Wild Harvest Value Chain Analysis Report

Armenia

Armenia Gender Project
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Armenia historically has always been well-known for the high quality of fresh and processed berries and fruits, thanks to favorable agroecological conditions and production systems. Armenia’s climatic conditions are favorable particularly for raspberry, strawberry, blackberry, currant, and blueberry growth. The intact environment, where berries and herbs grow, positively affects the quality of crop harvested from forests and makes them products with high demand both in the domestic and international markets.

This is one of the main sectors of Armenia’s agriculture, which has a big export potential and brings attention to it from outer markets. Analysis of three value chains, namely fish production, greenhouse, and wild harvest done in the value chain selection report, shows that wild harvest has the least developed value chain, compared to fish production and greenhouse with women’s share overrepresented virtually at all segments of the value chain, except for transportation. One of the specifics of the wild harvest value chain is that there are no tangible entry barriers and start-up costs.

This report aims to provide a detailed analysis of the selected value chain. It provides insights about the nature of the work and responsibilities performed through the various stages of the value chain, from collecting and processing till the final stage of realization. Within this research and proposed analysis, significant efforts have been focused on discovering, exploring, and explaining gender-sensitive patterns across the value chain.

The report consists of three main parts: macro, meso, and micro analyses where the analysis of the wild harvest value chain is performed to provide descriptions and explanations of the general functioning of the value chain, women’s role, responsibilities, knowledge, skills needed, and the opportunities for income generation across the stages of the value chain. The focal point of the analytical work has been to explore the gendered roles, gendered access to resources and capital, gendered control over benefits, and types of skills and knowledge required for increased profitability.

In the final part of recommendations, possible intervention trajectories are proposed with the aim of developing the wild harvest value chain and the long-term objective of economic empowerment for women in rural areas.
Analysis also suggests that there is a huge potential for this value chain to become a well-developed and profitable one. Fresh and processed berry demand is growing internationally, and Armenia could not stand aside from the global developments. One of the key preconditions for this transformation is the shift of the production and organizational system of the wild harvest value chain from being purely based on local knowledge to the one that largely depends on business and technical knowledge.

Currently, wild pickers and farmers fail to meet the growing demand from food processing companies. Adding to this, with an open opportunity of exporting deep-frozen berries, which currently stands very low in Armenia, but grows rapidly internationally, the situation with insufficient supply will get even worse. However, the issues of sufficient supply of berries can be overcome in a short period, provided all necessary successive steps are agreed and implemented properly.

The main issue is that collectors have little awareness of what is the market demand for berries in terms of quality and quantity. This leads to the situation where wild collectors point out that they experience problems regarding the sales of collected produce or do not collect to the maximum of their capacity, while processing companies are looking for suppliers on a contractual basis, which will ensure timely supplies of berries and will meet the set standards for quality, marketable condition, and other factors. As underlined by the experts of the sector during the in-depth interviews, the issue of balancing supply and demand of berries is a multi-tiered process and requires a holistic approach to be solved. Actors of the value chain do not control any assets such as land or any other assets. Cooling and drying facilities available to them were mostly funded by international organizations and are shared among value chain participants.

The cooperation possibilities for the wild harvest value chain are largely dependent on the management and organizational arrangements in the future. This value chain is mostly represented by physical persons, mostly women, who collect the harvest and sell it near their houses. The main characteristics of the value chain are the low organizational arrangements within the sector and
individual efforts of the actors. This fact certainly creates tangible difficulties for future cooperation and field development.

Research results identify the unstable nature of trade deals in the wild harvest market as a main obstacle for the development of the selected value chain. In other words, there is no confidence for collectors that they will be able to sell their product on time. The situation is becoming even more complicated, taking into account a very fragile nature of wild berries. This, in turn, creates a great impediment for the motivation of collectors to collect and sell more. On the other hand, the interviews with wild collectors clearly show that supply-side actors need organizational and marketing skills development to promote a reliable functioning of the market and making wild harvest collection as one of the main sources of income generation for the chain participants.

The results of the grading exercise aimed at selecting a gender-sensitive value chain, conducted within the framework of the value chain selection report, showed that the wild harvest value chain possesses the highest potential for enhancing women’s economic empowerment. The wild harvest value chain does not require huge capital investments, has limited entry barriers, and is thus reachable for most vulnerable groups. The other weighty factor in favor of the wild harvest value chain is that it offers a variety of new opportunities for women in terms of increasing both the number of women involved in the value chain and the overall profitability for women collectors. Unmet local demand for fresh and deep-frozen berries added by growing international demand for such products is a promising precondition for the value chain’s overall growth.

