



SUCAFINA

EAST AFRICA GENDER STRATEGY





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1. INTRODUCTION

Promoting gender equality and empowering women in the coffee value chain is a key focus of Sucafina's Sustainability Strategy. It's also at the heart of the Human Rights pillar of IMPACT, Sucafina's responsible sourcing program.

This East Africa (EA) Gender Strategy sets out Sucafina's vision for advancing gender equality and empowering women within our supply chains in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda to foster equitable, thriving coffee communities and support sustainable coffee production.

1.1 Rationale

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a key priority in sustainable development. Women contribute significantly to the global coffee industry and perform up to 70% of labor in coffee production; yet gender imbalance in the coffee sector is impeding sustainable development (*source: ICD, 2018*). Championing women's participation in the coffee value chain on equal terms with men and increasing men's participation in gender equality efforts are both key.

Our motivations for developing a gender strategy include:

- **Advancement of human rights.** Gender equality is an essential human right. Every person has the right to live free from oppression, abuse, and prejudice, irrespective of gender. Gender strategies help to ensure that these rights are recognized and safeguarded.
- **Economic empowerment.** Equal opportunities for women and other under-represented groups supports their contribution to the workforce and helps drive economic growth. This means that promoting gender equality can have a significant impact on economic development.
- **Reducing violence and discrimination.** Gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination are prevalent global issues and gender strategies provide a roadmap for addressing these problems, creating safer and more inclusive communities.
- **Sustainable development.** UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 focuses on gender equality, emphasizing the empowerment of women and under-represented gender groups in order to reduce poverty, improve resource management, and create more sustainable societies.
- **Eradicating harmful stereotypes.** Gender stereotypes severely restrict opportunities and legitimize discrimination. Gender strategies help to dispel these myths and encourage more realistic and favorable attitudes for people and organizations.

Engaging men in gender equality efforts. Engaging men and boys as allies and agents of change is vital. This can be done by promoting: alternative and positive masculinities; shared decision-making; equitable division of labor in caregiving and unpaid care work to enhance the 5Rs (recognize, reduce, redistribute, reward, and represent); healthy and gender equitable relationships; and non-violence in communities.

1.2 Gender in East Africa

Gender inequality is deeply embedded in cultural practices in all EA countries. Women in many societies face economic, political, sexual, and cultural discrimination even though such discrimination harms individuals, communities, countries, and businesses, hampering development and economic growth. This discrimination transcends into family matters but also affects places of work, directly and indirectly.

When developing our approach to gender in East Africa, we consulted the national gender policies in the countries in which we work:

- **Burundi.** Burundi's National Gender Policy focuses on gender equality and equity, the advancement of women, the elimination of all forms of violence against women, the control of fertility by women, and women's access to health services, especially reproductive health.
- **Kenya.** The Kenya National Policy on Gender and Development seeks to create a just, fair, and transformed society, free from gender-based discrimination in all spheres of life. It aims to address discrimination that is embodied in statutory, religious, and customary laws and practices and the administrative and procedural mechanisms for accessing rights that hamper the goal of attaining gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Rwanda.** Gender equality is one of the core values of Rwanda's Vision 2050, which aims for the country to reach upper-middle-income status by 2035 and high-income status by 2050. Gender is considered a cross-cutting priority area in national planning and strategic frameworks, which have been translated into workable programs and projects through the Sector Strategic Plans and District Development Strategies.
- **Tanzania.** The Tanzania National Gender Policy places strong emphasis on gender mainstreaming in all plans, programs, budgets, strategies, and activities to close the gaps that resulted from customary and religious laws that discriminated against women in terms of education, traditional roles, and rights to resources including land.
- **Uganda.** Women in Uganda tend to rely more on farm self-employment than on non-farm and formal employment, due to lack of adequate skills, discrimination in formal labor markets, and difficulties combining employment with caregiving. The Uganda Gender Policy prioritizes strategies such as designing and implementing programs to improve women's and men's access to justice, enacting and reforming laws to eliminate gender discriminatory practices, norms, and values, preventing GBV, and implementing reproductive health and literacy programs.

2. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Sucafina's Global Gender Strategy aims to promote gender equality and empower women to foster equitable, thriving coffee communities through the IMPACT Program. The strategy is based around three pillars: **gender mainstreaming, gender transformation, and women's economic empowerment**.

