVC interventions. In the process of economically empowering women, social enterprises have also shown effective ways of addressing unpaid care and domestic work borne by women, gender pay gaps, unequal opportunities for leadership development and representation, and violence against women. Toward developing transformational partnerships that would empower marginalized small-scale producers in AVCs, these social enterprises need to be enabled with innovative policies and programs by ASEAN and its member states.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Enact and implement dedicated policies and programs that recognize and support social enterprises as transformational partners in reducing poverty, including the provision of tax exemptions, tax breaks, and/or tax credits, as well as preferential treatment in government procurement of goods and services, in recognition of their contribution to improving the position and well-being of women and men small-scale producers and other marginalized sectors

- Establish or strengthen dedicated government bodies or units within the agriculture ministries and other relevant departments to regularly support the pursuit of social entrepreneurship strategies and the use of the Benchmarks and other relevant tools that promote the role of social enterprises in AVC development
- Conduct regular research to identify priority strategic AVCs that have the greatest potentials for growth and impact on women and men small-scale producers and, in the process, define optimum opportunities for public investments in social enterprise and AVC development
- Mobilize multi-year investments to support the development of social enterprises in AVCs that empower women small-scale producers, contribute to the development of an inclusive care economy, and engage women and men small-scale producers as stakeholders of sustainable consumption and production systems
- Invest in a dedicated Social Enterprise Recovery Fund for AVC development to enable social enterprises to meet the recovery requirements of women and men small-scale producers, side by side with the recovery of their respective enterprises from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and future shocks
- Enable social enterprises as vehicles for transitioning workers in agriculture, the informal economy to the formal economy, and for providing employment opportunities to marginalized sectors, such as persons with disabilities
- Promote the integration of social entrepreneurship in the curriculum of all schools and incentivize the development of social entrepreneurship as a viable career option, especially in schools offering agriculture and agribusiness development
- Promote the role of local government units and develop their capability in enabling social entrepreneurship and social enterprise development that is linked to the development of value chains and local economies founded on sustainable agriculture, fishery, and forestry, as well as sustainable consumption and production

Sub-Guideline 4.2

Enable transformational models of inclusive businesses engaged with women and men small-scale producers by supporting their partnership with social enterprises and NGOs

Inclusive businesses provide goods, services, and livelihoods on a commercially viable basis to people living at the base of the pyramid, making them part of the value chain as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers. ASEAN governments have started developing policies to encourage more inclusive businesses to emerge and scale-up. Inclusive businesses engage with low-income and poor communities, including small-scale producers in AVCs, through partnerships with social enterprises, NGOs, and governments to contribute to national and regional objectives.

As ASEAN member states build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling stronger partnerships among inclusive businesses, social enterprises, and NGOs that are situated in AVCs will help accelerate the path toward a green, inclusive, and resilient ASEAN.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Strengthen inclusive business policies and programs that support strategic partnerships between agribusiness companies and women and men small-scale producers organized as stakeholders of social enterprises or as members of associations or cooperatives
- Enable an ecosystem of service providers among social enterprises, NGOs, and resource and intermediary institutions that could assist aspiring agribusinesses and inclusive businesses in organizing women and men small-scale producers into cooperatives, associations, and other self-governing institutions; provide sustained capability building support on leadership formation and entrepreneurial management; and adopt the Benchmarks as an evaluation, planning, and learning tool
- Incentivize an inclusive business qualification system supportive to fair trade, ethical practices, and the integration of an environmental management system in their supply chain; innovative schemes and opportunities for small-scale producers to own equity shares in the company; the practice of participatory guarantee systems for sustainable agriculture, fishery, and forestry; and the adoption sustainable consumption and production technologies and practices that are friendly to small-scale producers

- Encourage affirmative action among agribusinesses to support ASEAN gender-responsive policies and plans, especially those that impact on workers and supplier communities, such as but not limited to awareness-raising on gender issues; address gender pay gaps as well as health and other needs of working women; recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work; encourage and recognize women as representatives of households; provide equal opportunities for women to avail of training and services; and put in place mechanisms for addressing gender-based violence

Sub-Guideline 4.3

Invest in and incentivize AVC interventions that support transactional and transformational services among women and men small-scale producers through inclusive and hybrid financing

The best practices of AVC development programs are those that have provided a combination of transactional and transformational services to ensure the inclusion and empowerment of marginalized small-scale producers.

