VALUE FOR WOMEN

# Gender Inclusion for Climate-Smart Agribusinesses

*A practical framework for integrating gender in climate-smart agriculture*

VUNA

UKaid
from the British people

Adam Smith International

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The lead author of this report at Value for Women was Shelley Martin, with support from Sarah Mills, Celia Santillan, Rebecca Fries, Norman Sarria, along with others in the Value for Women global team.

**For more information please contact Value for Women:** valueforwomen@v4w.org

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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **CCAFS** | CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security |
| **CSA** | Climate-Smart Agriculture |
| **DFID** | Department for International Development (UK aid) |
| **FAO** | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| **GHG** | Greenhouse Gas |
| **HR** | Human Resources |
| **ICT** | Information and Communications Technology |
| **IFAD** | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| **SACCO** | Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation |
| **SHF** | Smallholder Farmer |
| **SMART** | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound (Goals) |
| **SGAB** | Small and Growing Agribusiness |
| **VSLA** | Village Savings and Loan Association |

# Glossary

### Small and growing business (SGB)

SGBs are defined by the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) as commercially viable businesses with five to 250 employees that have significant potential, and ambition, for growth. SGBs are designed with growth in mind, but often lack access to the resources required to grow and so differ from enterprises that are designed to or intend to stay small.[1]

For the purposes of this Series of papers, we will use the term 'small and growing agribusiness' to reflect the target audience.

1 http://www.andeglobal.org/default.asp?page=AboutANDESGBs

# New Series: Gender Inclusion in Climate-Smart Agriculture for SGABs

This Vuna publication, produced by Value for Women Ltd.,[2] is the first in a series of three reports with the goal of guiding small and growing agribusinesses (SGABs) to growth through strategic gender inclusion in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) value chains. The research was commissioned by Vuna, a three-year regional CSA programme funded by UK aid (DFID), and implemented by Adam Smith International in five countries of East and Southern Africa: Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Vuna aims to transform Africa's agriculture sector by enabling smallholder farmers to improve their livelihoods in the face of climate change. It operates in East and Southern Africa, where the adoption of farming practices that reduce the negative impacts of climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has been slower than in comparable geographic regions.[3] Given their influence in the sector, agribusinesses have a unique opportunity to catalyse greater uptake of CSA in farming systems. By taking steps to ensure their value chains are climate-smart and gender-inclusive, SGABs not only contribute to climate resilience among smallholders and their communities, but also increase productivity for farmers and companies, thus helping to improve food security and spur economic growth.

This Series aims to support SGABs through a process of awareness and prioritisation; positioning and influencing in enabling environments; and piloting of strategies for gender inclusion in CSA. The three publications include:


***Gender Inclusion for Climate-Smart Agribusinesses: A practical framework for integrating gender in climate-smart agriculture***


***Influencing and Advocacy for Gender-Inclusive Climate-Smart Agriculture: A guide for small and growing agribusinesses***

This Paper aims to contribute to a more enabling environment for gender-inclusive CSA. It is designed to help climate-smart SGABs move beyond their internal practices and focus on engaging in advocacy and influencing activities with external actors and stakeholders within the market/ecosystem.


***Innovations in Gender-Inclusive Climate-Smart Agriculture: Examples of good practices***

This Paper offers examples of businesses in East and Southern Africa (and beyond) that are practicing gender-inclusive CSA innovations. It provides tangible reference points for businesses interested in taking a gender-inclusive approach to their CSA work. It undertakes a thorough review of available literature and research, including of the Vuna programme.

2 http://www.v4w.org/
3 http://www.vuna-africa.com/agriculture-in-africa/

# Is this Guide for you?

## Audience

This Guide is for owners and managers of SGABs, from input suppliers and off-takers to commercial farm owners and food companies, that aim to lead their businesses with a 'climate-smart' lens. It will help environmentally conscious SGABs determine how they can better integrate gender strategically across the company's model and value chain, in order to maximise dividends to the company, confer social and economic benefits to producers and other community members, and mitigate climate change.

To achieve its intended impacts, CSA requires a holistic and collaborative approach, involving action from multinationals, governments, SGABs, farmers, and consumers. Recommendations for the entire range of actors is beyond the scope of this Series.

### As this Guide outlines, small and growing agribusinesses have a significant role to play in the practice of CSA and mitigation of climate change.[4]

With the capacity to stimulate collective action above the individual plot- and community-levels, SGABs have the potential to be agents of "landscape-scale" CSA approaches.[5]

While SGABs may already be interested or involved in climate-smart practices due to potential productivity and efficiency gains—or related positive impacts on the planet—the majority of evidence and documentation of CSA practices is based on grant-funded programmes. Projects are often participatory, designed to target smallholders directly or through plot-level schemes tested in partnership with NGOs. Although climate grants and subsidies are important for piloting new interventions, such programmes represent the minority of agricultural production globally.

When it comes to scalability, there must be an obvious business case. The Vuna programme seeks to contribute to an evidence base for private-sector CSA delivery models that are profitable, sustainable in economies of scale, and able to catalyse systemic change. However, if "pre-existing gender disparities in resource access, productivity gaps, and returns from agriculture" are overlooked in CSA programmes, "innovation models run the risk of further exacerbating gender disparities compounded by climate change".[6]

This Series argues that SGABs have an important role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation and that there is a strong business case for adopting gender-inclusive CSA practices. It offers practical steps for SGABs to integrate gender into CSA practices, explaining the benefit of doing so, and shares examples of good practice within the gender, CSA, and SGAB nexus.

4 See Annex for Vuna Programme Theory of Change. Also available online at: http://www.vuna-africa.com/about-vuna/how-we-work/theory-of-change/
5 Duong et al, 2016: 25
6 http://www.vuna-africa.com/project/vuna-impact-monitoring-projects/

This Guide presents opportunities for businesses to align their operations with gender inclusion.

# Use and Limitations

The goal of this Guide is to increase agribusinesses' interest in gender-inclusive CSA. With a focus on the supply side of SGAB value chains, it outlines suggestions for what businesses can do to improve women's economic opportunities and reduce the productivity gap, and how their business operations can benefit from promoting gender inclusion.

Businesses do not work in isolation. This Series is designed as a *starting point* for SGABs to learn, test new ideas, and build new relationships. However, context-specific conditions impact applicability, and recommendations given will need to be adapted to the specific circumstances and motivations of businesses. SGABs already implementing climate-smart practices can also use this Guide to develop new ideas informed by gender inclusion principles. The authors recognise the tensions that exist when developing tools for a broad audience, in making them both specific and applicable to businesses, while at the same time generalisable to a broad set of enterprises with diverse processes. As such, the emphasis for this Paper is on providing a high-level introduction and guidance for how to adopt gender inclusion approaches. Readers interested in implementing any of the strategies outlined in this document are likely to require gender expertise to develop tailored plans and actions to achieve the desired impacts.

