



GEM FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

GENDERED ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

MENNONITE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES (MEDA)

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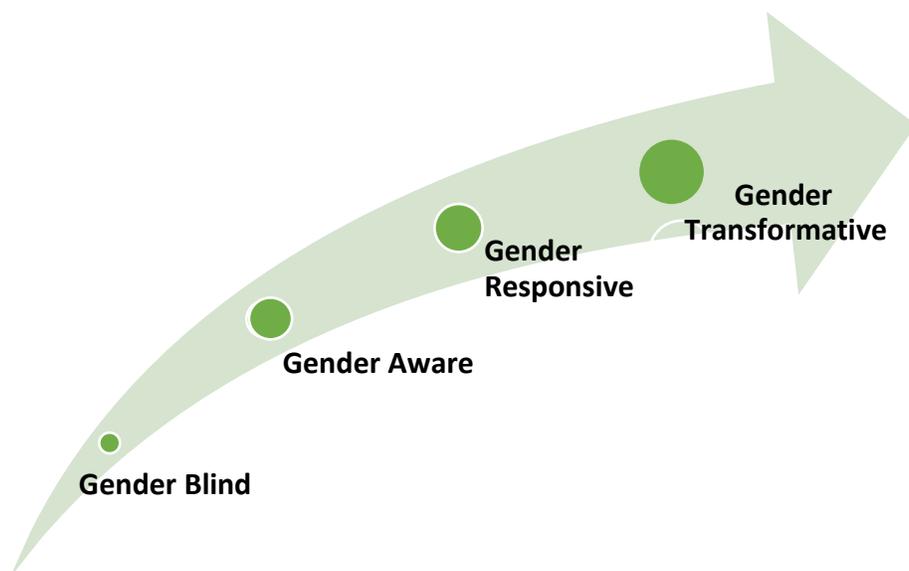
Creating business solutions to poverty

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Gendered Environmental Recommendations

The environmental component is one of three lenses 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 disasters¹. 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.²

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.³ The recommendations provided below follow the example of Mamboleo

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

² *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-relateddisasters-increase-over-past-50-years-causing-more-damage-fewer>

³ GEM Framework, page 11.

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](#).⁴

Gender Blind (score 0-1)

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. 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.

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:

- **Invest in learning more about gender, diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts and their intersection with environment and climate change.** This can help a company to understand how its operations impact the environment and make a commitment on whether they want to pursue more work in this area or not.
- **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.

Gender Aware (score 2-4)

Your company may have some environmental policies and practices established. You may understand how your business impacts or is impacted by climate change and environmental degradation, but you may not have considered 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. The company has started to collect environmental or gender data and is open to sharing limited 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.

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

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:

- **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 Tool⁵ 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 Responsive (score 5-9)

Your company understands that environmental considerations are important to its operations, and it is likely that you have established environmental policies and practices. You have considered the different needs of women and men stakeholders within the company's broader environment.

A Gender Responsive 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.

⁵ Please reach out to the MEDA team for these documents.

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 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 responsive 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 Transformative (score 10-12)

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 tool⁶ 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.

