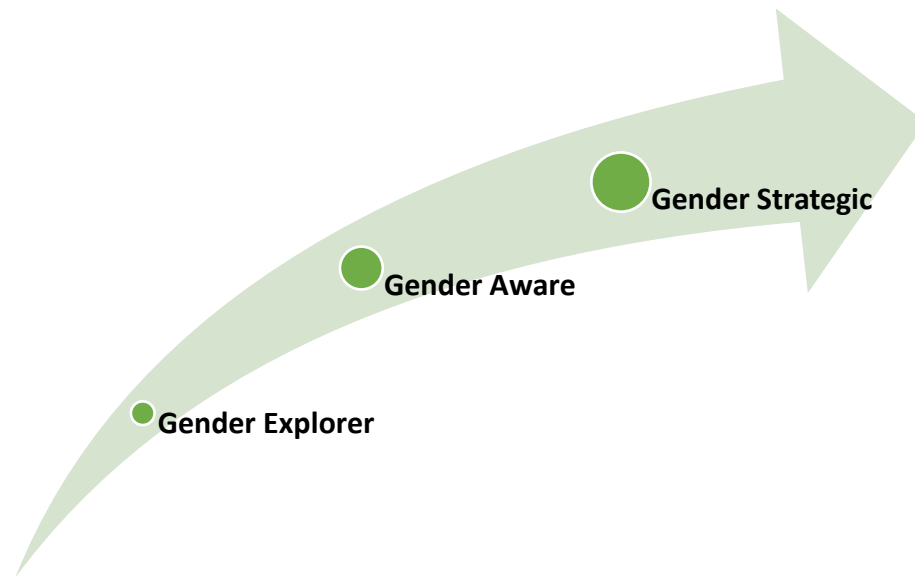


## Gendered Environmental Recommendations

The environmental component is one of three lens that comprise the Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) Framework. The assessment allows a rating of your company along the spectrum below with recommendations on how to mainstream gender equality in company environmental practices and policies.



Climate change and environmental degradation is a material risk to business performance. Climate change alone is expected to [reduce the value of the world's financial assets](#) by an estimated USD 2.5 trillion (Dietz et al, 2016). [Swiss RE](#) estimates the world stands to lose as much as 18% of its economic value from climate change by 2050 if mitigation actions are not taken (Swiss RE, 2021). According to the World Economic Forum's [Global Risk Index](#) (2021) the top three clear and present dangers are infectious disease, livelihood crises and extreme weather events. In all three instances women are often more likely than men to be negatively affected by the impacts brought on from these dangers, such as with natural disasters<sup>1</sup>. These gendered impacts can present themselves along your value chain from supply of raw materials to disruption of labour to changing buying habits and purchasing power of your customers.

The built environment: the communities, businesses, and farms where we work are also where the most hazards exist for women and men as they go about their daily work. Globally, 1 in every 5 deaths and 1 in every under five mortalities are associated with preventable environmental factors. These occur due to exposure to hazardous substances in the air, water, soil, and the food we eat; in addition to natural and manmade calamities (e.g., floods, droughts, epidemics); climate change; occupational hazards.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Women...in the Shadow of Climate Change*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/women-in-shadow-climate-change>

<sup>2</sup> *Weather-related disasters increase over past 50 years, causing more damage but fewer deaths*. World Meteorological Organization. August 2021. <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/weather-related-disasters-increase-over-past-50-years-causing-more-damage-fewer>

An accurate rating of a company's rank along the GEM spectrum is thus dependent on understanding the larger context, such as local environmental conditions, climate change impacts in addition to analysis of company culture, local business environment, regulatory framework, and prevailing social norms to understand women and men's roles, thus making this an important aspect in the GEM approach.<sup>3</sup> The recommendations provided below follow the example of Mamboleo Farms, a Tanzanian agribusiness that produces, purchases, and processes rice, as well as produces certified seed. More information about the company can be found in [MEDA's Learning Series](#).<sup>4</sup>

## Gender Explorer

Your company may or may not have environmental policies established. You may not understand how your business impacts or is impacted by climate change and environmental degradation nor consider the potential impacts on men and women workers or the wider community. If policies are in place, limited action has been taken to ensure women stakeholders are involved and benefiting from these policies. Overall, your company has likely not spent time considering the different needs of women and men stakeholders within the company's broader environment. The company likely does not collect environmental or gender data and is reluctant to share any information it may have.

### ***Mamboleo Farms Case Study***

*Mamboleo Farms was founded in 2011 and quickly looked for ways to grow their rice business sustainably. This included building partnerships with the community but not really adopting environmentally sustainable technology and practices. The farm was established in a remote area of the Rufiji River basin. Large diesel pumps worked around the clock to flood rice paddy. More land was cleared to plant more paddy to meet market demands. Parallely, in the surrounding community women were farming in the estuaries of the Rufiji River, cutting down mangroves to plant rice paddy with low yields. In addition to market competition, the deforestation of mangroves increased the risk of seasonal flooding. The company was neither environmentally sustainable nor gender blind, which presented both risk and opportunity.*

Investing in women and climate makes business sense and Mamboleo Farms quickly realized they needed to seek opportunities to have an environmental and gender sensitive approach to business. Studies have shown that women farmers are more likely than men to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices ([Twyman et al, 2014](#)). Climate-smart practices aim to increase agricultural productivity and farmer income and reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions ([FAO, 2018](#)). Sourcing from women farmers who apply environmentally sensitive practices would ensure a reliable and high-quality supply of paddy. Not only would Mamboleo be better able to meet customer demand, but it would also support women farmers to increase their income, while reducing negative impacts on the environment.