This Guide does not intend to equip businesses to achieve every goal of social equality or inclusive development, but rather presents opportunities for businesses to align their operations with gender inclusion. It assumes that while no innovation can be equally "smart" in all elements (e.g. carbon, soil, water, knowledge, market, gender), CSA's 'triple bottom line' of ***profit, people, and planet*** is still a viable value proposition for SGABs—one that is enhanced through gender inclusion.

Doing some things more effectively than before is an improvement on business as usual. The approach to this Guide is therefore pragmatic and supports incremental change for SGABs to become more gender-inclusive and climate-smart within the broad business models of today's regional and global food markets. The Guide is also designed to complement other efforts focused on gender equality in communities and households.

# 1. Introduction to Gender-Inclusive CSA

*The rationale for being climate-smart and gender-inclusive, and how it relates to agribusinesses.*

# What Is a 'Climate-Smart' Lens?

**In a variety of ways, climate change has already impacted every region of the world, with GHG emissions now more than 50% higher than their 1990 level.[7]**

**Among the most drastically affected by rising temperatures and variability in weather are members of the agricultural sector. Climate shocks such as drought, flood, erosion, and high salinity have had vast biophysical consequences, and in many cases, have led to socioeconomic challenges, including market fluctuation and unemployment.[8]**

As a result of changing climatic conditions, smallholder farmers in East and Southern Africa in particular are exposed to frequent food insecurity, price volatility, and fewer incentives to expand their production of commercial crops. At the same time, the businesses "anchoring" smallholders' value chains now face greater investment and trading risks. Many SGABs are concerned about the imminent effects of increasing temperatures and rainfall variability on their businesses, and also believe these changes are linked to a rise in pests and diseases that affect their products.[9]

To remain resilient in the face of climate risks, agribusinesses may expand their catchment areas or import raw materials, but many are apprehensive about investing in the *resilience of smallholder production systems and value chains right around them.*[10] However, since key effects of environmental stress in farming systems are intensification of women's workloads and decreases in assets of poor households,[11] this may be one of the most sustainable and ultimately climate-smart decisions SGABs can make! Many companies under the Vuna programme are already demonstrating the important commercial role SGABs play in linking farmers to markets, assuring quality control, and improving logistics.[12] ***Climate-smart thinking considers what is needed to make gains in efficiency while also ensuring resource sustainability for the future.***

For agribusinesses, this includes engaging with actors in farming systems to improve their resilience to risks alongside the resilience of the company.

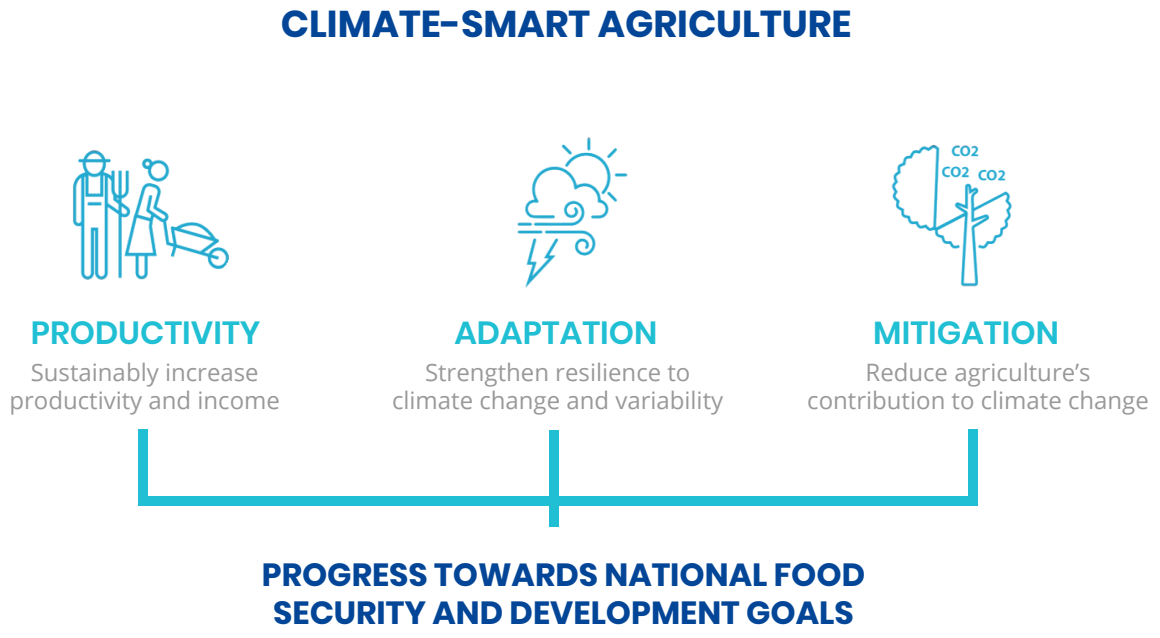
7 http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-13-climate-action.html
8 Duong et al, 2016
9 Morris, 2016
10 ibid
11 Jost et al, 2015; Agwu and Okhimamwe, 2009; and Goh, 2012 cited in Nelson and Huyer, 2016
12 Morris, 2016

Climate-smart agriculture practices are now being piloted around the world, with the potential to meet multiple environmental, socioeconomic, and business objectives at once. As CSA is a relatively new field, farmers and agribusinesses are still testing practices by region and industry. However, all climate-smart agriculture involves strategies to:

1) sustainably increase agricultural yields and incomes;
2) adapt to climate change, strengthening individual and collective resilience; and
3) mitigate for GHG emissions in agricultural systems by reducing or removing them where possible.[13]

## These objectives comprise the three pillars of climate-smart agriculture, as shown in the figure below.

## The three pillars of CSA:




13 Nelson and Huyer, 2016

# Potential CSA Innovations

While appropriate and effective CSA practices vary by context, some examples to start iterating from are outlined below.[14]

**Agroforestry**
Planting trees together with crops on the farm. These are trees that produce or are primarily used for fruit, fodder, or fuel wood production or that provide other benefits, such as reducing runoff or erosion, enhancing soil fertility, providing shade, and providing medicines.

**Terraces and bunds**
Physical structures placed along contours to slow the speed of water.

**Planting pits**
Pits for planting and to help conserve water; they can be of different sizes.

**Crop residue mulching**
Leaving crop material on the fields after harvesting to improve soil texture, prevent erosion, and help with water filtration.

**Cover cropping**
Crops grown to ensure that fields are covered by vegetation in between seasons; intended to protect soil against erosion; can enhance soil fertility and suppress pests.

**Water harvesting**
Structures for collecting water from a surface area, to be used for irrigation or improved filtration. These can be larger or smaller systems, encompassing individual farm- and plot-level water ditches, to larger systems like water pans and dams.