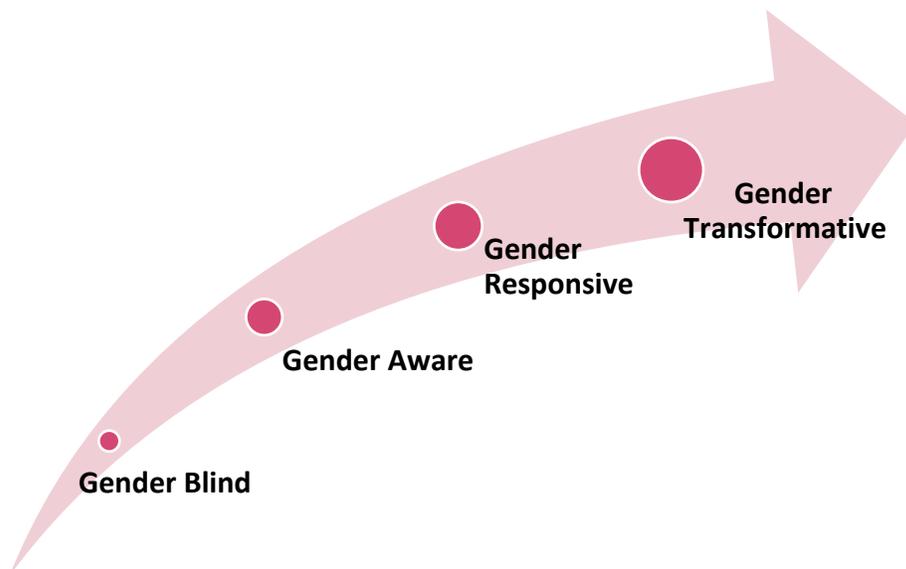
Mamboleo Farms Case Study

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.

⁶ Please reach out to the MEDA team for these documents.

Gendered Social Recommendations

The social component is one of three lenses 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 a company's workforce, customer base and supply chain.



Maximizing women's participation in business is not just the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense. Advancing women's equality could add as much as \$28 trillion to global annual GDP by 2025 ([McKinsey, 2015](#)). Women as employees, customers and suppliers represent a powerful source of economic growth that is frequently overlooked and underleveraged by businesses. There are many business benefits to hiring and promoting women including increasing the competitiveness of a company's talent pool, raising the level of creativity and innovation through gender diverse work teams ([PwC, 2017](#)), and improving access to more capital and new investors.

Looking beyond employees, women as consumers have immense purchasing power and influence, especially in the food, fitness, beauty and apparel markets ([HBR, 2009](#)). Women currently control about \$20 trillion in annual consumer spending and are projected to control nearly 75% of consumer discretionary spending worldwide by 2028 ([Ernst & Young, 2013](#)). As the primary buyer for people in their networks, women consumers have a multiplier effect. Companies who capitalize on this multiplier benefit from increased sales, customer loyalty, and expanded market share ([Forbes, 2015](#)).

Purchasing products from women suppliers can diversify sourcing and mitigate supply chain risks like product unavailability. Companies that source from multiple suppliers spend on average 20% less on their buying operations ([Hackett, 2017](#)).

Businesses like PT Cisarua Mountain Dairy (Cimory) are yielding the commercial benefits of hiring and advancing women. Cimory, a leading producer of dairy products in Indonesia, launched a direct-to-consumer sales program that recruits and trains low-income women as sales agents. While dairy is not inherently a women's product category, Cimory chose to employ women sales agents to engage customers with a more personalised brand experience, increase sales and capture larger profit margins. Since its launch, the women sales agent program now represents 14% of Cimory's total sales and grew by 30% in the previous year alone (MEDA, 2017).

Gender Blind (score 0-4)

It is likely that your company employs more male staff across job levels and departments. Your company's strategy to recruit and promote employees may overlook women as viable candidates to fill new job openings, especially at the senior management level. Since your company's products and services are not designed and marketed specifically for women, the market potential of the female customer segment is largely unrealized. Your company likely doesn't collect any gender data on its employees, customers, or suppliers.

The following tips and resources can help you get started on upgrading your company's workforce, customer and supplier practices while improving gender equality:

Employees

- **Begin by measuring the number of women and men employees at various levels and departments.** You can use measurement as a starting point to understand where women and men are least represented in your company. The gender gaps identified can be explored further through discussions on Human Resources (HR) practices with your staff and tracking your company's employee trends over time, and ultimately addressed through a corrective action plan.
- **Undertake online self-assessments specific to your sector to learn more.** For agri-businesses, consider the Value For Women <https://giabiz.v4w.org/> Gender Inclusion Assessment for Agri-businesses. The self-assessment developed in collaboration with the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs and Walmart Foundation further assesses business operations from a gender perspective at three levels: human capital, productivity management, and market. The tool walks businesses through a three-step process to collect data about where women are within agribusiness operations, provide a report analyzing the data showing gender gaps in women and men participation as employees and suppliers, as well as highlighting the policies, practices and systems that should be in place for a business to support gender inclusion. Finally, the report will provide recommendations on action steps businesses can take towards increasing women's inclusion across core business areas.

Customers

- **Disaggregate customer data by women and men.** The use of Customer Relationship Management platforms can help you measure, analyze and generate highly effective marketing strategies that respond to the genderspecific needs of your customers. [Dove](#) used a series of [impactful data](#) gathering campaigns to uncover insights into the wants, needs and behaviours of women customers.

