

# Agriculture and Gender Equality

## GENDER EQUALITY KNOWLEDGE NOTE



Last updated: 20 September 2012

### Knowledge Note: Purpose and Application

---

#### Purpose

The NZ Aid Programme's *Gender Equality Knowledge Notes* aim to increase knowledge and understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment.

This *Knowledge Note* encourages a structural analysis of gender issues, reflected in the headings in the table on page 4: Women's economic empowerment (economic), women's participation in decision-making (political), risks and security, and basic needs and strategic interests.

#### Application

The *Knowledge Note*, along with the [Gender Analysis Guideline](#), can stimulate thinking, discussion and analysis; it should not be seen as a definitive guide or a compliance checklist. It can be used to inform or appraise:

- Programme Strategic and Results Frameworks
- Strategy and policy formulation and implementation
- Discussions with partner governments, agencies and stakeholders
- Terms of Reference for scoping, design, evaluations, etc.
- Contracting and briefing contractors
- Concept Notes, Activity Design Documents and Appraisals
- Results frameworks, evaluations and reviews
- Progress reports, field visits
- Activity Monitoring Assessments and Completion Assessments

Other resources available include:

- Development Manager: Cross Cutting Issues and Gender
- Gender Equality *Knowledge Notes* ([Tourism](#), [Sustainable Economic Development](#), [Humanitarian Relief](#))
- Principal Development Managers and DMs (sector)
- External gender or specialist consultants
- Women's Economic Opportunity Index (WEOI)
- Partner country or sector Gender Action Plans

# **Agriculture, Rural Economic Development and Gender Equality**

---

## **Activity and Policy Context**

Agriculture is a driver of economic development and food security. 43% of the global agricultural labour force are women and support for women can increase productivity and revenue by up to 20%. Therefore strengthening and expanding women's roles and opportunities in agriculture promotes sustainable economic development.

Gender inequalities are a measurable and significant limit on agricultural productivity and efficiency, undermining rural economic development. The FAO reports that narrowing the gap between men and women in agriculture can reduce the number of undernourished people by up to 150 million and improve family nutrition, education, food security, poverty, maternal and child health, environmental management and reduce conflicts. Gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights are essential for agriculture and as development outcomes in their own right.

Agriculture is rapidly changing, especially in developing countries, presenting opportunities, challenges and risks to national economies, rural communities, and women and men farmers. Knowledge and technologies are advancing; markets are changing especially for the higher value product; environmental degradation and climate change require improved sustainable natural resource management; trade and investment policies offer opportunities for economic development but significant risks to livelihoods, land tenure and food security.

Social, political, economic and demographic changes also affect agriculture: these include HIV and AIDS, urban migration, conflicts, state withdrawal from extension services, de-legitimising and undermining of subsistence and sustainable modes of production, population pressures, and violence against women. Policies and decisions are increasingly being made at a national and international level, further excluding farmers.

Food security requires food availability, access and utilisation and must be "at all times", i.e. right dietary mix, across seasons, during economic, climatic or political crises. Women are critical to food security – and food security is a right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Interventions to strengthen gender equality include ensuring equality of access to inputs, legal systems and property rights, productive resources and health and education as well as reducing the pay gap and increasing participation.

Industrial agriculture and agri-business (including processing) is expanding and provides important opportunities, and some risks, to women. Employment must be into decent jobs; unequal pay and weak and unsafe labour practices entrench poverty and slow up economic development. Opportunities for entrepreneurship will also be created but only if women have access to capital, business services and training, security, markets and infrastructure.

The following table lays out how women's economic empowerment, women's participation in decision-making, risks and security, and basic needs and strategic interests might be considered in the context of the business enabling environment, value/market chain analysis, food security and capacity development and institutional strengthening.