**Irrigation**
Covers all types and systems of irrigation from ground and surface water sources.

**Aquaculture**
Sustainably breeding and harvesting aquatic plants and animals, such as fish and shrimp.

**Composting**
Removing crop residues to allow them to decompose and then adding them back to the soil to improve soil fertility and texture and allow for improved water filtration.

**Livestock manure management**
The collection of livestock manure that can be stored and then applied to fields.

14 CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), 2015: 11-13; World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 2015

**Efficient use of fertiliser**
Applying appropriate amounts of fertiliser to increase yields, including greater yield with the same fertiliser or the same yield with less fertiliser. Farmers may increase use to improve soil fertility where it has been under-applied; reduce use where it has been over-applied; or switch fertiliser types based on crop requirements. May also practice mixing fertiliser components to reflect actual soil and crop needs, deep placement of fertiliser, micro-dosing, changing from one fertiliser application at the beginning to three smaller fertiliser applications, or changing application based on extension advice.

**Improved, high-yielding varieties**
Purchasing or breeding varieties to improve and increase their yield.

**Destocking**
Reducing the number of livestock to improve resilience and make herds more manageable as a conscious decision, and not due to hardships.

**No-till or minimum-tillage practices**
Opening soil only where the seeds are placed, with as little soil disturbance as possible.

**Pasture management**
Rotational grazing and setting paddocks aside in case of drought.

**Improved feed management**
Storing animal feeds like stover, grass, and napier; making better use of them through combining feeds; growing grass varieties better suited to the agroecological zone; fodder conservation; fattening animals; among others.

**Drought-tolerant species or breeds of livestock**
Purchase or breeding of animals that are more tolerant to drought or disease, including switching the species of animal. Zebu cattle and small ruminants are common examples of more drought-tolerant species.

**Improved post-harvest practices**
More efficient storage and processing to reduce food losses, decrease women's workloads, and improve food safety.

**Improved cookstoves**
Using technology that requires less wood, reducing GHG emissions, women's workload, and food preparation time.

**Stress-tolerant varieties**
Use of varieties adapted to climate challenges that a particular region faces, including drought-, flood-, saline-, submergence-, and pest-resistant seeds.

Through sustainable, context-specific innovations, CSA has the potential to address existing business challenges and inefficiencies, while paying intersecting commercial, environmental, and social dividends to the company and community. Gender inclusion in CSA practices will multiply these co-benefits.

# Why a CSA Guide about Gender?

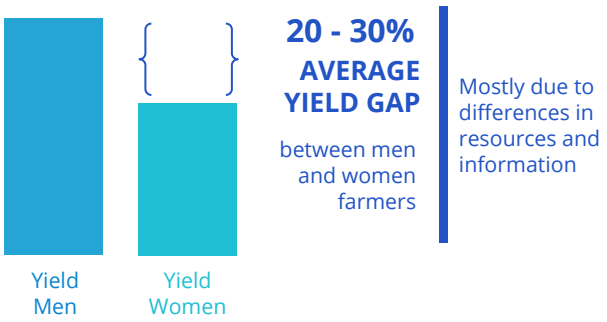
*What is meant by 'gender inclusion' and why it matters for SGABs.*

Smallholder farmers often face barriers to participating in CSA and other schemes to increase productivity. These barriers include access to agricultural information, farmland, equipment, inputs, and markets. Affordable credit and secure property rights are also obstacles for many producers.[15]

Female farmers face these constraints more often and more intensely than their male counterparts, as they are frequently compounded by social and cultural norms around 'gender roles'. These may include perceptions of socially acceptable behaviours, such as who is allowed to travel or make business expenditures; men's tendency to control external information and resources coming into the home; women's larger role in unpaid care and domestic work, which reduces their time available for income generation; and gender stereotypes about women's abilities, e.g. to attend to details, sort items, or handle only small livestock and subsistence crops. As a result of such limitations, women are less likely to benefit from contracted agricultural schemes. They often remain occupied with poorly remunerated tasks, unable to sell their labour at higher-valued positions in value chains or develop diverse skills needed to advance.

**"Because women are less likely to become contract farmers, outgrowers, or members of relevant producer groups, women lose out, not only on the income from crop sales but also from other services that many companies provide to their contract farmers, such as training, pre-financing, and provision of inputs."[16]**

It is of little surprise then that in most countries, male farmers achieve on average 20-30% higher yields than their female counterparts in conventional farming systems.[17] This difference in output represents the 'gender productivity gap' in agriculture.




15 Chakrabarti and Nuutinen, 2014
16 Chan, 2010: 27
17 FAO, 2012

Similar *gender disparities* exist in farmers' adoption of CSA, due also to men's and women's differing levels of access to resources, services, and opportunities, such as:

Cash and upfront financing for initial investments like inputs and labour

Land ownership and control

Technical training and CSA extension services

Market and climate-related information

Education, literacy, information and communications technology (ICT), and financial skills

Leadership and managerial roles

**Extensive studies have concluded that female producers are just as efficient as men and would achieve the same yields if they had *equal access* to productive assets, fertilisers and other inputs, and hired labour. Women's productivity further increases with complementary *targeted services*, such as interaction with female agricultural extension workers.**[18]

18 FAO, 2012: 40

In the era of climate volatility, closing the gender gap has huge implications for food security and development. Equal access and thus equal yields would increase overall productivity in developing countries by 2.5-4% and reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 100-150 million people, or 12-17%.[19]

**EQUAL ACCESS** and thus **EQUAL YIELDS** would

INCREASE

Boost total agricultural output in developing countries by **2.5 - 4%**

DECREASE

Reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by **100-150M** people or **12-17%**

## GENDER YIELD GAP

**Bridging the gender yield gap would boost food and nutrition security globally.**

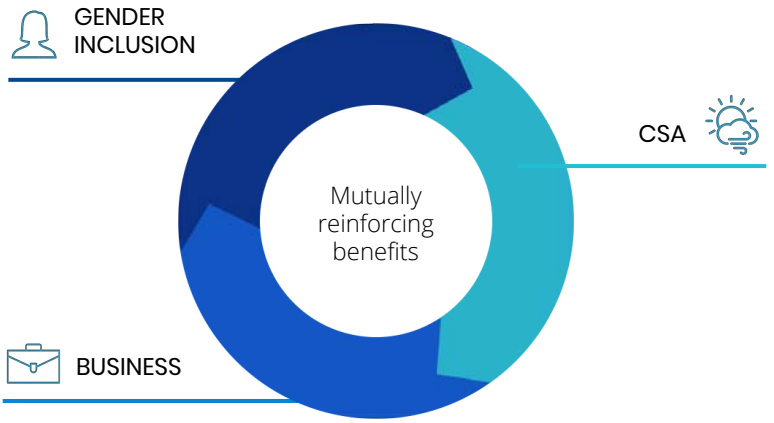
19 FAO, 2012 cited in Nelson, 2014

There is immense productive power to be harnessed by removing structural barriers faced by half the population:

"Addressing gender inequalities in political, economic, and sociocultural structures can increase agricultural productivity, improve food and nutrition security, reduce poverty, and build the climate resilience of rural populations."[20]

Particularly with regards to CSA, innovations are "unlikely to be effective, let alone equitable or transformative" without attention to such *gender-based constraints*.[21] Crop failure, natural resource depletion, and other costly effects of climate change are leading more and more SGABs to try adaptive technologies and innovations. In piloting climate-smart practices, agribusinesses have reason to invest in women's participation as much as men's, and in doing so contribute to closing the productivity gap between male and female farmers.