Suppliers

- **Determine the number of women and men suppliers that your company currently sources from.** To develop a more gender-balanced supply chain, it's helpful to first determine the number of women and men suppliers that your company is currently sourcing from. The [Savannah Fruits Company](#) sources shea butter from 40 women's groups representing about 5000 women farmers. Creating employment for women in the supply chain can attract international buyers like the [Sundial Brand](#), who sources shea butter from Savannah.

Gender Aware (score 5-12)

It is likely that your company collects some gender data on employees and is aware that it employs more male staff across job levels and departments. Your company's strategy to recruit and promote employees may overlook women as viable candidates to fill new job openings, especially at the senior management level. Since your company's products and services

are not designed and marketed specifically for women, the market potential of the female customer segment is largely unrealized. In addition, your company may not diversify its procurement to reach both women and men suppliers.

The following tips and resources can help you get started on upgrading your company's workforce, customer and supplier practices while improving gender equality:

Employees

- **Increase the gender diversity of your company's employees.** Identify the gender gaps through discussions on Human Resources (HR) practices with your staff and tracking your company's employee trends over time, and ultimately addressed through a corrective action plan.
- **Evaluate your company's current recruitment practices.** Assess whether these practices present a disadvantage to female job candidates. Using tools like the [Gender Decoder for Job Apps](#) can help you ensure that vacant roles appeal equally to both sexes by focusing on topics like credentials, rather than personal characteristics.
- **Examine how your company recruits new staff.** For instance, on your company's job applications, ask candidates how they learned about the vacancy. Then breakdown the responses by gender. In some cases, male candidates may hear of job openings through their informal networks, whereas female applicants might learn of vacancies through more public areas (e.g., online third-party job board). Obtaining this data allows your company to adjust its job posting strategy to better reach both women and men talent pools.
- **Explore formal partnerships with training institutes and colleges that have a high number of women graduates.** This helps companies access a larger labour market, as well as strengthen their reputation as a woman-friendly employer. In India, a microfinance institution entered agreements with three training institutes, where the company defined specific targets to increase recruitment of top female talent.
- **Evaluate certain staffing practices.** Assess whether current practices may be limiting women from joining or advancing in your company. For example, if a business requires its staff to always be in the office during regular working hours, this policy may inadvertently prevent women from applying for positions. The COVID-19 pandemic has further changed workplace practices with adoption of more virtual meetings. A 2021 report on [18 women in the workplace statistics you need to know](#) found that 45% of women business leaders find it difficult for women to speak in virtual meetings. To help attract and retain more women employees, explore implementing more gender inclusive workplace practices, such as flexible working hours or on-site childcare. The [UN WEPs tool](#) offers more ideas on creating an inclusive workplace.
- **Retain top female talent by creating professional development programs that are tailor-made for women.** For instance, Women's World Banking offers a [suite of leadership development programs](#) that not only equip women with the skills and confidence to move up in their organization, but also pair women with an executive sponsor who will advocate for their career advancement.

Customers

- **Disaggregate customer data by women and men.** The use of Customer Relationship Management platforms can help you measure, analyze and generate highly effective marketing strategies that respond to the genderspecific needs of your customers. [Dove](#) used a series of [impactful data](#) gathering campaigns to uncover insights into the wants, needs and behaviours of women customers.
- **Think of creative ways to make your company's products more appealing to women customers,** even if they are not specifically designed for women. For instance, [Ford Motor Company](#) recognized that its advertisements for the Windstar van needed to be more women-friendly to increase sales to women. Its decision to hire more women sales agents and include women designers and engineers in its ads led to a 1% increase in sales of the Windstar

van by women customers as compared to the previous year. In another company, there was a 2x increase in sales by women agents selling household use clean energy products once a gender lens was applied to sales training.