Transactional services pertain to enterprise or market-driven activities, such as providing loans, demonstrating appropriate technologies, or conducting training necessary for the small-scale producers to perform their roles effectively and efficiently as suppliers, workers, and clients in enterprises and value chains. Transformational services pertain to activities that empower small-scale producers, such as the provision of educational and experiential learning opportunities, asset build-up, and leadership formation and organizational development toward becoming full-fledged or partial owners, as well as conscious decision makers of producer organizations.

These activities are geared toward equipping small-scale producers to take on new roles or functions in value chains where they are situated toward becoming change agents for themselves, their communities, and sectors.

An effective combination of these services can best be provided if social enterprises, including cooperatives and inclusive businesses and their partner NGOs, are provided hybrid financing that provides grants for transformational services in combination with various forms of credit and enterprise financing that are accessible and appropriate to AVC stakeholders.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Enact and implement enabling policies and programs that will provide adequate and accessible hybrid financing to holistically support the transactional and transformational aspects of social enterprise development and growth in AVCs, including capacity-building grants and special credit windows for non-collateralized loans with a guarantee fund pool
- Invest in developing an ecosystem for wholesaling and retailing hybrid financing for social enterprises comprising a combination of non-collateralized loans and grants for start-up capital, sustained capacity building of stakeholders, and developing a system for evaluating social impact
- Enable a comprehensive insurance system side by side with recovery and rehabilitation funds for social enterprises and their stakeholders toward protecting lives and livelihoods and ensuring resilience in the face of uncertainties, disasters, and pandemics
- Promote AVC financing models that enable inclusive businesses to access adequate enterprise financing for their development and growth side by side with the provision of grants for their partner NGOs that provide transformational services for their partner supplier communities
- Developing innovative financing models that address barriers to women's financial inclusion, provide special credit lines for women-led social enterprises and those that support and empower women small producers, and provide special grants for building the capability of women as social entrepreneurs, managers, and stakeholders of social enterprises
- Enable an ecosystem of strategic partners that build the capability and assist AVC stakeholders engaged in the provision of hybrid financing to undertake gender-responsive planning, monitoring, and evaluation and regularly report relevant gender-disaggregated data

GUIDELINE 5



MOBILIZATION OF SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION PLATFORMS THAT MAINSTREAM SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN AVCs TOWARD MEASURABLE SOCIAL IMPACT AND ACCELERATING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGs

Sub-Guideline 5.1

Invest in and incentivize programs that support AVC stakeholders to co-create social impact and measure outcomes of transformation at the level of women and men small-scale producers, households, and communities, and value chains and economic subsectors

Cross-sectoral collaboration among AVC stakeholders could be strengthened by developing communities of practice among practitioners and supporters of the Benchmarks. These communities of practice may become not only vehicles for learning from each other's experiences but for projecting collective impact toward generating more participation and support that could inspire other stakeholders to adopt the Benchmarks. Such communities of practice can be the springboard for governments to support the co-creation of AVC model, complete with a system for measuring and communicating outcomes that are consistent with the 13 SDGs.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Strategic partnerships to enable AVC stakeholders practicing the Benchmarks to develop communities of practice engaged in the articulation of relevant AVC models with a system for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes linked to the 13 SDGs
- Establishing digital multi-stakeholder platforms that would harness communities of practice in capturing the contributions and best practices of AVC stakeholders practicing the Benchmarks in achieving outcomes linked to the 13 SDGs

- Enabling an ecosystem of strategic partners to build the capability of AVC stakeholders and their communities of practice to undertake gender-responsive planning, monitoring, and evaluation and regularly report gender-disaggregated data relevant to the 13 SDG outcomes

Sub-Guideline 5.2

Enable cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder platforms that promote the practice and mainstreaming of the Benchmarks toward accelerating the SDGs

There is a need for governments to undertake sustained dialogue with AVC stakeholders to further develop and fine-tune enabling policies and programs that would mainstream the practice of the Benchmarks. There is also a need for governments to enable AVC stakeholders practicing the Benchmarks to gain massive support from public and private resource and financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and governments to bring about a scale of impact toward SDG acceleration.