**Gender inclusion and CSA are mutually reinforcing and beneficial, and can boost business performance.**




20 World Bank, 2009; Meinzen-Dick et al, 2010; and FAO, 2011 cited in World Bank, FAO, and IFAD, 2015: 5
21 Bernier et al, 2015 cited in World Bank, FAO, and IFAD, 2015: 5

Targeting women in CSA is proven to increase the likelihood that a particular practice is *widely adopted*.[22] If gender is *not* explicitly considered, adoption of climate-resilient practices is unlikely to reach scale, as at least 50% of any given population may be excluded. This is due in part to the less visible but key role women play in communicating knowledge and mobilising others. With their often back-end support of agribusiness, women can be "hidden influencers" in communities, responsible for the diversification of economic activities beyond male-dominated cash crop production.[23]

Gender inequality takes an economic toll on agribusinesses, which are negatively affected when key value chains are constrained. If women are excluded (even inadvertently) from CSA in a supply chain, SGABs miss out on valuable opportunities to improve their performance, quality, and efficiency. In contrast, taking steps to include women in supply chains allows businesses to increase and diversify their pool of producers and employees. For SGABs, gender-inclusive strategies and business modelling can lead to gains in gender equality along agricultural value chains that reduce the productivity gap and boost performance of the company.

## What is gender inclusion in a climate-smart agribusiness?

**Gender inclusion** is about *understanding gender issues and dynamics in your context,* in order to enhance business performance, promote women's empowerment, and reap the household, community, and countrywide benefits of social equality.

Thinking strategically about gender roles and norms can help SGABs make informed business decisions to maximise commercial, social, and environmental dividends from their CSA operations. To begin integrating gender in an enterprise, management may undertake a range of actions during planning and implementation to

1) recognise and respond to specific **drivers** and **priorities** women and men have, and
2) capitalise on unique **skills** and **opportunities** to include women and men in an agricultural value chain.

If climate-smart SGABs are *gender-inclusive*, their projects will further enhance the CSA pillars of productivity, adaptation, and mitigation, while also producing **additional benefits** outlined below.

22 Twyman, J. et al, 2017
23 Marquez, L., Volt Studios, 2017: 9

# The Case for Gender-Inclusive CSA

Gender inclusion makes business sense and is essential for successful CSA. It enhances the triple bottom line of **PROFIT**, **PEOPLE**, and PLANET.

## Potential benefits of gender-inclusive CSA: Impacts on your triple bottom line

### KEY COMMERCIAL BENEFITS OF CSA:

*With improved productivity and efficiency, stronger communications, cost-savings, and better markets, gender-inclusive climate-smart SGABs increase their profit margins.*

PROFIT

**Secure supply base**:[24] When SGABs ensure CSA practices and information are accessible to women and men, they have more producers and thus more products. Women's uptake of CSA information increases adoption of CSA practices in both female and male farmers.[25] If a practice like crop rotation promises higher yields, women's buy-in and knowledge is essential to achieving wide-scale adoption and higher yields more generally. Since women are effective "recruitment agents" who mobilise new farmers to join producer groups and outgrower schemes, bringing more female producers into supply chains is also paramount to securing a future supply of "smallholder dependent commodities".[26] Encouraging registration of women in households for wider adoption of CSA practices can also reduce supply variability for more consistent, cost-effective local sourcing.

**Improved productivity**: Gender inclusion activities (e.g. offering CSA financing, contracting with women producer groups, targeting women's preferred information channels, hiring female extension agents[27]) can all contribute to closing the gender productivity gap. When women's production is on par with men's, the result is more consistent yields and higher volumes available to SGABs. Companies that empower women and protect the natural resources of their communities also enjoy reputational benefits, leading to potential improvements in worker satisfaction, performance, and retention.[28]

**Enhanced communication:** Female leadership across the value chain can reduce management and coordination costs for agribusinesses. Women in SGAB management positions have been shown to improve communications between companies and outgrowers, including resolving disputes and soliciting vital feedback at the community level. Smallholder management committees led by women may also represent the interests of a diverse farmer base more accurately than committees led by men alone, as female liaisons have been shown to maintain and share information more readily with SGABs than their male counterparts.[29]

**Improved quality:** Field research has shown examples of how female smallholders may even produce better quality crops than male farmers.[30] CSA processes can also make more efficient use of resources, with higher quality end products than those produced through conventional commercial agriculture techniques.

**Brand equity:** SGABs may enjoy a stronger brand and improved access to niche markets when women and other marginalised groups are empowered through the company's operations. Greater gender inclusion and diversity in supply chains can "enhance the company's ethical credentials" and open doors to certifications like Organic or Fair Trade Association.[31] Leveraging such opportunities enables companies to reach specialised consumers and improve prices by increasing their market share among premium retailers.

24 Chan, 2010: 17
25 World Bank, FAO, and IFAD, 2015: 5
26 Chan, 2010: 21
27 Chan, 2010: 20
28 Value for Women, 2018
29 Chan, 2010: 20
30 Chan, 2010: 18
31 Chan, 2010: 17

## PEOPLE

**POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CSA:**

*Gender-inclusive CSA contributes to gender equality and inclusive development. When women are empowered, the result is greater household food security, child welfare, and poverty reduction.*

**Empowerment of women** has a multiplier effect, starting with **improving the home and family well-being**.[32] Globally, women have also been shown to spend a far greater proportion of their income investing in household health and nutrition than men.[33] Children are typically healthier when women are economically empowered. "Assets in the hands of women" also increases the share of household income that is spent on education, which is linked to the reduction of poverty and prevention of child labour.[34]

**Increasing gender equality** also has related community benefits. Gender inclusion in CSA increases women's participation and may lessen gender tensions in other spaces over the long term, leading to joint empowerment. Rather than shifting responsibility from one person to another, egalitarian decision-making can increase investments in agriculture, improve food security for rural communities, and produce better social and economic development outcomes for whole societies.[35]

## PLANET

**ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF CSA:**

*Gender-inclusive climate-smart SGABs contribute to gains in sustainable agricultural productivity, increased climate resilience, and reduced emission of GHGs, enhancing national food security and development goals.*

**Adaptation:** CSA builds resilience to climate change through climate-proofing supply chains and strengthening producers' and SGABs' abilities to withstand meteorological, environmental, and household shocks.[36] By reducing losses related to changes like drought, flood, erosion, high salinity, market fluctuation, and unemployment, CSA practices contribute to more *diverse, resilient farm systems.*[37] As more people and companies are engaged in sustainably managing natural resources, less is wasted and more is protected for future generations.