Suppliers

- **Determine the number of women and men suppliers that your company currently sources from.** To develop a more gender-balanced supply chain, it's helpful to first determine the number of women and men suppliers that your company is currently sourcing from. The [Savannah Fruits Company](#) sources shea butter from 40 women's groups representing about 5000 women farmers. Creating employment for women in the supply chain can attract international buyers like the [Sundial Brand](#), who sources shea butter from Savannah.
- **Explore opportunities to increase procurement from women entrepreneurs.** [The Women's Business Enterprise National Council](#) can help your company locate suppliers based in the United States, while [WEConnect International](#) can connect your company connect with globally based suppliers.
- **Consider forming business ties with companies that have a gender equality strategy for their own suppliers.** For instance, if your company sources from multinationals, the Hershey Company ensures that it only sources raw shea from suppliers who pay fair wages to rural African women farmers by agreeing to the principles of the [Global Shea Alliance](#) and enforcing its own [Supplier Code of Code](#). Retail stores that sell Hershey products are thus assured that they are participating in a women-friendly supply chain.

Gender Responsive (score 13-20)

Your business understands that women are influential drivers of business performance. You have taken steps towards including women in company operations, whether it is through hiring and retaining female staff, targeting female customers, or sourcing from women-owned enterprises. Despite these advances, your business has not yet taken full advantage of women's contributions as employees, customers, and suppliers.

We commend your company on its progress towards incorporating gender within company practices with employees, customers and suppliers. To support you in your journey towards greater gender inclusion, we have included the following tips and resources:

Employees

- **Increase the gender diversity of your company's employees.** Measure the number of women and men employees at various levels and departments to understand where women and men are least represented in the company. Combine this information with data captured in employee records (e.g., performance review sheets, and/or employee exit forms) and interviews with employees from different levels and departments to understand how men and women experience promotions, recruitment, compensation in your company differently.
- **Adopt new and creative ways to recruit non-traditional candidates.** Think creatively about how your company could recruit candidates who lack the traditional prerequisites but show an aptitude for being a high performer. For instance, [Andela](#) is a company that trains unskilled African women to work in technology-focused roles in multinational firms.
- **Establish a gender training program to educate your company's employees on the benefits of a diverse workforce.** This information can be embedded within existing job training or delivered as a standalone program. For example, Nestle Middle East created a [diversity and inclusion training workplace program](#) that promotes the importance of eliminating unconscious biases and upholding an inclusive workplace environment. Partner with

organizations such as [Value For Women](#) who develop and provide gender training for investors, staff of financial institutions and banks, businesses and women entrepreneurs.

- **Set up several communication channels for women and men employees to provide feedback on your company's HR practices.** For example, a confidential feedback system helps employees submit grievances and complaints on sensitive subjects, such as sexual harassment and discrimination. Other channels include holding regular town hall meetings, conducting annual employee satisfaction surveys and facilitating in-person employee feedback sessions.
- **Offer professional development programs to help aspiring female leaders boost their leadership skills.** For instance, [The Principle Financial Group](#) has created a job shadowing program to connect high potential women with opportunities to work alongside company leaders. Career development programs can also equip women staff with the technical skills necessary to move up your company's hierarchy.
- **Standardize your human resource practices to reduce any biases in decision-making.** For example, [PwC UK](#) excluded "selling experience" where it was not necessary for applicants to have this type of professional experience and removed any references to "masculine language" in its job descriptions. It also ensured that interview panels have at least one female or ethnic minority partner are present. Using a standardized performance rubric may also help your company's managers evaluate their team members more fairly.
- **Implement inclusive workforce practices to help women join and advance in your company.** Credit Suisse created the Real Returns Program, a 12-week initiative that allows professionals who have taken a career break (e.g., maternity leave) to ramp up their skills, increase their professional network and boost their confidence about returning to the workforce. In 2016-2017, [Credit Suisse India](#) achieved an 80% conversion rate of program participants returning back to the firm full-time once their leave was complete.

Customers

- **Pilot and refine your marketing strategies to target subsets of women consumers.** This will capture greater market share. For example, Nike has created a new product category; [an athletic hijab](#) to attract more Muslim women customers to its existing athleticwear line. Nike worked with Muslim women to stress test the product, ensuring it met their expectations prior to launch.
- **Follow and track gendered consumer trends.** Use resources like [trendwatching.com](#) and [BlogHer](#). Contemplate how these trends might influence your company's product design, price point, distribution and promotion to better address women's unique customer demands. For instance, PT Cisarua Mountain Dairy (Cimory) is a leading producer of dairy products in Indonesia that saw an opportunity to reach more women consumers by switching to a direct-to-consumer approach. Since its launch, the program, which employs women sales agents, now represents 14% of Cimory's total sales and grew by 30% in the previous year alone (MEDA, 2017).