As mentioned above, the development of the wild harvest value chain as a means of economic empowerment for women in rural areas puts a high demand on employing complex intervention mechanisms, which might be best described by the Strategy of Organizing for Change. The strategy assumes interventions throughout the value chain for identifying structural constraints, supporting capacity building, opening up access to affordable financial resources, and contributing to the formation of business entities, for instance, cooperatives.

The current wild harvest value chain analysis at the macro, meso, and micro levels aims to identify and facilitate discussions on gaps, discriminations, and key gender issues, keeping in mind the multiple dimensions and levels on which gender inequalities and opportunities operate.

The analysis is based on the results of qualitative research conducted through in-depth interviews with wild collectors and field experts, comprehensive desk-based reviews of local and international studies, and comparisons and analogies of official statistics, strategies, and other analytical materials.

A comprehensive analysis of vertical and horizontal integration of women in the value chain was done. An overall picture depicting the situation of where in the value chain women and men are more active, what is the division of labor among them, what is the role of women and men in the management, and so on has been given. Other important issues such as the impact of cultural
setting and customary law and the women and men leaders’ influential power on policy development level, for instance, whether they are able to advance policy initiatives aimed at establishing a more conducive environment for gender equality, among other emerging issues, has been discussed.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

The constraints currently faced by women engaged in wild harvesting are presented in Table 1 in four dimensions: (a) practices and participation; (b) access to assets; (c) beliefs and perceptions; and (d) laws, policies, and institutions.

**Table 1. Different Types of Gender-based Constraints in the Wild Harvest Value Chain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Observed and Measurable Unequal Conditions</th>
<th>Factors Leading to the Observed Gender Inequalities</th>
<th>Gender-based Constraint Statement</th>
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| Practices and participation | Women are actively participating in different stages of the value chain— from the collection of crops till the product realization in the market.  
Women, compared with men, have less access to trainings and extension programs, due to weak transportation systems, insufficient infrastructures in rural areas, and overloaded housework. | Women are mainly represented in the production stage of the value chain.  
Women, as a matter of practice, are excluded from those stages of selected value chain where income is generated and added value is accumulated.  
They lack the marketing skills and leadership features to become successful in product realization along with men. | The overall development of the value chain will itself improve the economic situation for women, because they are actively engaged nearly in all stages of the value chain.  
Women might become more successful and economically empowered through the selected value chain if they have equal access to trainings and extension programs.  
Women need to develop their marketing and leadership skills. |
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| Access to assets                | Although the law provides equal ownership rights both for men and women, the number of women possessing ownership rights over land is incompatibly low compared to those of men.  
The hereditary rights are basically in favor of men.  
The sons become the lawful owners of land and other types of capital.  
Women encounter tangible difficulties in getting financial aid and loans, due to the absence of collateral.                                                                                                                      | After the privatization processes in the 1990s, women became de jure co-owners of land in rural areas. Yet, de facto, all decisions about the actual use of land were made exclusively by men.  
Societal norms about the ‘natural’ roles assigned to men and women are steadily perpetuating an ‘economic subordinate’ role for women.  
Women need guarantees of repayment to get loans from banks.                                                                                                                 | The main constraints on women’s access to vital assets are the hereditary customs and rights on the one hand, and perceptions and societal norms about the ‘normal’ gendered roles on the other.                                                                 |
| Beliefs and perceptions          | The traditional stereotypes about the proper roles of men and women are very dominant in every aspect of social life. Women are predominantly perceived as mothers, wives, and caregivers, and men as ‘breadwinners’.  
Although Armenia rates quite high in providing equal educational opportunities for men and women, in career advancement and fulfilling high management positions, women encounter more difficulties than do men. | Traditional stereotypes about proper gender roles are dominating not only among men, but among women, as well.  
The economic disadvantaged situation for women in its turn constrains their opportunities for maintaining active roles in social life, to a tangible degree.                                                                                                                          | Belief systems and perceptions about gender roles are not conducive to equal opportunities for men and women both in terms of economic empowerment and decision-making authority.  
The economic betterment of women’s situation will gradually improve their opportunities for decision-making positions within their communities and in the wider society, as a whole. |
| Laws, policies, and institutions | The laws and regulations provide equal opportunities for both sexes.  
There are not discriminatory practices in laws or other related policies.  
The main discriminatory effects are caused mainly by the poor implementation of these laws and regulations.                                                                                               | The main obstacle constraining the effective implementation of nondiscriminatory laws and regulations are social norms and hereditary rights over land and on other types of capital.                                                                                                           | The situation of women might be improved if social norms about the proper roles, rights, and responsibilities for men and women change over time.                                                                                           |
CHAPTER 1: MACROANALYSIS

GENDER ROLES

The wild harvest value chain development was selected as a way to improve the economic condition of women in rural areas because the number of women involved at all stages of the value chain is already quite high, in comparison with fish and greenhouse value chains, where women are involved mostly in cultivation, refinement, and processing operations, being excluded from the stages where income is generated.