**Mitigation:** CSA practices decrease GHG emissions and reduce global exposure to the effects of climate change.[38] Climate mitigation often comes as a co-benefit of activities that enhance productivity, resilience, and efficiency along the food chain.[39] For example, in livestock value chains, improved husbandry practices and feed formulations can enhance animal productivity and reduce the labour burden on women who typically tend to them, while also decreasing the environmental toll of such enterprises by reducing animal waste and GHG emissions.

32 Twyman, J. et al, 2017
33 (Quisumbing, A. and Maluccio, J. (2000): I*ntrahousehold Allocation and Gender Relations: New Empirical Evidence from Four Developing Countries, FCND Discussion Paper 84*, IFPRI, Washington, D.C. cited in Chan, 2010: 23
34 Chan, 2010: 23
35 Twyman, J. et al, 2017
36 Duong et al, 2016
37 Twyman, J. et al, 2017
38 SPC, 2011
39 Nelson and Huyer, 2016

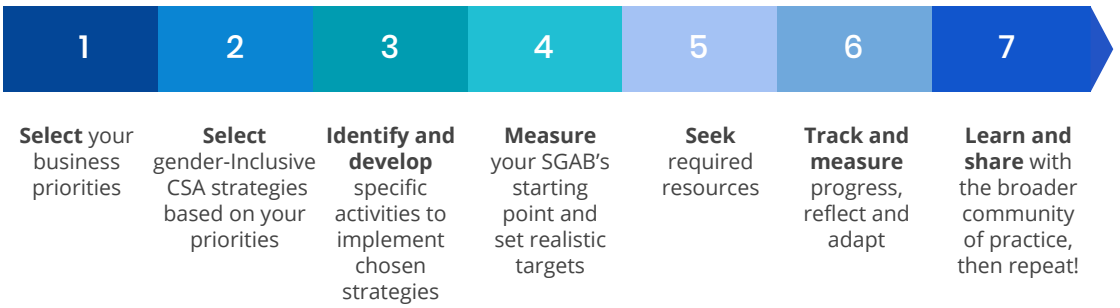
# 2. How Can My Company Be Climate-Smart and Gender-Inclusive?

***Is your company maximising opportunities to grow and have impact through gender-inclusive, climate-smart agricultural practices? SGABs have numerous opportunities to enhance their gender-inclusiveness, and can benefit commercially, socially, and environmentally as a result.***

# Seven Simple Steps to Prioritise Gender and Climate in Small and Growing Agribusinesses[40]

Now that we know gender inclusion can significantly enhance business performance, let's get started. Even though most CSA practices relate to agricultural production, their principles can be applied to all areas of business. There are seven practical steps your company can take to adopt gender-inclusive CSA practices. This Guide focuses on Steps 1 and 2 as they relate to the key categories of an agribusiness: Supply, Primary Operations, Supporting Business Services, Marketing and Sales, and External Relations.

## Seven Simple Steps to Prioritise Gender and Climate in Small and Growing Agribusinesses:




40 From Value for Women's *Gender Inclusion for Businesses in Agriculture: A Toolkit for Assessing Gender Gaps and Building the Business Case through Practical Strategies*, 2017

# Step 1

## Select your business priorities

Review some of the common challenges SGABs face in the categories outlined below. Then select your company's biggest challenge area and, within that category, identify which solutions you are interested in testing.

### SUPPLY:

- [ ] Improve farmer yields, quality, and consistency and volumes of available agricultural produce
- [ ] Develop reliable and sustainable supplier relationships
- [ ] Minimise costs of inbound logistics

### PRIMARY OPERATIONS:

- [ ] Minimise processing costs
- [ ] Improve productivity, efficiency, and quality of processed goods or services
- [ ] Improve safety and health of operations and thus of overall business performance
- [ ] Maximise disaster preparedness and response at the operational level

### SUPPORTING BUSINESS SERVICES:

- [ ] Attract talent and minimise employee turnover
- [ ] Improve qualifications, competencies, and skills of employees
- [ ] Manage legal and political risks to your operations

### EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- [ ] Improve performance in your supply chain with key providers and allies
- [ ] Expand your CSA knowledge and that of your supply chain partners
- [ ] Influence the sector

### MARKETING AND SALES:

- [ ] Increase sales and improve prices
- [ ] Give yourself a competitive edge

Once you have identified your priorities, continue to Step 2 for relevant **gender-inclusive CSA strategies** that can contribute to your business priorities.

# Step 2



**Select gender-inclusive CSA strategies based on your priorities.**

Below is a list of high level gender-inclusive strategy ideas for CSA practices. These are designed as a starting point to offer guidance for measuring progress towards the suggested indicators. Specific activities that your business will undertake to achieve the strategies selected below are explored further in Step 3.

Use this Step to select strategies that address the business challenges identified above, focusing on your priority categories. Adapt innovations as needed to your business needs, social context, and physical environment, considering the resources available for investing in various solutions. To measure changes in each category and ensure strategies are producing their desired results, it is recommended to track the suggested indicators that relate to all the strategies in that category.

## Supply category

*This includes all steps in procuring products, from planning, inputs, and extension services to aggregation, transportation, and scaling production. Many of the Supply indicators and strategies suggested below relate to SGABs engaged in off-taking from smallholders. Agribusinesses that own and manage their own farms may have greater control and motivation to adapt similar producer group-related strategies to their own productive operations on-site.*

**Key INDICATORS for the *Supply* category include:**

- Number of suppliers; percentage of whom women
- Average yields for women and men, per hectare or input unit
- Volumes rejected from women and men
- Volumes purchased from women and men
- Prices paid to women and men, per kilogram or type of produce
- Number of male and female extension workers contracted by SGAB
- Unit cost of raw materials, including logistics and supply-related transportation costs incurred by SGAB (from distribution of inputs, extension services, collection of produce, etc.)
- Number of male and female participants in trainings provided by SGAB

### STRATEGIES

- Increase volumes and improve yields and quality by harnessing the untapped power of women and youth. To target such suppliers, **start by removing common barriers and perceived risks to participation in CSA**. Design inclusive schemes to ensure female smallholders access essential upfront farm assets/inputs and credit. Disseminate CSA information and training resources through people and platforms that women can easily interact with.
- Attract female farmers by selecting familiar **commodities that women traditionally control** or have access to, promoting low-input or short-season methods, and making labour-saving technologies available where possible.
- Increase reliability and sustainability of your supply channels by **formalising your relationship** with suppliers, engaging women directly in contracts, and strengthening their position in the value chain.
- Minimise inbound logistics costs while reducing your carbon footprint as a company by investing in **localised, gender-inclusive supporting services for suppliers. Offer on-site CSA demonstrations and complementary capacity building in resilience**, link to community-based Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) training or microfinance products, and establish accessible collection points for fresh products.