Suppliers

- **Develop actions to improve gender diversity among your company's suppliers.** This should be based on your measurement and tracking of women and men suppliers that your company is currently sourcing from. Your company will likely find that this exercise helps better manage supply chain risk and reduce costs.
- **Improve the gender diversity of your company's supply chain.** This can offer a variety of business benefits, such as the reduced likelihood of stock-outs. [The Women's Business Enterprise National Council](#) can help you locate suppliers which are based in the United States, while [WEConnect International](#) can you connect with globally based suppliers.
- **Find new and creative ways to define and reach women suppliers.** Whether your company sources from individual or large-scale suppliers will impact the way in which you measure and implement plans to diversify

procurement. Businesses like agricultural processors that procure from small producers may find it easier to target women suppliers. However, companies sourcing from larger businesses – where it is not possible to identify gender – may need to find creative ways to define women suppliers. The UN Women offers a [helpful guide](#) for defining women-owned and operated suppliers and strategies to boost procurement.

Gender Transformative (score 21-27)

Your company strategically engages women as employees, customers, and suppliers to achieve superior business performance. Your company has a gender diverse workforce throughout job levels and positions. You offer inclusive employee options that work for women and men, such as flexible work arrangements and the provision of childcare benefits. Your company targets women and men both as customers and suppliers through gender responsive marketing plans and procurement practices.

We commend you on your leadership in mainstreaming gender equality in employee, customer, and supplier practices. To support you to continually improve gender equality, we have included the following tips and resources:

Employees

- **Enhance your company's existing employee training programs.** This can include integration of gender within the existing training curriculum. For instance, [Portea](#), a healthcare company in India, delivered a happiness training to women and men junior staff, which included job skills training alongside gender sensitive topics like work-life balance and personal financial management.
- **Mobilize the public around your company's gender equality vision and strategy.** Publicly setting targets related to your gender equality initiatives can enhance company reputation. [Tata Steel](#) announced it would like its workforce to increase from 11% to 20% female by 2020. To achieve this, Tata Steel partnered with training institutes to source top female talent, as well as hire experienced female professionals to fill in as project leads to cover women on maternity leave. In addition, companies can initiate public awareness campaigns. Tata Steel used the Twitter hashtags [#steelheros](#) and [#DayoftheGirl](#) to stimulate a dialogue and highlight real-life examples of how gender focused recruitment allows it to tap into a wider talent pool.
- **Encourage your company's women leaders to speak in public forums to elevate women as role models in business.** For instance, Wipro launched the [Women of Wipro program](#) which encourages their women leaders to participate in technology forums to raise their profile across the organization. Wipro more recently developed a holistic program for the inclusion of employees with disabilities, which they refer to as the CREATE framework (Career, Recruit, Engage, Accessibility, Train, and Enable).
- **Follow international trends related to gender diversity and women's empowerment to identify new business opportunities.** In the wake of the 2030 [Sustainable Development Goals](#), learn more about global efforts to encourage women's economic empowerment through data sets like the [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#). Complement your data-driven learning by reading the [Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business Report](#).

Customers

- **Analyze business performance indicators by gender.** This will provide advanced insights about your customers, such as disaggregating profit margin by repeat women and men customers, reviewing sales of products and services by women vs. men, considering women and men customer satisfaction rates, etc.
- **Conduct market research to uncover new insights on your company's ability to attract more men and women consumers.** Through a research study on the market potential of Nigerian women, Diamond Bank discovered that

it should be attracting women customers to capitalize off their exceptionally strong savings behavior. In response, Diamond Bank piloted [BETA](#), a simple and affordable digital savings account that can be accessed near to a woman's home and workplace. The pilot was however put on hold in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

