

Additional Guidance for Gender Equality, Social Inclusion, and Safeguarding

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender equality and social inclusion bring a variety of benefits to business. Best practice shows that businesses who engage meaningfully with women and marginalised groups benefit from a broader customer base and improved insights, higher productivity and efficiency, and improved product quality or suitability. Businesses with more inclusive supply chains also find these to be more reliable, and that their distribution networks are diversified. More generally, companies may benefit from better reputations and brand recognition as a result of more inclusive practices.

In some contexts, businesses will need to actively counter social norms that define how men and women traditionally interact, what tasks men and women are expected to perform, how much men and women are paid., and prejudices against people with a disability. The goal is to create business environments and practices that promote equitable opportunities for all.

There are five main ways that business can demonstrate their approach to creating inclusive and equitable business environments:

Lever 1: Workplace Practices

Having a diverse and inclusive workforce enhances business performance including through better risk management, improving employee engagement and productivity, attracting talent and bringing more diverse views to solve complex problems.

Businesses often assume that including people with disabilities within the workforce is expensive complicated and offer limited tangible benefits. However, multiple studies have shown that disability inclusion in the workplace results in higher revenue, net income and profit margins. Workplaces that accommodate and support workers with disability increase the available pool of talent available; increase productivity; and gain insights into broader market segments and their needs.

Businesses can promote inclusive and equitable workplaces by recruiting more women, ensuring equal pay for equal work, having anti-discrimination and harassment policies, providing skills development opportunities for women, promoting women and people with disability into leadership positions, providing childcare services, adapting workplaces to accommodate the needs of people with a disability, and having flexible and family friendly workplace practices.

- How will your business promote an inclusive and equitable workplace?
- How many women and men will be employed?
- How many women and men will be in senior or leadership positions?

In your application

Describe any strategies you will use to create an inclusive and equitable workplace. You may consider the number of women in management positions, strategies to increase the number of women accessing decent



and quality jobs in your business, policies that ensure equal pay for equal work, skills development and leadership opportunities for people who can be marginalised, flexible and family friendly workplaces, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and practices, and workplaces that are accessible to people with a disability.

Lever 2: Procurement Practices

A businesses' procurement practices are an important opportunity for the BPP to extend the social and economic benefits of a BPP initiative to those who can be excluded or marginalised and who offer great potential for innovation and cost-effective inputs. Businesses with more inclusive supply chains often find these to be more reliable, and that their distribution networks are diversified.

Businesses can promote inclusion in their procurement practices by actively seeking out producers and suppliers that are operated, controlled or represent a significant number of minority, women, LGBTQ+, veterans, persons with a disability, or indigenous persons. They can negotiate terms of trade that provide opportunities for smaller business to grow and scale; invest in training and skills development for women and low-income suppliers to improve productivity; and help link suppliers together to benefit from economies of scale.

- How will your business promote inclusive procurement practices?
- How many women and men will be involved in your supply chain, and how?
- How many people with a disability will be involved in your supply chain, and how?

In your application

Describe any strategies you will use to create opportunities for minority groups, women, LGBTQ+, youth, persons with a disability, or suppliers in the informal sector to equitably access business, training and development opportunities in your supply chain. You may consider strategies that actively seek out producers and suppliers that are operated, controlled or represent a significant number of marginalised groups; ensure that selection panels include women and diverse views; terms of trade that provide opportunities for micro and small businesses to grow and scale; investments in training and skills development for women and low-income suppliers to improve productivity; or efforts to link suppliers together to access new market opportunities.

Lever 3: Products and Services

The products and services of businesses have enormous potential to meet the needs of women and other customer segments that may be underserved. This also provides an opportunity to profit from an expanded client base. Businesses are encouraged to apply universal design principles to ensure that products and services can be used by virtually everyone, including people with disabilities.

- How will your products and services be accessible to women, people with a disability and underserved customer segments?

