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Agri3 Gender Policy

Purpose

The AGRI3 Finance Fund is committed to respecting the human rights of women and contributing to achieving gender equality. This policy lays out the gender related commitments made by AGRI3, and informs staff, clients and Partnerbanks of their responsibilities to managing risks, creating opportunities for women and promoting equal gender treatment. This policy will apply to all transactions that the AGRI3 Finance Fund supports.

Any changes to this policy will be the responsibility of the AGRI3 Fund Management Board. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the AGRI3 Fund Management Board and following initial transactions to assess suitability and relevance.

Background to AGRI3

The mission of AGRI3 Fund is to mobilise additional public and private capital at scale, including from commercial banks, development finance institutions (DFIs), impact investors and institutional investors to: actively prevent deforestation; stimulate reforestation; contribute to efficient sustainable agricultural production and value chains; reduce carbon emissions and improve rural livelihoods.

The Fund provides guarantees and subordinated loans to commercial banks (from now on called “Partnerbanks”) and other financial institutions to mobilise capital by de-risking and catalysing investment propositions (from now on called “Transactions”) that 1) Prevent deforestation and stimulate reforestation; 2) Contribute to sustainable and efficient agricultural production; 3) Improve rural livelihoods – for men and women.

Rationale

Agriculture is a key focus sector for the AGRI3 Finance Fund. Globally, women and girls make up to 50% of the agricultural labour force and fulfil important roles throughout agri-food value chains¹. In smallholder farming contexts, female farmers may face discrimination in access and control over factors and enhancers of production (e.g. land, seeds, fertilizers, credit); lack linkages and connections to networks that disseminate knowledge and enable collective action and have a limited voice in formal and informal agricultural institutions. As part of the labour force on large-scale commercial agriculture, women are often paid less than men for the same work, and are over-represented in informal, part-time, or seasonal jobs². Their burden in domestic tasks and household responsibilities also tends to remain higher, limiting their ability to benefit from trainings and other mechanisms allowing progress in their workplace.

Across agriculture, women are vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence, especially where they are employed in casual or seasonal work. Incidences differ by context and country, but perpetrators are often co-workers or supervisors. This can be compounded by limited labour law coverage and poor labour inspection on farms³.

Ensuring protection of women from harm of harassment or violence, as well as promoting gender equality is not only a fundamental human right⁴, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world and the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. As an important contributor to labour in agricultural production, leveraging their potential and closing the gender gap in food and agriculture could have a tremendous development impact for women, the agriculture sector, and societies as a whole.

Statement

AGRI3 respects the internationally recognised rights of women⁵ and aims at using its leverage over its partners – Partnerbanks and clients - to encourage them to respect women’s human rights and promote and contribute to gender equality. For transactions within the AGRI3 portfolio we expect:

- The Client organisation (often an aggregator) to have safeguards that respect the rights of women. This includes complying with relevant national legislation and international standards⁶; having policies and procedures that ensure a safe environment prohibiting discrimination or sexual harassment, having a grievance mechanism with a remit and suitable processes to include complaints about discrimination and sexual harassment and identifying risks to women in their value chain and using their business leverage as possible to mitigate such risks.

¹ FAO, [Why is gender equality and rural women's empowerment central to the work of FAO?](#)

² World Bank, [A Gendered Approach to Agricultural Risk Assessments and Management Strategies](#)

³ ILO - Spotlight on sexual violence and harassment in commercial agriculture: Lower and middle income countries

⁴ Gender Dimensions of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights⁴, or any relevant certifications of interest for the project⁴

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

⁶ ILO [Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 \(No. 100\)](#); ILO [Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention, 1958 \(No. 111\)](#)

- Assessment of the potential for the transaction to contribute to gender equality and the possibility to have explicit gender targets.
- Transactions to be monitored to ensure safeguards are maintained and any incidents are reported and managed appropriately.

Clients with transactions that the AGRI3 Finance Fund supports, as well as Partnerbanks, are expected to have human resources policies and processes that reduce barriers to women within the workforce and that are compliant with the International Labour Organisation's fundamental conventions on labour rights, including no discrimination in respect of employment. The existence of such policies and processes is checked during the ESG assessment of prospective transactions.