To achieve this, ASEAN member states may consider to:

- Support cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder platforms, initiatives, and communities of practice that mainstream the Benchmarks toward accelerating the achievement of the SDGs
- Encourage multi-stakeholder dialogues to undertake reviews and continuous improvement of enabling policies that mainstream the Benchmarks as a pathway for AVC stakeholders to contribute toward accelerating the achievement of the SDGs
- Urge bilateral and multilateral development agencies and banks to prioritize support for enabling policies and investments in multi-stakeholder platforms, initiatives, and communities of practice pursuing the Benchmarks as a pathway for AVC stakeholders to contribute toward accelerating the achievement of the SDGs

Annex

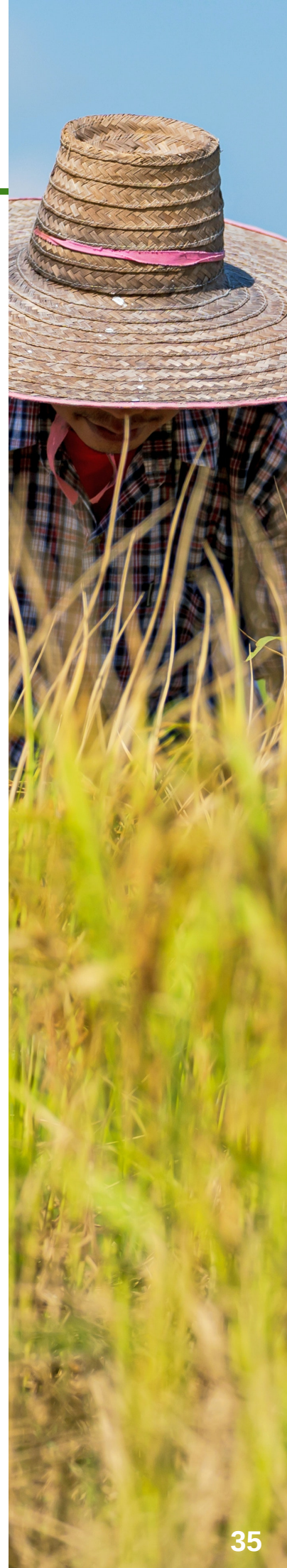
We would like to thank the following key informants and their respective institutions for providing their inputs and insights in the development of this policy paper.

- Jojo Ebron, Asian Farmers Association
- Dr Bayu Krishnamurthi, Trubus Bina Swadaya
- Dr Yang Mee Eng, ASEAN Foundation
- Angelica Saludez, Philippine Commission on Women
- Carmen Roceli Lopez, GREAT Women Project
- Erin Sweeney, Grow Asia
- Atty Kristine Alcantara, PhilWEN
- Dr Sita Sumrit, ASEAN Secretariat

We are grateful to the participants and partners of the stakeholders' consultations in the Philippines, Indonesia, and at the regional level who provided their verbal and written inputs, comments, and recommendations to enrich the Transformational AVC Guidelines.

From the ASEAN and ASEAN member states:

- ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
- ASEAN Secretariat
- Ministry of Women's Affairs – Cambodia
- Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs- Indonesia
- Ministry of Agriculture – Indonesia
- Ministry of National Development Planning - Indonesia
- Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Region and Transmigration – Indonesia
- Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection – Indonesia
- Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports – Brunei
- Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development – Malaysia
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement – Myanmar
- Department of Agriculture – Philippines
- Department of Agrarian Reform – Philippines
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Philippines
- Department of Trade and Industry – Philippines
- Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
- Philippine Commission on Women
- ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
- Ministry of Labour – Thailand
- Ministry of Interior – Thailand