# Example 1: Gender inclusion in Supply category of CSA value chain

SGABs can research the commercial marketability of various "women's vegetables" when selecting agricultural products, and choose to contract with female farmer groups that specialise in cultivating such crops. Women are often attracted to outgrower schemes in which they are paid to plant crops they know and value, and will benefit from the chance to keep a share of the harvest for household nutrition.

Similarly, SGABs may provide farmers with seedlings for "women's trees"—species that provide fuelwood, fodder, shade, and fruit rather than those that provide just poles and timber, which are more commonly desired by men.[41] With longer waiting periods to realise profits, female farmers may appreciate agroforestry initiatives that allow them to intercrop fruits and vegetables between trees, receiving some compensation during the initial harvest—the rest later when seedlings have matured—and benefitting from simultaneous work opportunities that smooth their income, such as development of seedling nurseries.

Nut companies in Kenya have created such off-season opportunities for female growers and factory workers to continue earning income while grafted plants are germinating. Engaging women in activities (e.g. construction, training other community members on grafting) enabled one SGAB to accomplish its goal of expanding its facilities and meeting greater demand for nuts. At the same time, these activities increased women's economic empowerment and satisfaction with the company. Mutual loyalty and greater productivity are some of the results of this gender-inclusive synergy.

41 Module 18, p.27

# Primary Operations category

*This includes all steps related to processing and value addition, from cleaning and grading to storing, milling, preserving, and packaging of agricultural products. Some factory-level strategies for gender inclusion can also be mirrored in the Supporting Business Services category by applying them to an office setting, for example gender-inclusive human resources (HR) policies, separate facilities, and workplace childcare.*

**Key INDICATORS for the *Primary Operations* category include:**

- Unitary costs for processing
- Product output per day
- Number of women and men hired as casual, semi-permanent, and permanent staff
- Number of women and men leading departments
- Factory "down time" experienced by male and female employees in a week
- Employee performance indicators, disaggregated by sex

## STRATEGIES

- Reduce costs and promote livelihoods through the **minimisation of waste and losses**, use of **renewable energy** sources, and creation of **inclusive job opportunities for women**. An example of this can be the utilisation of byproducts or subproducts for transformation or sale in local markets.
- Improve operational performance and worker retention through **adequate facilities and policies** that ensure a safe, healthy workplace for women and men.

## Example 2: Gender inclusion in Primary Operations category of CSA value chain

Parents with small children might not have safe, affordable alternatives for childcare, which limits their ability to integrate into the formal economy and provide for their families. When one agribusiness in Kenya realised its young workers' attendance and focus were hindered by issues related to their babies' health and development, it invested in a simple workplace day-care centre. While young mothers reported that they are free of stress and more capable of working while raising a baby, the company benefits from keeping employees loyal and productive during factory hours.

# Supporting Business Services category

*This includes all internal support activities, from your SGAB's infrastructure to HR management and administration.*

**Key INDICATORS for the *Supporting Business Services* category include:**

- Gender composition of staff, management, and board of directors
- Number of women and men promoted internally
- Number of new female and male hires in a year
- Number of women and men who have resigned
- Remuneration per hierarchical level, for men and women
- Prior qualifications held by women and men
- Number of women and men participating in training opportunities