To build on the global vision and further embed gender equality in its East African supply chains, Sucafina partnered with Equal Origins, an organization that supports the coffee and cocoa industries in engaging and investing in gender equality throughout the value chain.

2.1 Baseline Assessment

The first step towards developing a gender strategy for East Africa was to assess the gender equality state-of-play across Sucafina's operations in the region – at organization and farm level. Sucafina's teams in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda took part in a series of workshops with Equal Origins. Each country team conducted an in-depth Gender Equity Index (GEI) analysis to assess performance on gender and identify strengths and gaps. This analysis formed the basis of the Gender Action Plans at the heart of Sucafina's EA Gender Strategy.

2.2 Gaps

Sucafina has a long history of promoting gender mainstreaming through various initiatives in East African countries, particularly sustainability projects designed to improve farmers' livelihoods. However, the GEI assessment identified some areas of improvements that need to be addressed to further promote gender equality. These gaps are broadly similar in all five East African countries and included:

- **Lack of knowledge on gender issues.** Limited understanding and knowledge of gender issues at farm and organizational levels due to lack of well-designed training materials and activities.
- **Low female representation in producer organizations/cooperatives.** Most coffee farms are owned by men, and producer organizations (POs) and cooperatives have fewer female members, with leadership positions generally occupied by men. At the organization level, some departments (e.g. agronomy teams) have few or no female staff.
- **Lack of gender data.** Insufficient understanding of gender issues results in non-gender-sensitive programs with less impact on beneficiaries and inadequate gender-responsive infrastructure.
- **Gaps in approaches used to deliver farmer services and training.** Farmer training and services, generally organized through POs and cooperatives, sometimes exclude women due to male-dominated communication channels and less inclusive training approaches.
- **Discriminatory cultural norms.** East African cultural norms can restrict women's access to resources and decision-making, increasing their economic dependence and burden of unpaid care work.
- **Lack of formalized gender policy.** Sucafina has long promoted gender equality and women's empowerment in East Africa through numerous initiatives at origin, but had no formalized gender policy. This led to gaps in recruitment of staff and composition of POs, as well as the design of programs and projects that are not gender sensitive and a general lack of funding to implement gender-related activities.

2.3 International Frameworks

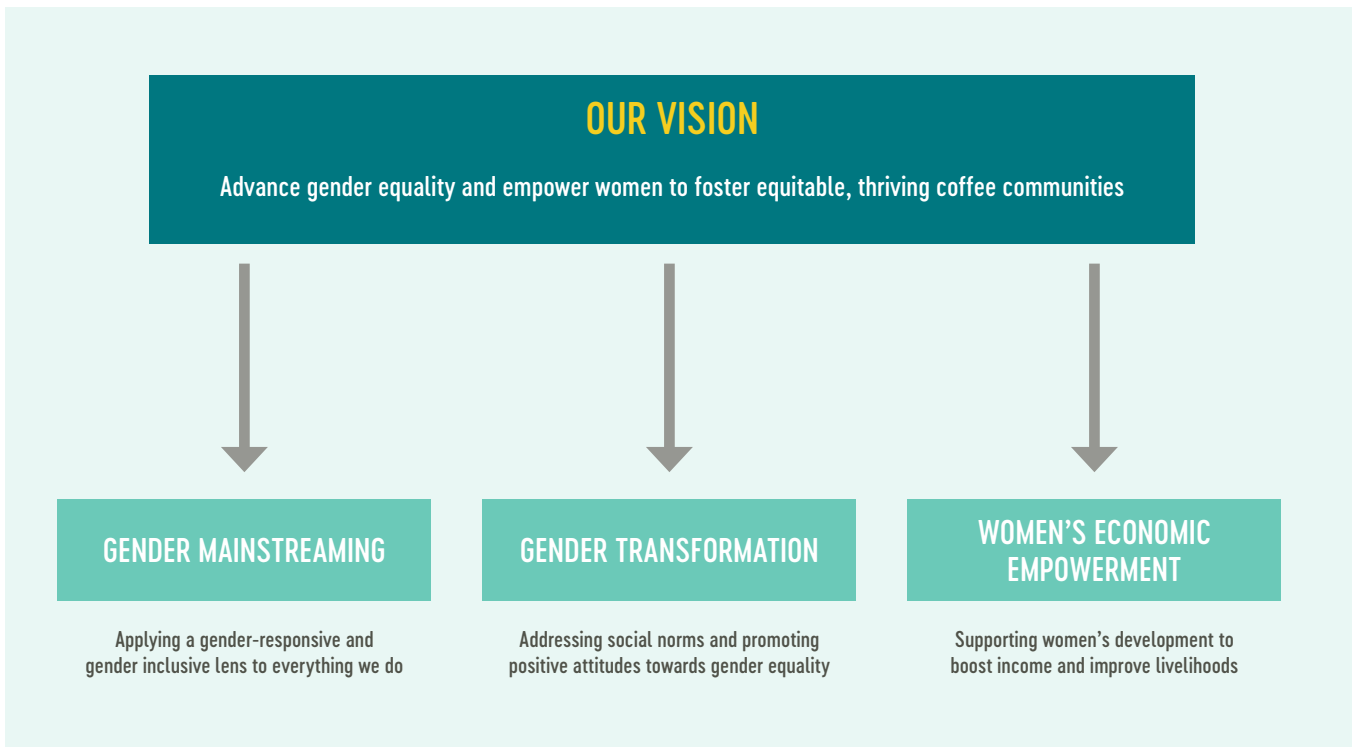
The Sucafina EA Gender Strategy was developed with reference to national and international gender policies and legal frameworks to ensure that it addresses various gender-related commitments globally. Some of the international legal frameworks include:

- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which forms the basis for countries to make commitments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).
- The UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".
- The East African Community (EAC) highlights that mainstreaming of GEWE is crucial to ensuring participation of women in transformation in the region. The EAC region underscores the importance of harmonizing gender policies to facilitate gender equality and women's empowerment.



3. VISION & STRATEGY

Sucafina's Global Gender Strategy was developed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through the IMPACT Program.



3.1 Gender as a Cross-Functional Issue

Gender equality is not just a standalone goal but a fundamental principle that intersects with various areas of Sucafina's operations, from its purpose – to create opportunities to improve lives – and HR policies, to the Caring for People pillar of its Sustainability Strategy, as well as the human rights focus area of its IMPACT Program.

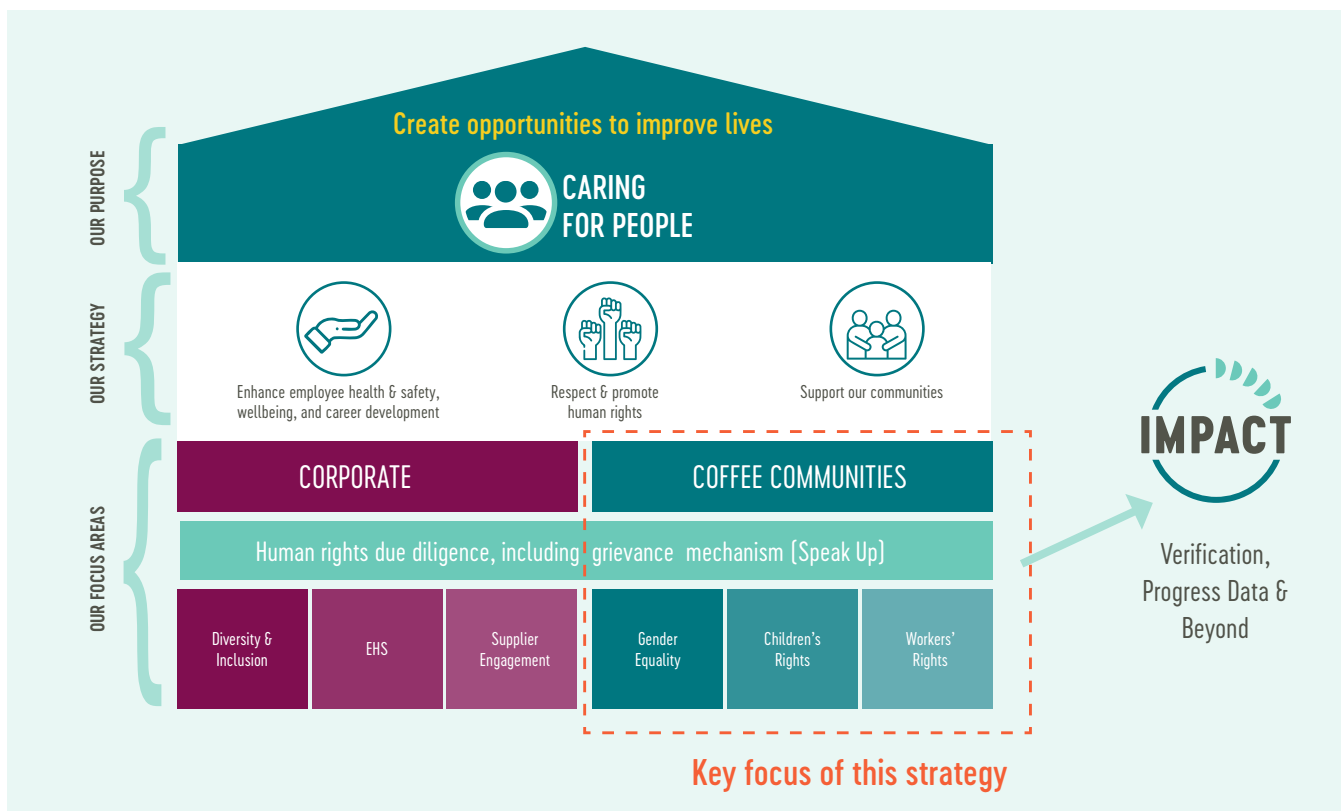
Treating people with respect and embracing diversity and equal opportunities is a key tenet of *Sucafina's Code of Conduct*:

Sucafina embraces diversity and inclusion while providing equal opportunities at all stages regardless of race, color, nationality, religion, tribe, gender, age, marital status, citizenship, disability or sexual orientation.

Recognizing gender as a cross-functional issue means embedding gender perspectives and considerations throughout the business, ensuring that Sucafina's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is reflected throughout its policies, programs, and practices. This approach not only strengthens organizational culture but also enhances sustainability efforts and community impact, leading to more equitable, thriving coffee communities.

This EA Gender Strategy focuses on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the East African coffee communities where Sucafina works through the IMPACT Program. The GEI analysis identified some opportunities to help further embed gender equality – and especially gender mainstreaming – throughout Sucafina's East Africa operations. These include working with HR to promote structural change towards gender equality, including when it comes to hiring, career development and progression, the balanced reconciliation of work and family life, and training on gender.

Gender Equality Is Embedded Throughout Sucafina’s Operations



3.2 Promoting Gender Equality in Coffee Communities

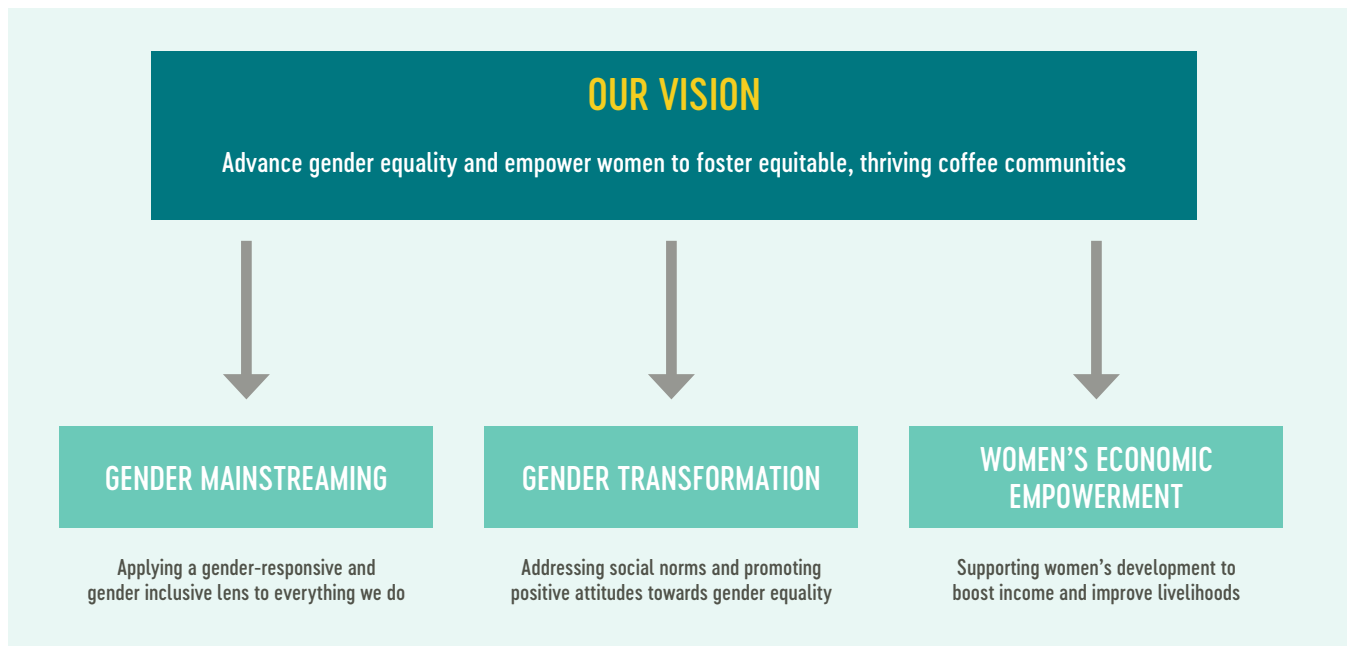
Promoting gender equality in the coffee supply chain is a key aspect of the human rights goal area of Sucafina’s IMPACT Program. Many projects that are part of IMPACT and Sucafina’s other sustainability programs in East Africa include action areas relating to gender.