In your application

Describe how your products and services and sales models have been designed to benefit the well-being of underserved groups such as low-income women or people with a disability. It may be the type of product or service that delivers benefits, the way it has been designed to meet the particular needs of underserved



customers, the distribution channels that reach remote or low-income customers, or a buyer-finance model that makes products and services more affordable to low-income customers.

Lever 4: Communications

The communications and marketing materials of a business can have a powerful influence on the way society views women, indigenous people, and people with a disability. A business' communications materials can profile women as leaders, empowered employees, and visible in supply chains and potential customers. They can promote people with disabilities as a customer segment, and tackle prejudices by profiling people with a disability as members of their workforce and the supply chain.

- How will your business communications and marketing materials challenge stereotypes, social norms and attitudes towards the role of women and marginalised groups?

In your application

Describe how your business communications and marketing materials will challenge stereotypes, social norms and attitudes towards the role of women and marginalised groups. For example, in your advertising materials you may profile women and people with disability as empowered customers. Alternatively, you may have newsletters or other materials that provide opportunities to profile women as leaders, empowered employees, and members of your supply chain.

Lever 5: Safeguarding Practices

Businesses often interact with diverse populations in the delivery of goods and services, in their operations and supply chain activities, and through engagements with suppliers, customers, and business partners. Businesses, therefore, have a responsibility to ensure that their work does not cause harm. This is particularly the case when businesses engage with women and marginalised groups such as people with disabilities, who may be in situations of vulnerability, or with children. More generally, businesses have a responsibility to comply with policies and laws around social and environmental protection.

Businesses that act to mitigate safeguarding risks and respond effectively to incidents can improve health and safety in their workplaces, strengthen productivity, benefit from improved access to talent and worker retention, and protect and strengthen their reputation among communities, customers and investors. These efforts can also reduce vulnerability to litigation and compensation claims, and the financial and reputational damage this can inflict on businesses and investments.

- What key strategies will your business implement to safeguard your employees, suppliers, communities, and customers?

In your application

Describe how your business will ensure that its products, services, supply chains, and workplaces will be safe for workers, suppliers and customers. You may describe strategies you have to ensure product safety, policies and practices to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, or supply chain due diligence processes.



Additional Guidance for Gender Equality: Examples of interventions

<p><i>Workforce</i></p>	<p>The BPP is looking for partners who have or are working towards developing workplace policies and practices that take an inclusive approach to recruitment, promote equitable benefits, are free from discrimination and harassment, and create enabling environments for female employees to participate in and thrive in the workplace.</p> <p>Opportunities for promoting gender equality in the workforce for BPP partners include¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting diversity targets in workforce plans• Removing gender pay gaps• Introducing flexible working hours and support for childcare• Establishing safe workplaces that are free from discrimination and harassment• Providing work-based healthcare including sexual and reproductive health services• Providing work-based training• Promoting women into leadership roles• Changing attitudes, mindsets and policies across the workforce to support greater diversity.
<p><i>Value Chain</i></p>	<p>The value chain offers lots of opportunities to increase the visibility of women in it, recognise women’s contributions to the value chain, promote access to new economic opportunities, provide training and skills development for women, and encourage women to take up roles in leadership.</p> <p>Opportunities for promoting gender equality in the value chain could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving female suppliers’ access to transportation• surveying women in the value chain and responding to issues that promote enhanced access to opportunities and empowerment• encouraging women’s representation in producer associations

¹ See for example the ILO Better Work program <http://betterwork.org/>; DFAT ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment in Agriculture Guidance Note’ (2015) <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/operational-guidance-note-gender-equality-and-womens-economic-empowerment-in-agriculture.pdf>



- Supporting female micro entrepreneurs to aggregate their products in order to access new market opportunities
- Linking women to new high value opportunities in the supply chain
- Promoting access to training and technology to improve productivity
- Exposing women to modern farming practices and techniques
- Establishing contract terms that are favourable to women
- Creating incentives for women to enter the value chain or increase production
- Linking women entrepreneurs to organisations that invest in women
- Linking women entrepreneurs to financial and other business services

Consumers

Businesses are increasingly recognising the significant potential to develop products and services that address women's unmet needs both in and outside the household, particularly in developing markets. Marketing to women has also evolved into an area of innovation and growth for business, driven by a better understanding of how women make and influence decisions and tapping into women's increasing incomes as they engage more in the paid workforce.