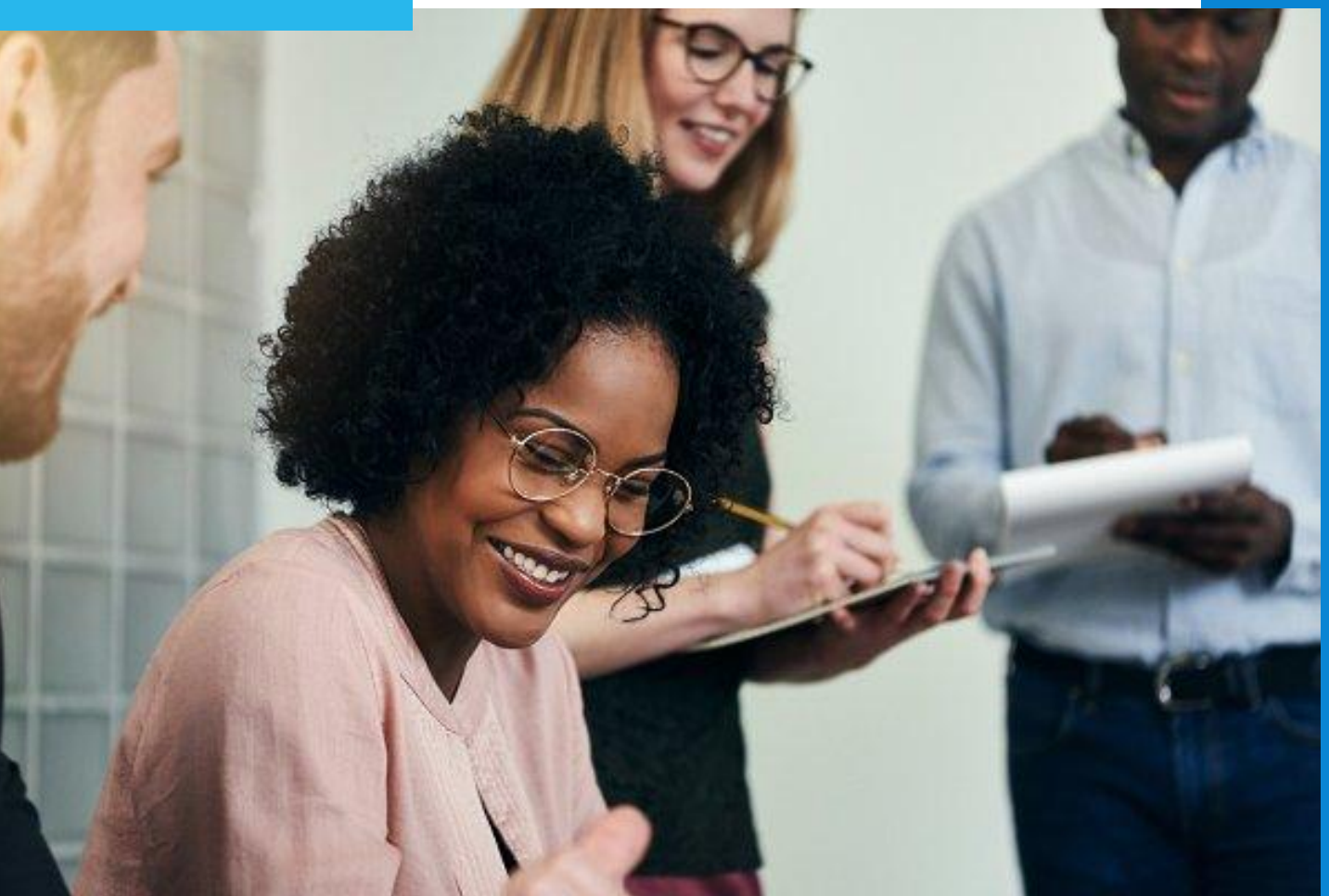
## STRATEGIES

- Attract and retain the best talent, benefit from diversity, optimise performance, and minimise employee turnover. Use proactive, **gender-inclusive hiring strategies, HR policies, and workplace facilities to attract and retain female candidates/employees** across the departments of your company.
- Improve company performance and mutual loyalty by offering **opportunities to improve employee qualifications and competencies**, and increasing the number of **women in leadership** roles.
- **Take advantage of gender and CSA incentives, and protect against sanctions by managing legal and political risk.** This can include establishment of focal points or committees within the company to drive forward priorities, update gender policies and action plans, and stay abreast of national programmes such as climate finance and subsidy opportunities or tax rebates for gender balance.

# Example 3: Gender inclusion in Supporting Business Services category of CSA value chain

Agribusinesses that appoint a focal point on gender and CSA are more likely to succeed with their gender inclusion and climate mitigation efforts. While mainstreaming gender in the company and ensuring environmentally friendly operations, this person (or committee) can also help the SGAB stay ahead of the curve on potential mandatory regulation by forming relationships with Ministries of Agriculture, Land, or Environment.

As global debates influence local and regional regulatory frameworks, new policies may be under formulation that stipulate minimum standards in business around gender inclusion or environmental protection. While others struggle to catch up to changing legal frameworks, the SGABs that stay proactive in climate and gender practices will set the area standard, earning a competitive edge.



# Marketing and Sales category

*This includes all activities related to product design, certifications, SGAB business development and sales, and industry-wide product promotion.*

**Key INDICATORS for the *Marketing and Sales* category include:**

- Volumes sold
- Price
- Profit margin
- Number of women and men distributing locally
- Number of international buyers
- Additional revenue generated from premiums, percentage of which invested back into cooperatives
- Number of certifications or international standards compliance

## STRATEGIES

- **Increase sales, improve prices, and strengthen distribution of CSA products, by leveraging opportunities to empower women,** e.g. through value-addition, development of niche products, and mobilisation of women as local distributors.
- Seek **feedback on consumer trends from women involved in your value chain,** and adjust product offer accordingly, e.g. by customising commodities, unit sizes, and packaging to women's seasonal preferences, purchasing power, and literacy levels.
- Benefit from premium markets and attract impact investors through **CSA certifications or branding** of practices/products as socially equitable, empowering of women, or environmentally conscious.

# Example 4: Gender inclusion in Marketing and Sales category of CSA value chain

Some agribusinesses are reaping the benefits of certification-related investments alongside smallholders in their supply chains. By branding their coffee as Fair Trade and empowering of local women's cooperatives, Ugandan coffee aggregators and roasters enjoy premium export markets and improved prices. Higher profits generated for the company are in turn used to implement its gender policy and pay growers a better price per kilogram than competitors, retaining talent and promoting the continuity of sustainable coffee cultivation practices in the region.

# External Relationships category

*This includes strategic relationships with other businesses, networks, and ecosystem actors who can help you achieve your gender inclusion and CSA goals in each of the other categories.*

**Key INDICATORS for the *External Relationships* category include:**

- New partnerships
- Number of women and men linked to supply chain allies
- Number of memberships in trade alliances, sector-wide unions, or networks

## STRATEGIES

- Improve performance in your supply chain through partnerships with key financial institutions that offer **low-cost and potentially differentiated financial products** for male, female, and mixed groups. Consider partners that can accept SGAB guarantees/assets or SGAB-created credit histories for smallholder farmer (SHF) performance.
- Improve efficiency and women's participation in your supply chain through **building relationships with non-financial service providers** (e.g. logistics, technology, additional CSA training) that provide affordable, differentiated product offerings tailored to your supplier's needs.
- Improve your SGAB's gender and market intelligence, as well as CSA competency in your supply chain partners, through **collaboration on action research and learning events/products** that meet **both company demands and institutional priorities.**

# Example 5: Gender inclusion in External Relationships category of CSA value chain

Partnerships with technology companies that have gender expertise can enhance the CSA work that SGABs are carrying out by creating more effective outreach and knowledge-exchange platforms. Taking into consideration gender- and age-appropriate media tools based on communications research in the field, social enterprises like Viamo and Digital Green are ensuring otherwise marginalised groups of rural women and youth are accessing essential CSA-related information. Collaborating with ICT experts enables agribusinesses to customise their services, whether disseminating vernacular language audio and visual messaging to ensure women hear about market information and see weather calendars, or designing mixed high-tech/low-tech behaviour change campaigns encouraging more sustainable agricultural practices throughout a community.[42]

42 For more information, see www.viamo.io and www.digitalgreen.org. Photo accessed online at: www.betterthancash.org

# Step 3

## Identify and develop specific activities to implement chosen strategies

After choosing the set of strategies that best align with your business model and goals, it is time to develop and plan actions your SGAB can take. This may involve seeking external support and gender expertise to analyse and understand the best opportunities for your business.

**When planning activities, you should consider:**

| Strategy | Actions | Resources required | Time frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| | What must be done and by whom, to effectively undertake this strategy? | Financial, human, or other material resources required to set actions in motion, including external support or expertise. | How long it will take to implement activities? |

# Step 4

## Measure your businesses' starting point and set realistic targets

Once you have planned what specific actions your SGAB will take to achieve your strategies, you can now do the following:

1. **Select indicators.**
   Compare your selected strategies with the suggested indicators. Consider if they are adequate or if you need other indicators to understand how your strategy is performing.

2. **Measure your current situation.**
   Before making any changes, you need to know your starting point. This is the moment to capture a baseline or initial reading on all of your selected indicators.

3. **Set SMART goals.**
   Now that you have a list of existing measures, consider where you would like to be in the future. Your goals, measured through changes in your indicators, should be *SMART*: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound.

You should now have a list of indicators with initial readings and a clear path to follow.

# Step 5

## Seek required resources

If your company is currently resource constrained, you might need to consider additional support. Step 3 should have helped you to determine how you will implement your selected strategies, which may include investments from the SGAB as well as additional funding through grants for gender equity or climate change mitigation.