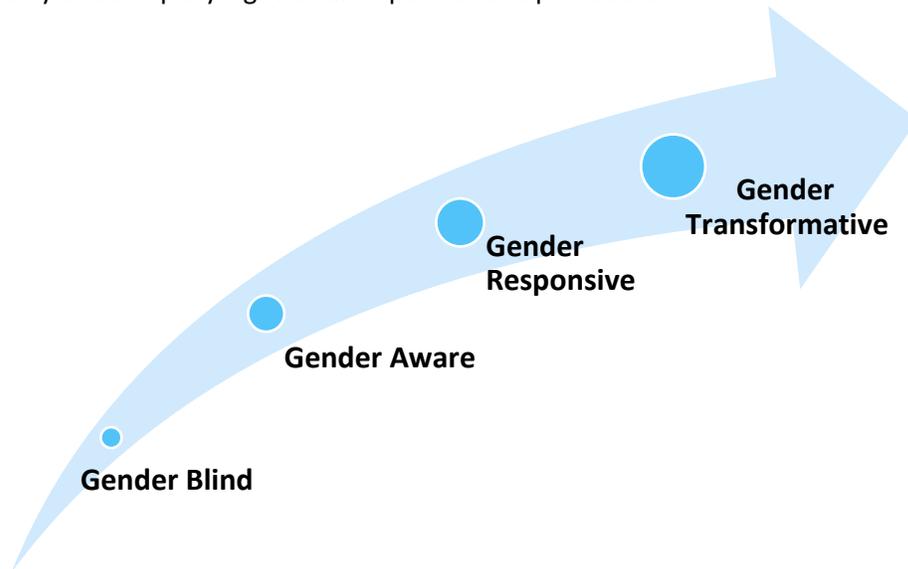
- **Continuously innovate your company's products and services to better meet the changing tastes of women and men consumers.** For instance, [Zivame](#), an Indian lingerie brand, improved its customer retail experience by hiring more customer advisors and revamping the layout of its stores to be more female-friendly.
- **Support women entrepreneurs who are either your customers or suppliers.** Consider the various partnerships in your region and sector, such as the [EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women](#) Asia-Pacific program. This is an evergreen executive leadership program designed for women with established businesses who are ready to scale operations and grow to become global market leaders.

Suppliers

- **Formally invite women and men entrepreneurs to apply to supply your company.** Expand your supplier network transparently and openly. For instance, Coca-Cola encourages a diversified procurement model by inviting any supplier to register on [its online database](#).
- **Publicize and share your efforts.** If your company has made commitments to increasing women suppliers, publicize your efforts. For instance, in 2015 [Walmart India](#) announced it will target doubling the number of women suppliers. It has also encouraged greater consumer uptake of products made by women by designating them as women-made products.

Gendered Governance Recommendations

The governance component is one of three lenses 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 a company's governance policies and procedures.



Studies consistently show that gender diversity at the board level is linked with superior business performance. One study demonstrated that companies with the most women board directors had 16% higher Return on Sales and 26% higher Return on Invested Capital than those with the least ([Catalyst, 2020](#)). Likewise, companies with strong female leadership (primarily measured by the number of women on boards) were correlated with higher Return on Equity than companies without ([MSCI, 2015](#)).

Not only does gender diversity drive business performance, but it is also a critical factor for managing and mitigating risk. Companies with fewer women on boards have more governance-related controversies than average ([MSCI, 2015](#)). By contrast, companies with more diverse leadership teams are known to better focus their attention on corporate governance, corporate responsibility, talent dynamics and market acuity. Looking beyond to corporate policy, policies which offer greater support for women can lead to higher employee retention and engagement rates. For instance, India-based ABB's introduction of an anti-harassment policy and extended parental leave resulted in hiring more young women workers, who showed lower attrition rates as compared to men. The company has also put in place [diversity and inclusion champions](#) to hire and retain more women in leadership positions.

Gender Blind (score 0-6)

Your company likely has no women on its board of directors. There are few to no gender sensitive corporate policies, such as a Fair Hiring or Sexual Harassment policy. Overall, your company has likely not spent time considering the different needs of women and men within the company's governance. The company likely does not collect gender data and is reluctant to share any information it may have.

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

- **Take stock of the number of women and men currently serving on the board of directors.** By doing so directors can plan to fill future openings with women (or men) to achieve a more gender balanced board. Other aspects of diversity can be considered, such as ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geography, socioeconomic background,

experiences, networks, knowledge, skills, etc. A similar exercise to evaluate diversity can be done for the senior management team and internal committees, if applicable.

