



Gender

**A guide to setting robust policy commitments
and reporting on practice in soft commodity
supply chains**

Thematic Guide No.5





Gender equality commitments

This guide is designed to help companies set and report on robust gender equality commitments across all operations, including in relation to management, employment and interactions with communities. It is relevant whether you are a producer, processor, trader or buyer of products in soft commodity sectors.

- **Gender equality** refers to the “equal enjoyment by women and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. A critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances.” ([FAO, 2021](#))
- **Women can be especially impacted in forestry and agricultural supply chains**, for example, through hazardous employment conditions, increased vulnerability to gender-based violence and harassment, and as part of affected communities reliant on natural resources.
- In 2019, **women only held 28% of managerial positions worldwide** ([UN 2021](#)) and **men were paid between 3.1 and 6.6% more than women** in a study of 6 developed nations ([Glassdoor, 2021](#)).
- Setting a clear gender equality commitment is a vital step for organisations to demonstrate that they commit to being an **‘equal opportunity employer’**.
- **Robust gender equality commitments and transparent reporting** help an organisation eliminate gender-based discrimination.
- Organisations should also recognise women may be **reliant on certain forest resources**, may occupy **different roles in supply chains** and may have **traditional knowledge** which differs from men—all of which need protecting.
- Gender equality commitments should form part of a wider suite of policies addressing **respect for human rights and workers rights**.
- Vital to gender equality commitments is the encouragement of a gender balanced workforce, pay equality, elimination of gender-based discrimination, a functional grievance mechanism and the inclusion and empowerment of women in communities and supply chains.

The SPOTT project assesses soft commodity companies on their public disclosure of gender commitments. For details of all the companies we assess go to www.spott.org/.



Gender equality in your corporate policies



Prepare or revise your **commitment to eliminate gender related discrimination** with regards to employment.



Report your progress to eliminate gender related discrimination.

Provide evidence of actions taken to tackle discrimination such as employee training and improvements made to key procedures such as recruitment, equal opportunities, parental leave, flexible working, etc.



Report how your organisation specifically supports the inclusion of women in forestry or agricultural operations.

Address issues such as adequate consultation with women in surrounding communities, flexible working hours, access and control of land and resources, livelihood schemes to support women, etc.



Publish clear gender data on your workforce—specifically the number and percentage of female and male workers.



Show the gender balance of your board and senior management team.

For publicly-listed companies, publish the number and percentage of women on the board. All companies should publish the same data for women in the senior management team.



Publish your gender pay gap—calculate the ratio of the basic salary and remuneration of women to men for each employee category, by significant locations of operation in line with [GRI reporting](#).



Define the scope of your commitments, applying them at the group level of your company, including any and all subsidiaries, joint ventures, affiliates and related entities in all countries.



Extend your gender equality commitments to all your suppliers, including those you source from directly and indirectly. Suppliers should be required to also apply the commitment at the group level.



Publish your gender equality commitments on your website with a clear date of publication and report progress annually at a minimum.



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Developed by ZSL (Zoological Society of London), SPOTT is a free, online platform supporting sustainable commodity production and trade. By tracking transparency, SPOTT incentivises the implementation of corporate best practice.

SPOTT assesses commodity producers, processors and traders on their public disclosure regarding their organisation, policies and practices related to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Investors, buyers and other key influencers can use SPOTT assessments to inform stakeholder engagement, manage ESG risk, and increase transparency across multiple industries.

Find more SPOTT Thematic Guides for soft commodity sectors here:

- Thematic Guide No.4: FPIC
- Thematic Guide No.6: Labour rights

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