The entry barriers to the wild harvest value chain are low. Besides, there is no need of huge financial investments to ensure the entry of women to the value chain as is the case for fish and greenhouse value chains. The selection of this value chain is also supported by the argument that international markets of wild berries and herbs, available to Armenia for export, present high demand for these products. Meanwhile, both the domestic and international markets available to Armenia already have stable suppliers of fish and greenhouse products, and the entry of new suppliers might be difficult.

1. What is the share of men and women working in this specific sector/value chain by activity (supply, production, processing, transportation, and trade)?

In the wild harvest value chain, women are generally involved in supply, production, and processing activities. While men are also involved in these activities, their number is growing when the performed tasks refer to transportation and trade issues. In many instances when wild crops are sold in the streets near the household and value chain actors do not have a need for special transportation means, the number of women appears to be higher than that of men. The operational cycle in the selected value chain is short. It may last from a few hours to a few days. This fact explains why all activities are tightly connected to each other and why the collection of wild berries and herbs is turned into income within a short period. Thus, women suppliers get all the income when there is no need for transportation, and the number of men actors getting the income is increasing proportional to the need of transportation. High representativeness of women in this specific value chain can be, to a large extent, explained by apparently low turnover and income, generated across the value chain.

Evidence suggests that harvesting continues to be a predominantly feminine activity, due to low income and outputs. The proportion of women involved is high, because harvesting comprises only a small percentage in the overall workload of women in rural areas. While harvesting is a seasonal activity, rural women have many different duties and responsibilities, for example, preparing food, performing house chores, and so on. The contribution of women in wild harvest functioning and development, as a separate field, is significant, but at the same time, it is very difficult to suggest empirically sound data for women’s share in the overall production.
Taking into account the fact that in the wild harvest value chain, there are no legally registered entities and it is nearly impossible to provide official numbers of women and men sharing the workload in the selected value chain. However, according to the experts’ estimate, women’s share in the collection and processing stage is nearly 90–95 percent and the share in trade is about 50 percent, while the transportation segment is fully represented by men. It is worth noting that most female interviewees mentioned that, if necessary, they had requested and received assistance from male members of their families, especially from their sons.

Figure 2. Expert Estimation of Women’s Representation in the Wild Harvest Value Chain

2. **Are they part of the formal or the informal economy?**

Wild harvesting, by and large, can be defined as a type of informal employment both for men and women. There are no data to prove that men in this value chain are employed in the formal economy, while women are employed in the informal economy. Because the entire field represents an informal employment opportunity for both sexes, it can be stated that female actors in this value chain are self-employed, and when adding their percentage to the informal economy, the numbers are increasing.

3. **What are the functional as well as sexual divisions of labor and roles within the different segments of the value chain (production, processing, trading and marketing, consumers, and so on) according to gender roles?**

Women workers in the wild harvest value chain are generally self-employed actors. Because the activities in wild harvest are seasonal and part-time, there are not established marketing and consumer-oriented strategies. Moreover, the absence of legal entities in the value chain characterizes instability in the supply side of the market. The products are either for family consumption or for local markets. Indeed, the income generated across the value chain is used primarily for the family needs of the women engaged. This fact significantly limits the opportunities for economic empowerment of the women value chain actors. Meanwhile, the large share of female actors across all stages of product processing and delivery is not conducive in terms of their economic stability and empowerment, but plays a crucial role in the well-being of their families.

A large part of the women’s income from wild harvesting is spent on food and children needs. The presence of women in the wild harvest value chain is greater than those of men. However, such an engagement does not necessarily lead to a transformation of the economic role of women within...
their families, villages, and/or communities. Because women’s employment and participation in the wild harvest value chain are predominantly seasonal and temporary, women comprise a prevalent part of informal employment, which is usually a low-income field and lacks the full coverage of labor rights and social protection.