## Knowledge Note: Agriculture, Rural Economic Development and Gender Equality

	<b>Women's economic empowerment - including access to productive resources</b>	<b>Women's participation in decision-making - leadership, governance, management, policies</b>	<b>Risks and Security</b>	<b>Basic Needs &amp; Strategic Interests</b>
<b>Business Enabling Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase women's access to capital and other financial services, e.g. insurance, banking</li> <li>• Equitable terms and conditions for loans, e.g. interest rates, collateral, repayment schedule</li> <li>• Formal registration of women owned SMEs</li> <li>• Non-financial services, e.g. financial literacy, budgeting, training</li> <li>• Remittances – women can access remittances from male partners who migrate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women empowered to participate in decisions in value/supply chain, e.g. resource and revenue allocation at a domestic level</li> <li>• Women have capacity and opportunity to participate in development of rural economy policies including local government</li> <li>• support land titling/property rights for women</li> <li>• business management training targets women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women can access all training; barriers to women's participation in training addressed, e.g. timing, seasonality, transport, accommodation, location, child care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's rural economic activity often determined by seasonality</li> <li>• Economic and financial literacy</li> <li>• Women participate in economic/farmers' forums and networks</li> <li>• Inheritance rights of women especially to property and land</li> </ul>
<b>Value/Market chain analysis</b> - gender division of labour - agri-business and markets - support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender analysis of division of labour for different crops and activities</li> <li>• Women access extension services and inputs (seeds, tools, fertiliser etc) suited to needs</li> <li>• Support women to produce high yield and/or high return crops</li> <li>• Cooperative marketing reduces power of middle men to exploit women, i.e. selling directly to buyers, e.g. schools, hospitals</li> <li>• Agri-business ensure decent jobs; fair, secure labour practices, equal pay</li> <li>• Women led and/or women only enterprises identified and receive targeted supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women able to participate in activity design, implementation and monitoring. Barriers to their participation identified and addressed.</li> <li>• Women supported and trained in non-traditional agricultural and/or economic activities</li> <li>• Women participate in any price setting negotiations</li> <li>• Women participate in post harvest management decisions including equitable distribution from revenue</li> <li>• Is there a need for women only activities or opportunities to participate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's safety and access in transport, service centres, storage, markets, toilets</li> <li>• Markets have adequate lighting, banking services, policing, security</li> <li>• Agri-business and processing plants are close to safe accommodation and/or transport services</li> <li>• Agri-businesses attempt to minimise potential disruption to domestic life by avoiding temporary work contracts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity and technologies reduce women's workload and/or increase revenue on the farm or in the home</li> <li>• Human rights/labour rights respected in factories/export zones</li> <li>• HIV/AIDS impact on division of labour</li> <li>• Accessible services allow increased economic activity, e.g. health, schooling, child care.</li> <li>• Girls kept in schools and not utilised as free labour or child care</li> </ul>
<b>Food security</b> - access and availability - natural resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender analysis of roles in natural resource management and subsistence farming</li> <li>• Women's intellectual property rights in biodiversity, seeds and varieties recognised and protected</li> <li>• Women access productive natural resources, e.g. water, fertile soils, forest, gardens</li> <li>• Quality/nutritional food is critical</li> <li>• Gender equality in post-harvest security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the sustainability, economic and food security benefits of mixed agriculture (subsistence farming + cash crops) and women's role in that</li> <li>• Women have capacity to participate in and influence decisions re food security</li> <li>• Women able to participate in community natural resource management decisions, e.g. land use planning, water source management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and equitable access to and from food outlets and distribution centres</li> <li>• Safe access to gardens, forests, grazing areas, water sources etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural changes so women and girls have equal access to food at the household level, e.g. times of scarcity</li> <li>• Equitable and improved nutrition rates for women and girls</li> <li>• Customary medical remedies and herbs recognised</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity development and institutional strengthening</b> - knowledge and information - research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender disaggregated data and research</li> <li>• Research includes gender analysis</li> <li>• Crop and produce prices available to women</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to promote the productivity, innovation and sustainability of small holder production, including women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women have capacity to participate in decisions on trade policies</li> <li>• Gender balance and equity in partner governance, staffing (recruitment, promotion, training), policies and plans.</li> <li>• Support women as extension officers</li> <li>• Opportunities for women in local government</li> <li>• More women in research, training, academia</li> <li>• Increased women's participation in decision-making decreases corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and analysis on impact of VAW on women's economic development, e.g. access to markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country partner national Gender Action Plan includes agriculture and rural economic development.</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture (or equivalent) has Gender Action Plan.</li> <li>• Equal pay and non-discriminatory policies (ILO Convention 100, 101)</li> <li>• Opportunity to implement/report against CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, MDGs especially MDG3; ILO Decent Work Country Programmes</li> </ul>