- **Review your company's current corporate policies to assess whether the different needs of women and men stakeholders are being met.** Wherever your company finds gaps, consider what types of policies could make your company more gender inclusive. Refer to resources, such as Better Work's Indonesia [Guidelines on the Prevention of Workplace Harassment](#) to learn how to appropriately structure corporate policies, such as Fair Compensation, Sexual Harassment, Fair Hiring and Anti-Discrimination policies to ensure that your employees feel safe and valued.

Gender Aware (score 7-13)

Your company likely has few to no women on its board of directors. It's likely that women are not filling prominent leadership positions like CEO or Chair of the board. There are few gender, diversity, equity and inclusion sensitive corporate policies, such as a Parental Leave for mothers and fathers. It's also unlikely that different women stakeholders participated in the development of your company's policies. The company likely does not collect some gender data and is more open to sharing any information it may have.

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

- **Invest in identifying top female talent to join your company's board.** Some companies report difficulty sourcing qualified female board members. Although male directors tend to have more C-Suite experience, female directors often outperform men in obtaining advanced educational degrees ([MSCI, 2015](#)). To successfully identify top female talent to join your company's board, the board's nominating committee might consider establishing relationships with knowledgeable partners. For example, Catalyst's Women on Board program features a [searchable database of women directors](#) that allows users to view women with a range of educational, professional and geographic experiences.
- **Avoid tokenism when appointing women as board members or senior staff, particularly if they are the only woman at that level.** Ideally, having three or more women leaders enhances the likelihood that women's ideas are heard for their own merit ([MSCI, 2015](#)). On a global average, companies with three or more women on the board have a market capitalization three times greater than that of companies with no women board members. EgonZehnder's [Global Board Diversity Tracker](#) has some great videos and resources on appointing more diverse candidates at the board level.
- **Provide a robust onboarding session to new Directors.** This will ensure that they are well-equipped to contribute and feel like they are a valued part of the team. If your board is large enough, pair new directors with experienced board members to build the capacity of new directors and reduce group divisions on the board.
- **Conduct gender awareness training for both your company's board of directors and senior management team.** It can be helpful to include a learning module about gender and governance topics, such as the business case for gender diversity and the importance of creating mentorship programs to cultivate women leaders.

Gender Responsive (score 14-25)

Your company understands that women leaders are an important contributor to good governance. It is likely that your company has a few women board members or has a female board chair or CEO. Your company has established some gender inclusive policies and practices; however, women stakeholders may not have heavily participated in the

development of business policies. If your company has internal committees, women are likely to be participants but have not necessarily taken on leadership roles.

Gender diverse firms in East Asia, for instance, demonstrated an 18% increase in the internal rate of return (IRR) relative to the median ([Snapshot of Progress in Indonesia, the Philippines & Vietnam](#), Value for Women, March 2021). “Genderbalanced teams (defined as having a male-to-female ratio of between 40% and 60%) also boost business metrics such as employee engagement, brand awareness, and client retention”. Having more women in leadership also translates to better results. [Calvert Impact Capital](#) (Kumbuli & Pryce, 2018) found that companies with the highest percentages of women in leadership positions achieved 18.1% Return on Sales, 3.9% Return on Assets, and 8.6% Return on Equity, compared to -1.09%, 0.3%, and 4.4%, respectively, for companies with fewer women in leadership positions.

Businesses like Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI Bank) are realizing the benefits of hiring female CEOs and using their unique perspectives to create a more gender inclusive culture. Through her CEO post, Chandra Kochhar supported ICICI Bank’s adoption of more women-friendly policies, such as maternity, fertility and adoption leave and flexible working hours. ICICI Bank was able to leverage its gender inclusive culture by developing a pipeline of top women talent. Kochhar’s progressive vision benefited the company through [the successful launch of more women-friendly products](#) (e.g., ICICI Bank has created new financial products for self-help groups; of which 90% of the participants of these groups are women). Under Kochhar’s leadership, the bank [nearly doubled its return on equity](#).