Although the wild harvest value chain is a low-income and generally unregulated field of economy, the development, stabilization of both demand and supply sides of the market, and regulation in the selected value chain will eventually lead to the increase of income generated across the value chain. Because women are engaged in all stages of the value chain from collection and processing to realization, the increasing profitability of the value chain will lead to the improvement of the economic condition of the women actors. In two other value chains (fish and greenhouse), the development of value chains will not necessarily lead to the economic empowerment of women, because they are practically excluded from the stages of income generation.

Thus, the selection of the wild harvest value chain is based on the initial relationships between the development of the selected value chain and the prospects for the women actors in this particular value chain, and not necessarily the profitability of the latter.

4. Are there any segments where the presence of women is more important? Are women involved in stages where value addition is generated? Where is the actual income earned?

As pointed out earlier, women are present in almost in all stages of the wild harvest value chain. However, the nature of work performed, low turnover, and absence of legal entities in the supply side make the labor of women invisible and insignificant within their families and the larger community. Their income generated through wild harvesting primarily contributes to the satisfaction of ongoing needs of their family and children. Women in this value chain do not sell the product but exchange the crops for milk, butter, or cheese from other villages. There are cases when exchanges are made to acquire clothing for children and other family members.

The incomes of women in the value chain are occasional and have little potential for the overall economic well-being and empowerment of women. Further, the income earned across the value chain depends upon the geographical specifics and individual abilities. Those who possess some skills and knowledge in bargaining may earn more for the product of the same quality and quantity than those who are new in the field.

5. What is the visibility and value granted to women’s role? What are the perceptions by women themselves, men, and the community? What is the nature of women’s work? Is it temporary or casual type of work? Are women only used as unpaid labor?

The involvement of women in the wild harvest value chain comprises characteristics natural to the life and work of women in rural areas generally. As a matter of practice, women in rural areas are
involved in activities that are vital for the well-being of the members of their families, particularly for their children. However, the involvement in the selected value chain as a form of informal employment does not necessarily lead to change of the perceptions of women’s role and decision-making authority both in their families and the wider community.

**Gendered Access to Resources**

6. What are men’s and women’s entitlements? What are the characteristics and factors that mediate men’s and women’s access to and control over different types of resources (natural, productive, and services)?

The future development of the wild harvest value chain is tightly connected with the prospects of cultivation of berries and herbs, and not necessarily with the collection of wild crops in forests. If the demand side of the market is stabilized, the need for berries and crops will normally rise. Thus, the major factor for such a development is the consideration of women’s ownership rights over land.

For some instances, men and women play complementary roles, for example, men clear land and women plant and harvest the crop. Regarding control and access over different types of resources, women in Armenia enjoy the same access to land use. It means they de facto have a right to use land, but usually the landowners are male family members who possess de jure rights over most types of resources, including land. The key point here to be made is that women’s ownership rights and access over natural resources are usually mediated by their relationships to men. When some women get divorced or widowed, they are in danger of losing any kind of ownership, which is a crucial factor to the future well-being of their children.

7. What is women’s access to information on production, organizations, and services available? Through what means of communication? Are these adapted to the possibilities of women?

Gender gaps remain in the agricultural arena due to gendered specialization of tasks performed and knowledge and skills gained and employed by men and women. Gendered specialization of tasks and knowledge has profound implications for income generation abilities of men and women. For instance, men’s expertise on new technologies, transportation, and marketing put them on a more advantageous position compared to women, taking into account the high income-generating potential of these skills and abilities. Thus, the improvement of women’s expertise in new technologies, information, and marketing is a very important source for the overall economic empowerment of women in rural areas.

Although women’s knowledge on production, information, and technologies has a great potential for dissolving gender gaps in agricultural arena, the efforts of numerous nongovernmental organizations remain less than fruitful in gender mainstreaming. Specifically, trainings were organized aiming at improving women’s knowledge and skills on management and marketing,
information, and technologies. However, women’s access was limited to those trainings and extension programs due to various reasons. First, women’s access was limited by the absence of transportation to the sites of trainings. In most cases, trainings were organized in community centers and women from distant areas had limited or no access to the trainings. Second, very heavy workloads of women in rural areas and limited free time on their schedules create additional difficulties to attend trainings and extension programs. Finally, the ability of women to participate in trainings is largely dependent on the permission of their husbands. As it was pointed out by the respondents of the focus group during the study, women in the wild harvest value chain work through traditional means of labor. They mainly rely on their physical strength, abilities, and knowledge gained over years. The value chain needs elaborated and structural approaches to enhance women’s knowledge and equip them with necessary technological means to increase productivity and facilitate value chain development.

