

Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities

Women in Agribusiness Value Chains

Gender-Smart Business Solutions for IFC Clients in Agribusiness

Agribusiness is central to food security, job creation, and sustainable growth in many low and middle-income countries.

Women comprise over 40 percent of the global agricultural workforce according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, and are crucial stakeholders in agribusiness value chains around the world.

Despite their contributions, women in agriculture face unique challenges that hamper their productivity, in turn weakening rural economies, the businesses that depend on them, and the global food chain. Giving women the appropriate knowledge and access to farming resources has the potential to generate business benefits throughout the value chain.

Our Program

IFC's Women in Agribusiness Value Chains program works with agribusiness clients across the world to help them close gender gaps and realize the benefits of gender inclusion in their value chain.

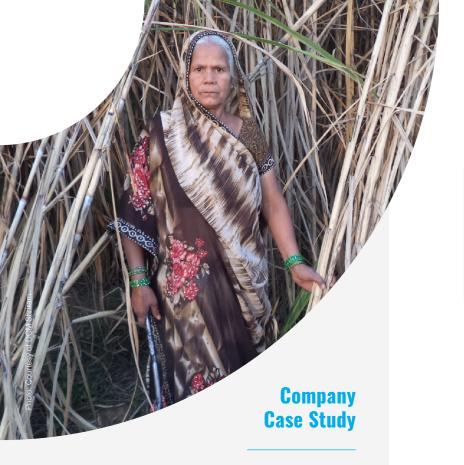
We Help Clients By:

- Assessing their value chains using a suite of qualitative and quantitative tools to explore gender gaps and performance constraints in their value chain;
- Designing gender-smart interventions to address those gaps; and
- Supporting clients in implementing customized interventions to address those challenges and achieving business benefits.

The benefits of gender inclusion in agribusiness value chains include:

- · Improved productivity and profitability
- · Enhanced quality of company operations and access to premium markets
- · Widened available talent pool
- Strengthened brand reputation and customer loyalty through ethical sourcing and compliance with environmental and social standards





DCM Shriram Limited, an IFC client, is one of India's largest business conglomerates that focuses on agribusiness in rural India. Much of its sugarcane produce comes from Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, one of the poorest, most patriarchal, and most disadvantaged districts in the country, with 29 percent of its population living below the poverty line.

IFC's assessment of DCM Shriram's operations found that women actively participate in the sugarcane value chain, but their contribution is often invisible. Sugarcane farming is often perceived to be a male-dominated activity, thus training programs on farming techniques to boost crop yields are not offered to women.

Additionally, poverty and outmigration of men to urban areas is leading to more women managing their farms independently but they face several challenges. Female farmers usually don't have assets registered in their name, excluding them from accessing credit, markets, or becoming members of farmer networks.

To address these challenges and to increase the visibility of the work done by women farmers and their impact on improving farm yields, DCM Shriram and IFC have developed gender-smart business solutions.

Under the Meetha Sona program, a sustainable sugarcane training program, IFC supported DCM Shriram in training over **2,000 women farmers**. To overcome the gender-based obstacles faced by women farmers, DCM Shriram hired female trainers to coach participants on entrepreneurship and financial literacy in addition to sustainable agricultural techniques.

The program has been a success, increasing reported farm yields among participants by **25 percent**, which translates into improved livelihoods for farmers, enhanced revenue for the company and increased profits for shareholders.

DCM Shriram is also exploring ways to further bolster smallholder incomes and empower women farmers. Together with IFC and other key partners, they are supporting over 20,000 women farmers in sugarcane growing regions to adopt dairy farming, a complimentary activity to sugarcane harvesting.

The Business Case for Gender Interventions in Agribusiness Value Chains

Value Chain Gaps



Limited access to inputs



productivity



harvest handling, processing and storage



Limited access to markets

Gender-Smart Solutions to Address Gaps

Support access to credit, land, and inputs

base

Ensure women are included in trainings Ensure
women are
paid and
trained for
harvest,
post-harvest
handling

Enable women to access farmer networks

base

Business Benefits Concentrated Reduced Increased Supply supplier consumer chain post-harvest network loyalty stability losses Strengthened Improved Secure Increased sales supplier product supply chain base quality stability Access Increased New or Access to new crop yield improved to new consumer markets consumer

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