We commend you on your progress towards incorporating gender within your company’s governance policies and practices. To support you in your journey towards greater gender equality, we have included the following tips and resources:

- **Conduct gender awareness training for both your company’s board of directors and senior management team.** It can be effective to include a learning module featuring gender and governance topics, such as the importance of recognizing different types of [leadership styles](#), the business case for gender diversity and the value of creating professional development programs to cultivate rising women leaders.
- **Establish a diversity, equity and inclusion committee at the board level.** A diversity committee is responsible for identifying your company’s inclusion and diversity strengths, issues and opportunities, developing strategies and sets plans to increase diversity amongst its stakeholders. Joining associations like [the 30% Club](#) can help your board stay on track for meeting its diversity targets. The 30% Club is a voluntary initiative that asks board chairs and CEOs of listed companies to have 30% of their board be women.
- **Implement gender inclusive talent development programs.** This ensures that all employees have an opportunity to be coached on how they can advance. Having members of your company’s top management team “sponsor” high-potential women, such as through making professional introductions or delegating key assignments, helps fast track women’s careers. In addition, [Lean In Circles](#) create learning communities whereby women gain access to new skills, so they feel empowered to seek out assignments which better position them for a promotion.
- **Ensure that gender diversity is a corporate-wide initiative.** This can help educate all employees on the benefits of diversity. Disseminate learning resources, such as McKinsey’s [Women in the Workplace](#) (2020) report to ensure that more employees become knowledgeable about gender inclusive practices and personally committed to championing diversity in the workplace.
- **Solicit feedback from women and men stakeholders on ideas to improve gender equality in your company’s policies.** This includes feedback on your procurement policy, human resources policies, community engagement policy, etc. Stakeholder feedback can be collected through numerous platforms like town hall or departmental meetings and social media. Encourage women and men management and non-management staff to contribute to these discussions and participate in the drafting or revising of any policies that result from these discussions. If your company finds that one gender dominates these meetings, think about how your company can avoid “groupthink” and encourage more voices to be heard.

- **Enhance your company’s current corporate policies to assess whether the different needs of diverse stakeholders are being met.** Wherever your company finds gaps, consider what types of policies could make your company more diverse. For example, if you company engages with young workers, refer to resources such as Better Work’s [Guidelines on Child Labour and Young Workers](#) to ensure that these issues are effectively managed to protect the rights of young workers and ensure safe working environments.
- **Explore the adoption of fixed term limits for leadership positions on internal committees, if applicable.** Fixed term limits can allow for more participants, particularly women, to emerge as leaders.

Gender Transformative (score 26-31)

Your company has a clear understanding of the business benefits associated with integrating gender and diversity into governance practices and policies. Your company has a gender diverse board of directors and strong female leadership in positions like CEO, board and committee chair. Your company has done an excellent job of creating corporate policies which encompass gender inclusive themes and engaging women stakeholders to solicit feedback on these policies.

We commend you on your leadership in mainstreaming gender equality within your company’s governance practices and policies. To support you in continually improving gender equality and diversity, we have included the following tips and resources:

- **Continually assess diversity at the board, committee and senior management levels.** Diversity is not limited to gender and can include ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geography, socioeconomic background, experiences, networks, knowledge, skills, etc.
- **Continuously pursue best practices in good governance while ensuring gender is mainstreamed.** [This assessment tool](#) presents ideas on embedding diversity and inclusion with an organization’s governance, leadership and beyond. As part continuously improving your company’s governance, actively solicit feedback from women and men stakeholders on company policies and their implementation (e.g., procurement policy, human resources policies, community engagement policy, etc.). Encourage both women and men to fill leadership roles in updating company policies.
- **Promote gender diversity as a corporate priority and objective.** This should be done through annual reporting, external communications, and participation in strategic networks. For example, the [30% Club](#) is a network of corporate leaders in gender diversity and can support companies to stay committed to their inclusion goals. You may also consider joining sector-specific associations, such as [Women’s World Banking global network](#) for financial institutions.
- **Share with and learn from other business leaders on the challenges and successes in implementing gender inclusive policies.** Encourage your company’s board and leadership to participate in a working group with other business leaders to discuss their challenges and successes in implementing gender inclusive policies and benchmark your efforts against other companies. For instance, [Diversity and Inclusion in Asia Network](#) offers its members networking opportunities and access to resources, such as the [Diversity and Inclusion: Building the Business Case, Stories from Asia](#) report which describes how to create a more inclusive workplace.