In recent years, the efforts and investments of a number of international donor organizations were mainly concentrated on the empowerment of women in greenhouse production. Women’s lack of information and access to technology and services available is conditioned also by the fact that their opportunities to participate in farmers organizations and commercial networks are far more limited than those of men because of their heavy workloads and difficulties of transportation. The limited participation of women in farmers organizations and commercial networks can also be explained by the insufficient information sharing systems about the advantages of participation among women. Some interviewees have mentioned that they had a chance to take part in such meetings, but it was mainly because the male member of their family was not able to participate. Nonetheless, in some marzes, for example in Lori, participants mentioned that they do not experience any barriers to participate various events tailored to enhance their theoretical and practical knowledge on relevant fields. The main concern they expressed was the lack of a comprehensive and consistent training program that will ensure the sustainability of the gained knowledge and skills. Most of the offered trainings or workshops are of episodic nature. Along these lines, the trainings and extension programs offered to women demand long-term approaches and better mechanisms of information sharing about upcoming events and workshops among women.

Differentiated tasks and responsibilities of men and women largely contributed to an accumulation of different types of knowledge and skills among men and women over the years. Men possess technical knowledge, while women know the exact places in forests where the best crops and herbs might be collected. To balance the existing discrepancies in terms of knowledge and skills between men and women, more intensive and targeted workshops or other educational events should be organized on a regular basis.

Moreover, trainings and extension programs will become more effective in gender-related terms if the participation of women actors will be guaranteed. This can be ensured by providing special quotas for women. Besides that, evidence shows that women trainers and project coordinators are
more sensitive toward gender issues and are more successful in providing effective trainings appropriate for women’s special needs.

8. **What are capabilities of women to use these resources?**

To cultivate the abilities of women to gain more access to natural resources such as land and water, gender-sensitive practices and policies should be implemented. In this regard, special attention should be given to the changes of hereditary practices mainly by information and awareness-raising campaigns and the facilitation of getting financial aid for women to acquire land and other resources. The issue is very tightly connected with the specifics of ownership rights over land in Armenia. As a result of privatization in the 1990s, the main owners of land are male members of rural families. Privatization has skewed land ownership toward men. Because land was sold by the government, it was more men than women who had the financial means to purchase land. Even if land is sold, the new owner is more likely to be a man. If effective ways to cope with the legal framework and ownership rights regarding gender issues will be in place, a path for transforming the dominating cultural values and traditions about women’s proper role, responsibilities, and tasks might be found. Specifically, gender mainstreaming will be more effective if it will resolve the problems of the poor women foremost. Poor women and their families, their security, and their livelihood are the most dependent on the access to natural resources.

The establishment of women’s networks in the wild harvest value chain is one way to overcome the above-mentioned barriers. It will create the necessary preconditions to communicate the experience, knowledge, and skills among women in the value chain. The establishment of permanent and stable means of communication and information sharing among women will facilitate them to gain confidence and transform the prevailing cultural norms and perceptions about the proper roles and responsibilities of women.

9. **Who owns land, trees, harvest, and so on?**

As the study results indicate, women are in a disadvantaged situation regarding the access and ownership rights over land and natural resources due to many interconnected and interrelated variables, including the following:

- The historical processes of privatization in Armenia
- Traditional gender perceptions and behaviors both among men and women
- Legal frameworks, policies, and programs implemented in the agricultural arena are mainly characterized as gender-insensitive. More precisely, the reforms in the agricultural arena were not structured according to the special condition and needs of women in rural areas. As the dominating cultural norms are beneficiary for men, in most cases if the reforms and extension projects are not designed along the lines of women’s needs, these reforms become reinforcing sources for perpetual gender inequality in various dimensions.
• Discriminatory practices in hereditary right that exist till today because of the stereotypes about the abilities, aspirations, and the proper role of a woman in society and family, especially in case of rural women

• Low participation rates of women in various trainings, workshops, extension programs, and facilitation projects, which in turn created a disadvantageous situation for women in terms of technical, managerial, and marketing skills

• The overloaded responsibilities of women at home and outside, because they are often forced to work as much as their husbands but they should also perform household duties and childcare.

