

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:

1. **Assessing** their value chains using a suite of qualitative and quantitative tools to explore gender gaps and performance constraints in their value chain;
2. **Designing** gender-smart interventions to address those gaps; and
3. **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



Photo: Charlotte Kes/World Bank



Photo: Chhor Sokunthea/World Bank

Gender-smart solutions in agribusiness can boost the sector's productivity and profitability and result in stronger, more integrated value chains.



Photo: Courtesy of DCM Shriram

Company Case Study

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



Low productivity



Poor post-harvest handling, processing and storage



Limited access to markets

Gender-Smart Solutions to Address Gaps

Support access to credit, land, and inputs

Ensure women are included in trainings

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

Enable women to access farmer networks

Business Benefits

Increased consumer loyalty

Supply chain stability

Reduced post-harvest losses

Concentrated supplier network

Secure sales

Strengthened supplier base

Improved product quality

Increased supply chain stability

Access to new consumer base

Increased crop yield

New or improved markets

Access to new consumer base

Contacts

Tania Lozansky

Global Head—Advisory,
Manufacturing, Agribusiness & Services, IFC
tlozansky@ifc.org

Sanola A. Daley

Gender Lead—Advisory,
Manufacturing, Agribusiness & Services, IFC
sdaley@ifc.org

More Information

@IFC_org and @WBG_Gender

www.ifc.org/agrigender
www.ifc.org/gender