Sucafina origins organize capacity-building sessions on gender equality for farmers and staff. The aim is to further understanding of the different roles and needs of women and men in the workplace and in communities, and develop capacity to challenge gender discrimination and address socially constructed equalities, which are challenges to improving livelihoods. Gender representatives and committees have been elected to support initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality across the company. Projects that aim to further the economic empowerment of women have been designed and funds acquired from donors.

A particular priority is to increase the proportion of female field agronomists and CWS managers and to support them in interacting directly with stakeholders to enhance women’s empowerment and overcome gender disparities. The GEI assessment also highlighted the need to ensure projects are designed to be gender sensitive and gender responsive. Project achievements are often measured quantitatively, such as recording the number of people trained or farm inputs provided. Gender-sensitive and gender-responsive monitoring goes beyond simply counting numbers of female and male participants and should evaluate gender differences in all project aspects. Projects should also include data on participation, time use, health access, and land ownership to clearly show the impact on people’s lives. Gender-sensitive indicators ensure that project interventions benefit everyone equally and equitably, irrespective of gender.

3.3 EA Gender Strategy Framework

Sucafina's EA Gender Strategy is based around the same vision and key pillars as the global strategy:



The three pillars – gender mainstreaming, gender transformation, and women’s economic empowerment – form the basis for the individualized Action Plans developed for each East African origin to identify capacity and resource needs, prioritize actions, and measure progress.

3.3.1 Gender Mainstreaming

Applying a gender-responsive and gender-inclusive lens to everything we do.

Gender Mainstreaming is the cornerstone of the EA Gender Strategy. The first step is to address key fundamentals, such as making sure programs and farmer services are designed to be gender inclusive and gender responsive. Other actions, identified as part of the GEI assessment, include:

- Formalizing gender policies and including a gender lens in project design.
- Increasing female representation e.g. in cooperative leadership and among field agronomists.
- Improving access to training and services for women farmers.
- Gender-sensitization training.
- Promoting joint membership of farmer groups/cooperatives for household members.

3.3.2 Gender Transformation

Addressing social norms and promoting positive attitudes towards gender equality.

The Gender Transformation pillar builds on gender mainstreaming work by:

- Establishing positive role models in communities.
- Providing sensitization and capacity-building on: household decision-making, safety & gender-based violence, and gender equality.
- Engaging men as a pivotal lever for change.

