

GENDER ACTION PLAN

A. Gender Context

1. **Gender disparity.** While India is making progress towards development goals, gender disparities are persisting. India ranks 140th out of the 156 countries on the overall Global Gender Gap Index 2021 and since 2006, the gap collectively (economic, education, health, political participation) has grown significantly.¹ For instance, the estimated earned income of women is one-fifth of male income, which is also among the world's lowest (144th).² In ADB's India country partnership strategy from 2018 to 2022, gender empowerment and social inclusion is considered a key area of focus.³

2. **India is witnessing a feminization of the agriculture sector.** As a result of increasing migration of men from rural to urban areas, women are playing an increasing role in the agriculture sector as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and laborers. Moreover, there is global evidence that suggest that women play a decisive role in ensuring food security and preserving local biodiversity.⁴ However, women's growing participation in agriculture in India is being associated with their increasing poverty and lower well-being. To address this, women farmers require enhanced access to resources, such as fertilizers, to increase their agricultural productivity and household incomes.⁵

3. **The chemicals sector including the fertilizer sector is a nontraditional area of employment for women and tends to employ few women.** The chemicals industry plays an important role in the Indian economy. Although data is scarce on the number of women employed in the sector, the limited available information suggests that the number is low.⁶

4. **Boosting skilling opportunities for women is important to advance women's equality in India.** Women in India represent only 24% of the labor force that is engaged in any form of work in the market economy, compared with an average of 40% globally. More women in India tend to work in low-productivity and low-skilled jobs than men. For example, women account for only 38% of all professional and technical jobs in India. Increasing skilling opportunities for women, particularly in technical roles, can boost their employability and increase their participation in the workforce.⁷ Moreover, women who have been exposed to skills training not only show an increase in income but also improvement in their levels of self-efficiency, aspirations, and agency.⁸

¹ World Economic Forum. 2021. Global Gender Gap Report. Geneva.

² UN Women. 2019. [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2019](#). New York.

³ ADB. 2020. [ADB's Work in India](#) (accessed 17 November 2020).

⁴ Government of India. Press Information Bureau. 2018. [Growing Migration of Men is Causing Feminization of Agriculture Sector, says Economic Survey](#). Delhi (accessed 9 April 2021).

⁵ Itishree Pattnaik, Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Stewart Lockie & Bill Pritchard. 2017. "[The feminization of agriculture or the feminization of agrarian distress? Tracking the trajectory of women in agriculture in India](#)". Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy, 23:1, 138–155, DOI: 10.1080/13547860.2017.1394569

⁶ International Labor Organization. 2011. Restructuring, employment and social dialogue in the chemicals and pharmaceutical industries. Geneva.

⁷ McKinsey Global Institute. 2015. [The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in India](#) (accessed 19 April 2021).

⁸ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2019. [Women at work in India](#). New York.

B. Smartchem Technologies Limited

5. **Smartchem Technologies Limited has taken measures to strengthen gender equality and promote a diverse workforce.** Despite a challenging sectoral context, Smartchem Technologies Limited (STL) has taken measures to strengthen gender equality in the workforce including implementing an anti-sexual harassment policy and actively seeking to attract female candidates through campus outreach programs. STL trains staff on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace once a year. The 45-minute module tests the knowledge of the staff and provides a certificate upon completion. Currently, 97% of staff are men and onboarding training for sales agents does not include understanding and meeting the needs of female customers. Table 1 below provides the staffing in STL.

(Confidential information deleted).

6. **Smartchem Technologies Limited's corporate social responsibility initiative is working on addressing a number of gender issues.** Women are the key beneficiaries of STL's (corporate social responsibility) CSR program, the Ishanya Foundation.⁹ The Foundation's initiatives include scholarships for women's education, vocational training and skill development, and dairy development programs targeted at low-income women.

B. Gender Action Plan

7. The project is categorized as *effective gender mainstreaming*. An accompanying technical assistance is in place which will support achievement of training of women farmers in climate-resilient soil management practices, including the importance of developing moisture holding capacity, managing nutrient availability, and in smart use of fertilizers, as well as functional financial literacy. Delivery of the training would be a combination of classroom-based teaching as well as hands-on training, including on-farm for farmers. There is a requirement to selectively pilot women-only groups when delivering the financial literacy training. (Confidential information deleted).

Table 2: Gender Action Plan

Results Chain	Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines	Data Sources and Reporting
Output 2. Agriculture modernization, gender equality, and climate change resiliency promoted	(Confidential information deleted): 2a. At least (Confidential information deleted) smallholder farmers, of which at least (Confidential information deleted) are women, trained in modern farming, climate-resilient agricultural practices, and financial literacy (Confidential information deleted) 2b. At least (Confidential information deleted) training groups pilot the use of women-only training sessions to deliver functional financial literacy (Confidential information deleted)	STL's annual development effectiveness monitoring report

⁹ [Ishanya Foundation](#).

Results Chain	Performance Indicators with Targets and Baselines	Data Sources and Reporting
3. Company sales' outreach to female farmers expanded	<p>2c. Share of female workers employed in the fertilizer business increased (Confidential information deleted)</p> <p>3a. At least (Confidential information deleted) farming households reached with marketing materials aimed at enhancing gender equality among farmers (Confidential information deleted)^a</p> <p>3b. A gender sensitization training module developed and piloted with at least (Confidential information deleted) sales agents with the intention to improve outreach to female farmers including specific approaches for selling products to women (Confidential information deleted)^b</p>	

STL = Smartchem Technologies Limited.

^a Examples of gender-sensitive communication material may include messages on equitable household decision making, importance of education of girl child, ending early/child marriage, or showcasing pictures of women farmers that breaks cultural stereotypes.

^b Gender sensitization training intention is to improve outreach to female farmers, including specific approaches for selling products to women. Example topics that may be covered in the training include addressing unconscious bias or gender-sensitive outreach to women farmers.

Source: Asian Development Bank