The organisations involved in managing the AGRI3 Finance Fund and their staff members, e.g. advisors, Fund managers, consultants are expected to comply with similar expectations, i.e. ensuring a safe working environment; not condoning or committing any form of gender-based violence or sexual harassment, promoting and contributing to gender equality, in line with their individual company policies related to gender and diversity.

Implementing the Policy

The policy will be implemented during the transaction screening and monitoring process. AGRI3 aims to evaluate on an individual transaction basis, with Partnerbanks and their clients, the ability to include gender targets, based on need, leverage, and ability by client or Technical Assistance to support their intergration and monitoring. AGRI3 will also collect gender specific data for transactions that we support – as feasible and in line with current livelihoods KPIs – and use this information to review the gender policy and KPIs on an annual basis.

Transaction due diligence

During the due diligence prior to agreeing to support a transaction, AGRI3 will:

- Communicate this Gender Policy to Partnerbanks and clients at the start of a transaction screening process
- Analyse the transaction-specific context, in order to identify any gender related risks or opportunities specific to that region or business.
- Assess the gender aspects of the client's human resources management system and their application to the specific transaction supported by AGRI3; identify any other gender risks or opportunities related to the transaction, e.g. opportunities for female farmers to participate in smallholder credit programme – which may involve developing extra training support for women in order to create gender equality; review the grievance mechanism to ensure it is accessible and responsive to female complainants.
- Require training and/or improvements to policy and practices where needed as a condition for investment, so that projects identify and mitigate risks and meet AGRI3 expectations.

Clients may be eligible for support from the AGRI3 Technical Assistance facility to make these improvements – see below.

Assessing gender-related risks and potential positive impacts in project due diligence is the responsibility of the AGRI3 Investment Advisers team, including the IESG team.

Transaction monitoring

Gender aspects will be included only where relevant in project monitoring, e.g through KPIs that provide gender disaggregated data on employment, participation in programmes, training.

The AGRI3 Finance Fund Complaints Mechanism⁷ is open to complaints related to gender aspects, including sexual harassment or gender discrimination where it has not been possible to resolve these at the transaction/client level.

Responsibilities of the AGRI3 staff

The AGRI3 Fund Management Board should ensure all staff members have access to, are familiar with the policy, and understand their responsibilities under this policy.

Communicating the AGRI3 Gender Policy to staff, Partnerbanks and clients is the responsibility of the AGRI3 IESG team.

However, any AGRI3 staff involved in recruitment of staff or consultants are required to ensure that staff are aware of the policy.

IDH TA Facility

The TA Facility, managed by the IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative, can support AGRI3 Partnerbanks and clients to identify opportunities and barriers to gender equality. The facility has a range of tools and approaches available to develop activities to support integration of gender equality related to AGRI3 transactions, and in monitoring the impacts of specific activities of the fund.

IDH considers gender to be a key driver and concern for sustainability and has extensive experience in mainstreaming gender in its programs in order to deliver positive social and economic outcomes. A key tool in assessing barriers and opportunities is the IDH Gender Toolkit⁸. This document guides program teams and partners on how to recognize opportunities related to gender in their programs. Following six programming steps, it provides tools on how to integrate gender aspects into project design, implementation, and how to develop gender-responsive indicators for M&E to support gender mainstreaming through the project cycle.

The TAF can support the AGRI3 Fund, Its partners and its (potential) clients to integrate gender aspects across the AGRI3 portfolio where the Finance Fund has identified such risk or opportunities, and to the extent relevant and appropriate in view of the specific activities of the clients/transactions. Potential areas of support may include:

⁷ As described in the AGRI3 Integrity Policy

⁸ <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/uploaded/2018/03/Gender-Toolkit-with-Guide.pdf>

- Analyse and identify potential critical risks identified by the AGRI3 ESG team related to gender aspects, and propose technical assistance or action plans when needed to mitigate such risks and/or lift barriers that women may face to making use of opportunities created by the AGRI3 Fund;
- Supporting the implementation of action plan or activities to address risks/barriers. This can include for example TA to ensure substantial and impactful participation by women in stakeholder consultation processes or in training opportunities during the project implementation phase, and establishing grievance mechanisms to address complaints, including concerns related to gender and sexual harassment.
- Provide support to strengthen monitoring capacities for transactions in the area of gender-related impacts as set out within the Livelihoods KPIs of AGRI3.

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