10. **Is information more difficult to obtain for women producers in ‘feminine’ or mixed value chains? What about access to information for women in other segments of the value chain (for example, processors or traders)?**

Women lack information about market mechanisms and loan-taking procedures. They lack experience in this regard, which causes their extreme cautiousness in risk-taking. A clear difference of accessing information in feminine and mixed value chains is not supported by the results of the study. The main difference that has been found is regarding the differentiated knowledge that men and women possess in the wild harvest value chain. Women are more experienced about the forest locations where different types of herbs and crops grow, the specifics of their consumption, and their use in food or medicine. Meanwhile, men tend to be more experienced in terms of marketing knowledge and which crops are more profitable. Women possess a very specialized knowledge about the seasonal availability of crops and conservation practices. Though in a very general sense, the knowledge among men and women is differentiated concerning processing and marketing, the differences are shaped not only by gender but also by factors such as the age, marital status, education, and so on. Acquiring expertise on income-generating activities such as marketing and trading will lead to the improvement of women’s ability and opportunity to perform these activities and increase their income within the selected value chain. In this regard, special attention is to be given to the development of price negotiation skills among the women value chain actors.

11. **If there are constraints, what are the main constraints faced by women in different segments of the value chain (women’s lower level of education; more marginalized and lesser access to ‘networks’, projects, and programs; less visible within segments of the value chain; less control over information; and so on)?**

The main obstacle for the economic empowerment of women in the wild harvest value chain is, nevertheless, the overall poor development of the chain. Although the work in this value chain is seasonal and part-time and characterized by low profits and turnover, a large percentage of women at all stages of production and realization (harvesting, processing, and marketing) makes the wild
harvest value chain development a deserving initiative in terms of economic empowerment of women in rural areas. The basic assumption here is that the economic empowerment of women initially is more dependent on the level of representativeness of women in the value chain than the overall profitability of the latter.

If the value chain is developed, it will eventually lead to the betterment of the livelihood of the women engaged and will contribute to the well-being of their families. What women need most in the value chain are projects that will establish the so-called regional hubs for buying the product and organizing its further realization in local as well as international markets. If the demand side of the market is stabilized, the motivation of women to collect more will undoubtedly increase.

Some of the interviewees mentioned that they gained more and more experience when they succeeded to sell the wild herbs or processed berries to tourists. As the analysis here suggests, the development of the wild harvest value chain is tightly connected with the betterment of demand-drivers in the market. One such drivers seems to be tourism, which creates right incentives for the chain participants to collect and sell more wild berries and herbs. So, the efforts of stabilizing and increasing the demand side of the market might be designed along with the general touristic patterns and specifics in a given location. It should be mentioned that even within the same marz in some communities, this trend is in its initial stage, while for other communities, trade with tourists is the main source of income. This makes obvious that further projects should be designed not only to increase women’s knowledge and abilities but foremost to stabilize the demand side of the market. In this case, women will have the right motivation to gain more knowledge and technical abilities. It will be more effective than the efforts to better the marketing skills and knowledge of women.

12. Any specific information on market segments relevant for gender issues (for example, increase product offer to low-income consumers to improve quality of life such as nutrition)?

Women in the value chain are engaged in wild harvest either for family consumption or for marketing purposes but in a very limited quantity and largely by a chance. Meanwhile, men cultivated skills and knowledge on marketing over the years. Such a situation may continue in the future unless women are provided with ownership right, financial aid, ongoing training, and education. The challenge that should be overcome is that in times when urban demand for crops and herbs is continuously increasing, women should retain control and rights over their production, processing, and marketing. Women need education and training if the value chain is to be developed with the increasing demand in the market. The present practices of harvest and postharvest operations will not be efficient enough in case of larger consumption. On the other hand, if the value chain is not developed in a gender-sensitive way, it will endanger the women value chain actors by the loss of their jobs and present income.
13. How can poor groups and other stakeholders obtain information about services in the sector or market information?

Some specifics of food market arrangements in Armenia were conditioned by the past commercialization processes throughout the whole country during the 1990s. Both the large and small farmers faced a totally new situation in the market that had nothing common with the past practices. New market arrangements and policies established a very different structure of market relationships. There were no fixed prices for products by the governments as it used to be. Instead, intermediary structures emerged to fill the vacuum. However, some of these intermediaries were more successful than others.

Because the women value chain actors are classified as smallholder producers, intermediary structures and transactions are mainly informal. Poor groups and stakeholders are faced by many types of obstacles for market access. The closure of the past parastatal market arrangements very often has led to an emergence of monopolistic markets because poor groups and smallholders were not able to access the markets to buy their inputs and sell their products. They need tangible transportation costs, which in turn generates added transaction costs. Rural roads to markets are in a very bad condition, and at certain times, they become entirely inaccessible. Physical obstacles include not only transportation costs but storage costs as well, which is a great concern for women because they usually trade vegetables and perishables. These difficulties create a situation where the choices and marketing opportunities are strictly limited for women.