**Some ideas on potential support for your SGAB include:**

- **Consultants** to lead participatory processes to help you develop gender-inclusive internal operations policies and make recommendations for improvement of SGAB infrastructure
- **Firms** with gender expertise that can (a) conduct a *training needs assessment* of staff and suppliers and (b) *deliver training*, e.g. for staff on inclusive CSA management, or for workers and suppliers on developing VSLAs and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs)
- **New staff hires** to manage gender inclusion and CSA-related activities, or training and resources for existing focal points
- **Fundraising support** to succeed in accessing grants and technical assistance programmes that grow your capacity to implement your selected strategies
- **External advisors to help benchmark** your position against industry best practices

Once you have fully developed plans for the piloting stages, start making incremental changes!

# Step 6

## Track and measure progress, reflect and adapt

Check your indicators periodically and reflect on any deviations from the original plan. Take note of previously unknown obstacles to implementing the strategies, and reassess any assumptions about how you theorised the changes would take place. Then reflect on what to do differently.

### TRACK

Track your indicators, e.g. *Are men and women producing the same quality and yields? Have there been any unintended outcomes—positive or negative—of the strategies you've undertaken? How do you know?*

### REFLECT

Reflect on whether your strategies for gender inclusion are working as expected for your SGAB, e.g. *Are there differences in men's and women's cultivation practices, harvest and storage methods, or transportation modes? Are the necessary tools, resources, and information reaching female and male actors in your value chain? Why or why not?*

### ADAPT

Decide what needs to change, e.g. *For all suppliers to achieve optimal yields? To reduce waste at the plant? For female and male workers to advance at the same rate in your company? To access premium CSA markets for higher profit margins?* Adjust strategies in light of this learning.

This is a great time to solicit feedback from participants at various levels of your operations through focus group discussions with women and men. The process of tracking progress and reflecting on your challenges and successes will give management important insight on how best to adapt, in order to remain on track to achieving your *SMART* goals.

For results of this process to be relevant, Step 6 should take place at least twice per year.

# Step 7

## Learn and share with the broader CSA community of practice, then repeat!

Increasing the visibility of gender-inclusive and climate-smart activities at your SGAB will enhance its unique selling proposition and reputation as a market leader. Your company can also contribute to an enabling environment for scaling CSA by supporting gender inclusion in other individuals and institutions. Sharing lessons learnt and expanding the knowledge of the sector will also contribute to your own improvement, helping you stay at the cutting edge of innovation and best practices. With new information and experience, you may start the innovation process again, tackling new priorities.

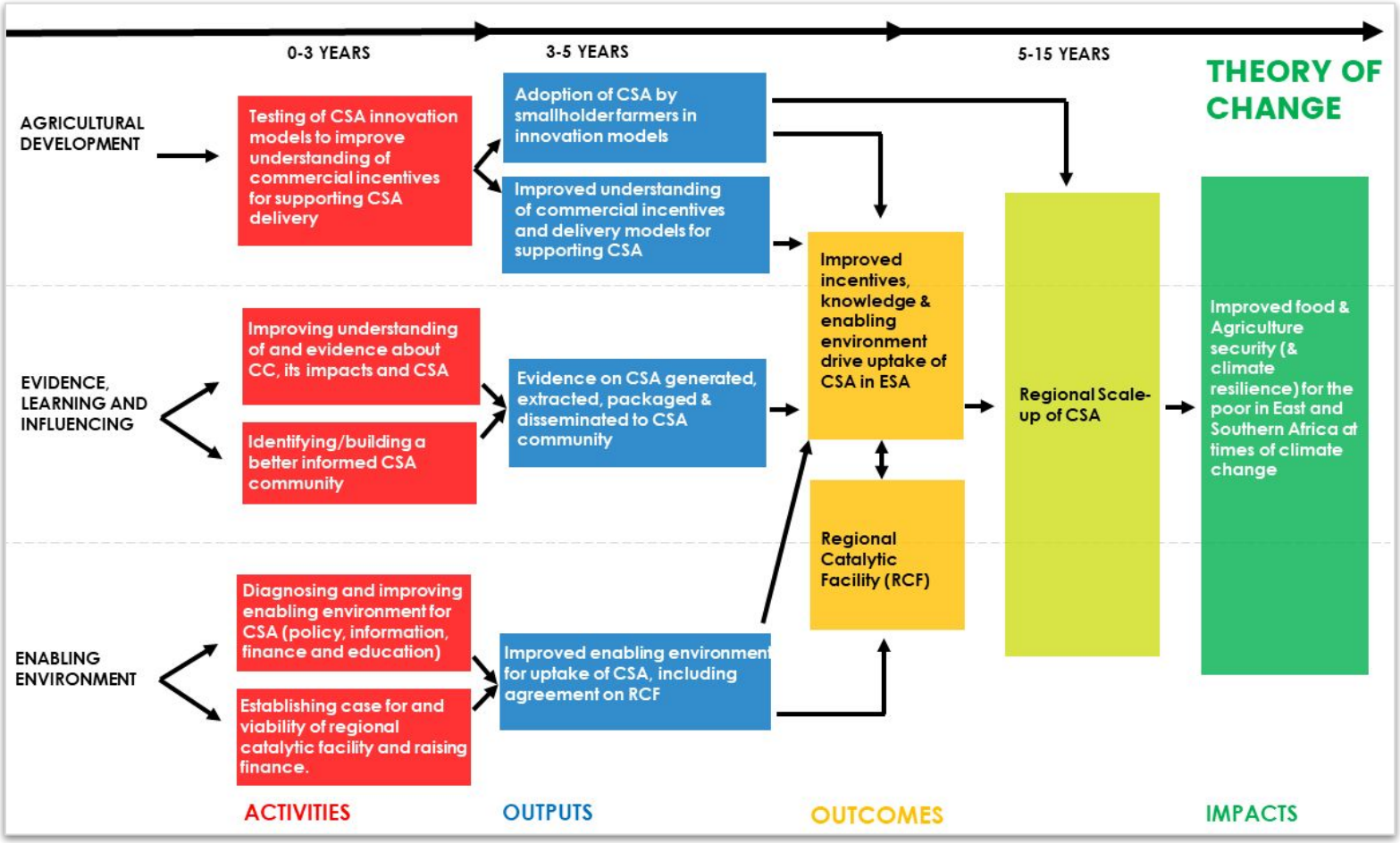
# 3. Conclusion and Next Steps

This Paper is intended to have given readers a high-level overview of the role SGABs can play in the innovation and implementation of gender-inclusive CSA, and some practical guidance on how SGABs can become more inclusive within their business model and practices. Rather than being a comprehensive step-by-step guide, the information presented here aims to provide some inspiration and motivation for SGABs to contribute to the emerging evidence base at the gender/CSA/business nexus.

For further guidance on how SGABs can engage with others to build an enabling environment for gender-inclusive CSA, please continue to the second Paper in this Series, *Influencing and Advocacy for Gender-Inclusive Climate-Smart Agriculture: A guide for small and growing agribusinesses.*

# Annex:
# Vuna Theory of Change

*The research, publication, and dissemination of this Series seeks to contribute to efficacy of Vuna programme objectives at the output level.*



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