3.3.3 Women’s Economic Empowerment

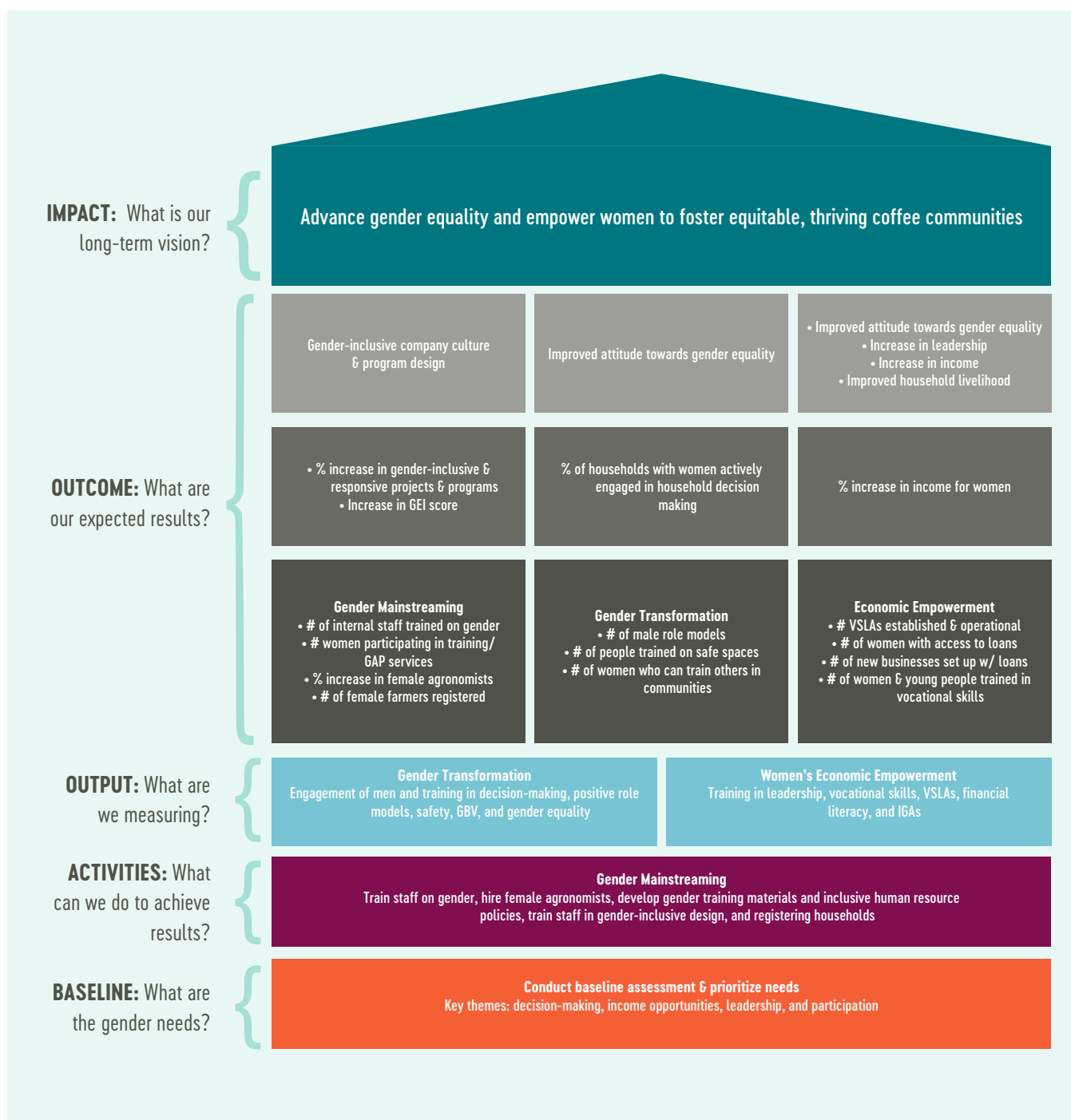
Supporting women’s development to boost income and improve livelihoods.

The Women’s Economic Empowerment pillar builds on our gender mainstreaming work by:

- Empowering women through training on: leadership, vocational skills, financial literacy, and income-generating activities (IGAs).
- Providing access to finance; for example, through the establishment of Village Savings & Loan Associations (VSLAs).

3.4 Metrics & KPIs

The EA Gender Strategy translates the vision and key pillars into a series of expected outcomes, supported by a set of targeted actions and activities, as well as key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress.