Women are enforced to sell their product at a low price not lose the whole income. They often lack networks, which are of great importance to enable them to negotiate favorable trade conditions with large and highly specialized intermediary companies. The lack of knowledge, information, and organization puts smallholders in a very disadvantaged situation where they appear to be only passive actors. They are easily exploited by those who have market relations. Moreover, smallholders are not fully conscious about the ways that they can influence market prices and conditions for their production. Food markets, especially in remote rural areas, experience significant information asymmetries, which bring great social loss in most cases for poor and small farmers.

**Gendered Control over Benefits**

14. Are there any uneven power relationships? Are there any gender-related discriminations or exclusions?

Main discriminatory practices that have significant gender-related implications refer to women’s inability to own land or get necessary financial assistance. This is mainly conditioned by the traditions of hereditary right when only sons of the family get ownership rights over land. Subsequently, women farmers experience great challenges for getting financial aid and credits due to their lack of collateral. The ownership rights over land and targeted financial assistance provided
for women smallholders are the exact prerequisites to dissolve perpetual gender inequities in terms of economic self-realization and sustainability. Yet, another discriminatory practice continues to be the unequal share of household chores between men and women.

15. How is power distributed within production and exchange relationships across the value chain?

In this value chain, like in the agricultural sector as a whole, gendered segregation of power relationships and division of labor continue to persist. Women are more specialized in planting, collecting, and processing activities, while men perform responsibilities of transportation and marketing of the product. Women in some cases are excluded from the income-generating stages of the value chain because the profits from selling are directly concentrated in the hands of men.

Taking into account the fact that ‘casual’ worker phenomena are widespread in the agricultural sector, women casual workers earn far less for the same tasks as men do. Gender-wage gaps are evident foremost in the casual workforce. There are types of work and responsibilities that are largely accepted as feminine. Lack of technical skills and means of transportation creates a disadvantageous situation for women when they are not able to take profits for their production directly. Moreover, such a division of labor and stereotypes about proper ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ types of work have a tendency to be passed to the new generation as well.

16. Who decides? Who controls benefits?

Women in the wild harvest value chain are considered as self-employed actors. Besides, women’s share in the informal economy is large, causing great gender-wage gaps, disadvantageous to women. Their work in wild harvest is part-time with low profits and inaccessible in some seasons of the year. Even if women succeed to make their own profits from the products, their earnings usually cover the nutrition and clothing needs of the children. This makes obvious that women’s earnings in this value chain have a low potential for economic empowerment of women, unless the demand side of the market is stabilized. The situation becomes even more complicated when the prevailing stereotypes of women’s role in family are to be considered. These stereotypes are more dominant and widespread in rural and especially in poor communities than in urban areas. As mentioned by the participants, the crucial decisions in most cases are made by males.

17. What are the disempowering dynamics?

Women have an essential role in the production of crops for household consumption. The high rates of migration of men work force from rural areas have changed the nature and intensity of tasks and responsibilities of women substantively. Their daily workload and schedule are persistently increasing, but these changes do not have innate implications for powering dynamic transformation across different agricultural value chains. Women still constitute a significant part of informal and underpaid employment. Their work is crucial for the nutrition of their family and children. Provision of well-elaborated and gender-sensitive trainings and workshops, improved
legal framework and policies, and properly designed institutional support are the means by which disempowering practices can be eradicated. Likewise, women’s need for leadership, commercial, technical, and marketing skills is vital for opening possibilities to turn to market-oriented practices and high-value production.

18. What are the entitlement capabilities of men and women throughout the value chain? Is there any uneven distribution of these capabilities?

Access to assets, for example, land, production inputs, information, training, and financial resources, is a basic determinant for rural profitability. However, women smallholders have limited access to the productive assets and marketing skills required for yielding profits. Women are less likely than men to take credits and loans from banks and financial organizations, or become a member of professional unions or associations that will contribute to boosting their technical knowledge and skills, as well as open up business opportunities in the agricultural arena.

Moreover, women are not able to control the utilization of their own time and schedule. Hereby, the hidden reasons for gender discriminatory practices limit the alternatives accessible to women. Gender-discriminatory practices, by all implicit and explicit means, decrease the efficiency of agrarian activities of women, causing extensive financial and social loss.