Examples of products and services that could meet the needs of women: regular supply of power and/or lighting; time saving devices; financial and banking services; job seeking platforms; safe transport; e-marketing services; improved and affordable nutrition; affordable health care; child care; and agricultural inputs such as high quality seed.

Additional Guidance for Social Inclusion: Examples of interventions

Workforce

Workforces that are inclusive and embrace diversity access a wider pool of talent; increase productivity; gain insights into broader market segments



Opportunities for promoting inclusion and diversity in the workforce include²:

- Developing written statements of commitment to Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Inclusion, or Non-discrimination
- inclusive recruitment practices such as flexible recruitment criteria, supporting on-the-job learning/upskilling/bridging, and creating internships or other entry pathways.
- ensuring workplaces are accessible to and usable by all staff, including people with disabilities, including making 'reasonable accommodations' for staff with a disability.
- Training staff on inclusion and diversity, respect and dignity, and anti-harassment

Value Chain

There are many entry points in the value chain to promote social inclusion.

Opportunities for promoting inclusive value chains could include:

- Creating linkages with local NGOs or social enterprises who represent marginalised or underemployed parts of the community
- Encouraging diversity in the membership of local supplier/producer associations
- Ensure essential information is fully accessible to people with disabilities who are suppliers.
- Link suppliers to financial literacy training
- Form linkages with micro-finance institutions to help reduce indebtedness among suppliers
- Develop attractive terms of trade that provides reliability for new suppliers and producers.
- Reduce barriers to involvement in the supply chain such as access to market through providing transport

Consumers

The BPP is interested in businesses that have undertaken research and market analysis to identify viable market opportunities that address a problem that disproportionately and positively impacts underserved parts of the market, especially marginalised groups.

² See for example the ILO Better Work program <http://betterwork.org/>; DFAT "Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture Guidance Note" (2015) <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/operational-guidance-note-gender-equality-and-womens-economic-empowerment-in-agriculture.pdf>



BPP partners are also encouraged to incorporate universal design principles to ensure that products and services can be used by virtually everyone, including people with disabilities.

Additional Guidance for Safeguarding: Examples of interventions

<i>Workforce</i>	<p>The BPP is looking for partners who are aware of potential risks to their employees and have policies and practices that promote safe workplaces. Examples of ways that businesses demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding in the workplace include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment agreements that are consistent with ‘decent working conditions’, where workers are remunerated fairly for their contributions and have protections in place• workplace policies and training related to preventing discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace• workplace policies and training for staff in occupational health and safety• whistleblowing policy that enables workers to raise a complaint safely and without retribution
<i>Value Chain</i>	<p>As important economic actors, businesses help to set the tone for conditions and standards in the value chain. Examples of how business can ensure that safeguards exist within its supply chain include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due diligence processes that consider safeguards when selecting suppliers, including modern slavery and environmental impact• Surveying and responding to key risks identified by suppliers and producers• Providing links to fit-for-purpose insurance products for MSMEs• Ensuring terms of trade do not push suppliers or producers into over-indebtedness• Introducing a code of conduct that insists on decent work conditions• Liaising with producer/supplier associations on emerging risks in the market or supply chain• Providing training and/or technology that makes supply and production safer• Minimising hazards in supplier practices such as the use of hazardous chemicals and the use of protective equipment.• Raising awareness on issues related to GBV in the supply chain
<i>Consumers</i>	<p>Designing products and services creates an opportunity for business to reduce risks in the lives of marginalised and vulnerable people.</p>



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Examples of products and services that have improved the safety of women for example have included: reliable and safe lighting; digital banking systems, affordable housing loans, safe job seeking platforms for domestic workers, reproductive health services in the workplace. Equally, businesses need to ensure that its products and services do not create risks for consumers.