4. EAST AFRICA GENDER ACTION PLANS

Sucafina partnered with Equal Origins to conduct a GEI analysis to help assess performance on gender across its operations in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. The GEI reports identified areas where gender issues were ‘basic’, ‘intermediary’, and ‘advanced’. From these reports, each country team developed a SWOT analysis, identifying areas of strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In 2023, the GEI scores for the five EA countries ranged from 38% to 78%, highlighting the need to set continuous improvement goals over time.

To further promote and embed gender equality in coffee communities in East Africa, Sucafina built a network of Gender Leads, who focus on raising awareness and developing gender skills, including gender analysis, in their country. They facilitate talks on gender equality, support the design of gender-inclusive farmer services, and help to establish women’s VSLAs, among many other activities.

Based on the areas identified by the GEI as ‘basic’ or as weaknesses, action plans were developed for each EA country chapter, including a Theory of Change and a Gender Equity Development Plan. These plans are all based around the three key pillars of the EA Gender Strategy. Some of the key activities and actions developed for each pillar are outlined below.

Gender Mainstreaming

Promote women coffee producers’ improved access to extension services, including seedlings, fertilizers, and other farm inputs by:

- Updating gender policies for each Sucafina EA origin.
- Establishing a functioning gender coordination structure at each country office.
- Electing gender representatives at CWS, POs, and cooperatives for coffee farmers.
- Conducting gender analysis surveys for farmers and staff.
- Developing or updating sexual harassment policies.
- Developing tools and guidelines (manuals, guidelines, and toolkits) on gender mainstreaming for all employees and extension personnel to use in planning trainings, meetings, workshops, and projects.
- Building capacity of staff and coffee farmers on gender equality in the value chain (assessing training needs & developing training materials).
- Conducting awareness-raising, including by designing gender-related messaging and organizing campaigns to address GBV.
- Increasing the number of women and young people among registered coffee farmers.

Gender Transformation

For both women and men to have the opportunity to realize their full potential, the norms, behaviors, relations, structures, and systems that sustain and perpetuate gender inequality must be transformed. Therefore, Sucafina EA will engage key actors to address prevailing power dynamics and enhance gender equality. We commit to conduct gender analysis to critically examine the gender roles, norms, and power dynamics that contribute to gender inequalities by:

- Organizing training for couples to equip both men and women with knowledge and to address gender equality at home and with their children.
- Training male change agents as gender champions in communities to challenge negative social norms.
- Establishing safe spaces for women where they can share ideas and strengthen and advise one another, building self-esteem and confidence.
- Mobilizing men to allocate parts of land to their spouses for coffee farming.
- Identifying female role models and ambassadors to act as trainers and mobilizers of other farmers on gender equality and agronomic work.
- Organizing engagement meetings with local leaders on women’s empowerment and transformation in the coffee sector.
- Mobilizing and supporting women to participate in International Women’s Day, International Day of the Girl Child, and other international days in order to amplify female voices.
- Mobilizing women to take up leadership positions.
- Connecting women’s groups with identified NGOs and partners to boost learning.

Women's Economic Empowerment

In order to further women's economic empowerment, Sucafina EA commits to supporting women's development to boost income and improve livelihoods by:

- Organizing engagement meetings with local leaders on women's empowerment and transformation in the coffee sector.
- Training women on financial literacy, leadership skills, and coffee agronomy skills.
- Establishing VSLAs and women's groups that provide loans to women at low interest rates.
- Supporting women by providing coffee seedlings and fertilizers.
- Organizing trainings for VSLAs and women's groups on income-generating activities.
- Connecting women's groups with local partners for micro-business start-ups.



5. APPENDIX

5.1 Results Framework

CATEGORY	#	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Gender Mainstreaming	1	# and % of internal staff trained on gender
	2	# and % of agronomists/field staff trained on gender
	3	# and % of female farmers participating in training
	4	# and % increase of female farmers registered
	5	# and % increase of female agronomists
	6	# and % increase in gender-inclusive & gender-responsive projects & programs
	7	GEl improvement score
Gender Transformation	8	# of men engaged in gender activities (as male role models)
	9	# of households participating in training on gender norms (safe spaces/gender action learning groups (GALS))
	10	Average score on decision-making at farming household level (sample based)
Women's Economic Empowerment	11	# of women & youth trained in vocational, leadership, and financial literacy skills
	12	# of VSLAs established & operational
	13	# of income-generating activities established
	14	# of women in leadership positions
	15	% increase in income for women (sample based)





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