From social enterprises and their support institutions, civil society and academic organizations, public-private partnerships, and private sector actors in Southeast Asia and beyond:

- Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration
- Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc.
- Annamrit Farmers as Owners Foundation
- ASEAN Ventures Philanthropy Network
- Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia
- Asian Seafood Improvement Collaborative
- Association for Promotion Sustainable Development
- Ateneo Center for Social Entrepreneurship
- ATIKHA Overseas Workers and Communities Initiatives
- Baden Aniline and Soda Factory
- Base of the Pyramid Hub
- Bina Tani Sejahtera Foundation
- Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
- Cambodia Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture
- Center for Environmental and Agricultural Policy Research, Extension and Development
- Coffee for Peace
- Corteva Agriscience
- Davao Federation of Fishers and Farmers Cooperatives
- Davao Federation of Farmers Integrated Services Cooperatives
- Development Wheel
- DIKA
- Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits. Inc.
- Eden Social Welfare Foundation
- Fairtrade Asia
- Federation of Agriculture Cooperatives in Camarines Sur
- Federation of Free Farmers
- Foodlink Advocacy Cooperative
- Foundation for a Sustainable Society Inc.
- Good Food Community
- Good Return
- Grameen Foundation
- Green Network Asia
- Gubat St. Anthony Cooperative
- HelpAge Cambodia
- iDE Global
- Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services
- University of the Philippines - Center for Women's and Gender Studies
- Integrated Regional Support Program
- International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
- ITUC-Asia Pacific
- Kapampangan Manalakaran Inc.
- Lafirza Econex Konsultan

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- Leyte Philippine Organics
 - MAYANI
 - Nanyang Technological University
 - Orient Integrated Development Consultants, Inc.
 - Oxfam in the Philippines
 - Oxfam in Cambodia
 - PATAMABA - Workers in the Informal Sector Enterprises
 - PEREMPUAN AMAN
 - Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement
 - Philippine Women's Economic Network
 - Polbangtan Bogor
 - PROCESS Foundation Panay, Inc.
 - Purple Action of Indigenous Women's Rights
 - PT Karya Masyarakat Mandiri Dompot Dhuafa
 - Rural Reconstruction Nepal
 - Samahang Kabubuhayan sa Mapulang Lupa
 - SAFFY Inc.
 - SAFRUDI
 - Sela Pepper
 - Sentrong Ugnayan ng Mamamayang Pilipino Multi-Purpose Cooperative
 - Sime Darby Foundation
 - Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative
 - Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture
 - Trend Global
 - Toko Trubus Swadaya
 - United Coconut Planters Bank
 - University of the Philippines
 - University of the Philippines - Institute for Small Scale Industries
 - UN Women Philippines
 - VICTO National Cooperative Federation and Development Center
 - WE EFFECT
 - Women's Initiative NGO
 - Women's Legal Bureau / Weaving Women's Voices in ASEAN
 - Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
 - World Fair Trade Organization – Asia
 - World Vision International Cambodia
 - World Vision Thailand
 - 11.11.11. Asia

We also thank the ISEA fellows and stakeholders for their valuable contributions to develop and complete this policy paper.

Notes

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March 2022

This paper was prepared for ISEA by Marie Lisa Dacanay, Jay Bertram Lacsamana, Gomer Padong, Catherine Tiongson-Intalan, and Josefa Carandang. In the production of this paper, ISEA and Oxfam acknowledge the editorial assistance of Mark Vincent Aranas and Shubert Ciencia and the lay-out design of Bernadette Patañag. This paper is submitted to ASEAN and its member states for consideration as a briefing paper to enhance ASEAN policies in empowering women and men small-scale producers in agricultural value chains. For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email inquiry@isea-group.net

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Front Cover – Photo by Quang Nguyen Vinh (Pexel)

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Published by ISEA and Oxfam GB for Oxfam International
Room 407 John Gokongwei School of Management Building, Ateneo de Manila
University, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City 1108 Metro Manila, Philippines

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Published and produced by Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia

With support from Oxfam and the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok
under the Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia
(GRAISEA) Programme