To help you get started along this journey, we have included tips and resources that can upgrade your company's environmental policies and practices while improving gender equality:

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<sup>3</sup> GEM Framework, page 11.

<sup>4</sup> [Ramping up Rice Processing: Mamboleo Farms Business Case](#), Strengthening Small Business Value Chains Learning Series.

- **Develop an Environmental Policy and Strategy.** A policy should reflect your commitment to environmental protection as well as protection of women and men staff. When developing an environmental policy and strategy companies should ensure that women staff at various levels of the organization are contributing to policy development. MEDA has both an environmental policy and strategy template and an Environmental Screening Tool<sup>5</sup> to support the companies it works with to identify environmental impacts, regulatory compliance requirements and opportunities to reduce operational costs and improve community relations. Depending on your company's size you will want to develop an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) which has more research and actionable details than an Environmental Strategy. Larger companies should consider a more comprehensive [environmental management system \(EMS\)](#). When companies develop their strategy, it is important to take into consideration women and men's specific needs. For example, if a company operates in the manufacturing sector, it should ensure that nearby water sources, primarily used by women collecting water, are protected from waste generated from company operations.
- **Consult with men and women members of the local community.** This can help a company to understand how its operations impact the local environment. Good community consultation will inform the company's policies and practices, ensuring that the needs of women and men community members are met.
- **Conduct an [environmental audit](#).** This can provide invaluable information for a company. Depending on the type of audit undertaken, companies can test whether they are compliant with local regulations, identify opportunities to save costs through more energy efficient equipment, and consider issues relevant to women. Examples include [ISO 14001](#), environmental site assessments, environmental compliance audits and energy audits – all can be completed with a gender lens. When undertaking an audit, it is important for women staff and community members to participate.
- **Start to measure your company's environmental impact particularly as it affects men and women.** The [IRIS Metrics Catalog](#) and [SASB Materiality Map](#) are excellent investor-endorsed resources that can be adapted for gender inclusion.

## Gender Aware

Your company understands that environmental considerations are important to its operations, and it is likely that you have established environmental policies and practices. You may not have fully considered the different needs of women and men stakeholders within the company's broader environment.

A Gender Aware company is open to technical assistance and learning more about the environmental factors relevant to their business as well as the participation of women and men in decisions making, training and implementation of best practices. The company is also likely more open to sharing data.

Further along the spectrum, the company may have launched environmental initiatives, which includes an environmental screening, as well as established a clear policy and strategy, and identified areas for environmental and workplace safety improvements and regulatory compliance needs. The company

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<sup>5</sup> Please reach out to the MEDA team for these documents.

may have established a green team composed of men and women employees from all levels. Training opportunities around environmental protection and workplace safety have been initiated and the company has begun to share data and is open to feedback.

We commend you on your progress towards incorporating gender issues within your company's environmental impact. To support you in your journey towards gender equality and environment, we have included the following tips and resources:

- **Develop an environmental policy or environmental management system.** Companies should ensure that women staff at various levels of the organization are actively contributing to policy development. Here is an environmental policy and strategy template. When companies develop these policies, it is important to take into consideration women and men's specific needs. For example, if a company operates in the real estate and construction sectors, it has an established process for engaging women community members, as well as men, in land-use decisions. Women are frequently excluded from land-use decisions in locations where they have limited land rights. Similarly, when your company conducts environmental audits or assessments, women employees and community members should participate in the audit.
- **Partner with and learn from organizations working with clean technology companies and others addressing climate change within global markets and supply chains.** [Value for Women](#) has provided technical assistance to clean energy companies operating in Africa, India and Mexico supported by the Shell Foundation, as well as by impact investors such as Alphamundi to create, pilot, evaluate, and implement gender strategies that solve business challenges and improve business operations.
- **Regularly measure your company's environmental impact particularly as it affects men and women.** The [IRIS Metrics Catalog](#) and [SASB Materiality Map](#) are excellent investor-endorsed resources that can be adapted for gender inclusion. If you are already measuring your environmental impacts, your company might consider setting targets that integrate gender indicators and reporting them to internal and external stakeholders to remain accountable.
- **Consult with men and women members of the local community.** This helps a company understand how its operations impact the local environment. Good community consultation will inform the company's policies and practices, ensuring that the needs of women and men community members are met. Consultation can also uncover new business opportunities.
- **Track business trends in women and climate.** Resources shared by leading organizations like [WEDO](#) and [Global Gender Climate Alliance](#) can help you stay informed of the latest research and strategies, and identify new ways that your company can lead. [This 2016 report on gender and climate](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, while [New Course](#) offers more practical examples. In the wake of the COP 21 Paris agreement, monitoring policy developments can help firms stay ahead of regulatory change. The [Gender Climate Tracker app](#) is a policy resource that includes useful country-specific profiles.

### ***Mamboleo Farms Case Study***

*Mamboleo Farms have now transformed their business to gender aware and more environmentally sustainable. They have developed an environmental policy and strategy and completed a lengthy process to become compliant with the National Environment Management Council (NEMC). Their operations are Fire and OSHA compliant, and all the workers are provided with safety training and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). Men and women employees were consulted during this process and participated in the training and establishment of safety protocols. The company replaced the dirty diesel water pumps with a large-scale solar powered water irrigation system. Furthermore, the company began engagement with women rice farmers from the surrounding community. They introduced them to high yielding new rice varieties and entered into an agreement with them to share farming space in exchange for aggregation of the harvest to meet market demands and a stop to deforestation of mangrove forests. Women farmers and the company benefit from this as the new rice varieties yield more and can generate two harvests per year. This brings much needed income to everyone, and this strengthens their working relationship.*

### **Gender Strategic**

Your company has a clear understanding of the importance of gender equality within the broader environment. Your company has robust environmental policies and practices, likely similar to MEDA's environment policy and strategy template, and integrates environmental considerations throughout its operations. It is likely that women staff contributed significantly to the development of environmental policies, and that both women and men community stakeholders were consulted. Women and men employees are aware of your company's impact on the environment and feel that their needs have been taken into consideration. An active green team, comprised of both men and women, ensure the company is meeting its environmental and safe workplace commitments and all staff are trained according to the environmental strategy. The company actively seeks to reduce its environmental footprint investing in green technology and practices to reduce its environmental (carbon, waste, water, air pollution, noise pollution, etc.) footprint. There is a process for engaging women.

For example, if a company operates in the real estate and construction sectors, it has an established process for engaging women community members, as well as men, in land-use decisions. Women are frequently excluded from land-use decisions in locations where they have limited land rights. The company is transparent sharing data with stakeholders and regulatory authorities and may be a party of nationally/internationally recognized frameworks.

We commend you on your leadership in incorporating gender issues within your company's environmental impact. To support you in continually improving your strong company practices, we have included the following tips and resources:

- **Measure, set targets and report environmental impacts** of company operations on the local environment and **disaggregate results by women and men** community members where possible. The [IRIS Metrics Catalog](#) and [SASB Materiality Map](#) are excellent investor-endorsed resources that can be adapted for gender inclusion.

- **Publicly disclose the environmental impacts within a company's Annual Report.** For example, Vancity Credit Union, a Canadian financial institution, publishes an [Annual Report with a specific section dedicated to environmental sustainability](#) and a specific [Green House Gas Inventory Report and Handbook](#). With your level of gender expertise, you will be able to ensure your incorporation of these resources are also gender strategic!
- **Implementing additional strategies that benefit women.** Based on consultations with men and women suppliers and community members, your company may consider implementing new environmental strategies that benefit women.
- **Continue to follow business trends in women and climate.** Resources shared by leading organizations like [WEDO](#) and [Global Gender Climate Alliance](#) offer some of the latest research and strategies. [This 2016 report on gender and climate](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, while [New Course](#) offers more practical examples. The [Gender Climate Tracker app](#) is a policy resource that includes useful country-specific profiles. Tell us what your favourite gender climate and business resources are!
- **Adopt technologies and processes that promote energy efficiencies and gender equality.** Recognize that gender, business, and climate smart operations are mutually reinforcing and adopt technologies and processes that promote energy efficiencies and gender equality in your operations. MEDA utilizes a gender and environmental technology screening tool<sup>6</sup> to identify appropriate (accessibility, affordability, ease of use, usefulness, low risk to male capture) technology as additional due diligence to ensure the right technology is getting to the hands of women. Additionally, technology reference guides, such as this Value for Women's [Innovations in gender-inclusive climate-smart agriculture](#), are available for tangible reference points for adoption within agribusiness. Engaging or contracting women out growers can not only lead to larger, more secure supply base of goods but also economically empower women, reducing pressure on men to be sole providers and increasing overall household incomes.

### ***Mamboleo Farms Case Study***

*Mamboleo Farms recognized this early on, engaging with women farmers, environmental experts, and local government authorities to co-develop a plan that saw a transition from mangrove destruction to mangrove restoration while allowing for increased yields and incomes for rural women farmers. The company also benefited from an increase of rice paddy available for processing allowing them meet client demands. We know all of this because Mamboleo Farms worked with stakeholders to identify risks and opportunities and addressed them. The company also invested in data collection and shared this data with stakeholders. This allowed the company to make accurate assessments, seek advice, mitigate risk and plan accordingly. When a company reaches a level of transformation it means the company has developed an ability to recognize the benefit of including both women and men in decision making and implementation. Equally, it is a place where the environment is recognized as an asset that needs to be protected.*

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<sup>6</sup> Please reach out to the MEDA team for these documents.