Practically, land in rural areas is the most valuable asset in production and family nutrition. Ownership right over land is the first condition for successful agricultural work, although, some women participants of the study have pointed out that the absence of ownership rights over land is not a restricting factor for women’s economic situation. It once more makes evident that strong sociocultural values, settings, stereotypes, and perceptions highly dominate the life and behavior of rural women in Armenia. Control over land undoubtedly provides status and decision-making opportunities for women.

Besides, control over land will contribute to the rise of women’s status and have an impact within their families and communities. Female-headed farms confront more serious work limitations than male-headed ones because they commonly have fewer members but more dependents. In some communities, male migration adds to the limitations already posed by gender-specific work and responsibilities. Female-headed farms may get assistance from male relatives, however, after men have finished their own responsibilities. As a matter of fact, interviewees stated that their children very often help in farming, when they do not have sufficient time.

19. What alternatives (choices) do women have regarding chain activities and chain management?

Expenditure plans toward ensuring gender equity in a governmental level are key factors for improving the economic situation for women in rural areas. In some cases, the issue is not about financial aid, but more about the distribution of existing funds to support both men and women.
smallholders and farmers in a more fair and equal way. This value chain after the independence of Armenia has not received any substantial form of state support. This fact comprises both the advantages and disadvantages of the selected value chain. The absence of any substantial support from the side of the government was one of the major causes for the value chain as an underdeveloped field, but if the field had been developed without proper consideration of women’s needs it would have led to additional obstacles for gender mainstreaming in the future. In other words, the wild harvest value chain might be an open field with underutilized opportunities where future development will create necessary preconditions for economic justice and gender equality. For example, the goal of raising the educational level of women and girls is primarily connected with the provision of transportation. Governmental and international organizations should ensure that gender mainstreaming is incorporated in all development and support programs.

New possibilities for women actors in wild harvest may open up, if efficient intermediary structures and companies exist providing a stable demand side in the local market for the wild harvest outputs. Generally, women lack marketing, leadership, and negotiation skills to earn more from their production. If stable intermediary structures are in place, women’s motivation to harvest and sell more will definitely increase. The other possibility that will enhance the efficiency of women’s production in wild harvest is to establish networks among women with similar work and responsibilities. It will further improve information and experience exchange across the value chain. However, this will become possible only in the case of predictable demand in the market.

20. What is the ability of producers (male/female) to influence the price? What are the opportunities for negotiation (voice, participation, inclusiveness, indebtedness, and suboptimal contracting)? Who signs the contract for the sale of the product?

Women value chain actors in most cases sell their products to intermediaries. However, such transactions are very unstable. Women do not have an exact knowledge when the intermediary will come; thus, they very often harvest only a quantity that is sufficient for community market and family consumption. In some cases, transactions are enacted over preorders with a pre-agreed price. Their negotiation and marketing skills are extremely poor, because women traditionally perform jobs invisible in the chain, and men occupy positions where profits are yielded. The main voice here is that of the intermediary because the value chain actors have very limited notions about pricing and price fluctuation in modern market arrangements.

Besides, additional difficulties are created because of the deficiency of cooperative power among women value chain actors. Transactions are generally performed face-to-face between women value chain actors and intermediaries. Meanwhile, cooperation among women will truly improve their voice and negotiation skills. Because transactions in this value chain are informal, no contract is signed. Establishment of cooperatives among women value chain actors might be the next step for the development of the value chain and economic empowerment of women.
21. Do women in different segments of the value chain earn more income following the intervention (if any)?

The wild harvest value chain is failing to meet the expectations of women for various reasons. First, women do not have access to the assets, and their opportunities to utilize their time in the best possible way are very limited. Women usually confront more serious obstacles than men in getting assets and markets. This gender gap obstructs their profitability, lessens their commitments to value chain development, and restricts their motivation to achieve extended economic and social objectives. Gender mainstreaming in agribusiness development projects and practices might be one of the significant and decisive factors in facilitating the increased profits and economic stability for women participants.

22. Are women’s roles changing? Do they take leadership positions? Do they sign contracts?

The gender gap in access to credits is an additional obstacle for women’s leadership positions. The majority of female-headed farms have substantial difficulties in buying lands and inputs, for example, seeds, pesticides, or labor. Study respondents referred to the absence of access to credits as the most important difficulty for expanding their production. The main beneficiaries of financial aid programs from donors are men farmers and male-led units. Although most part of the financial and technological aid for agribusiness development in Armenia comes from international donors, the government continues to be an important stakeholder in any intervention primarily in issues of legal framework and regulation procedures. Additional information provided by the respondents makes clear that there are instances where even the financial aid provided to women farmers was further utilized for men’s profitable production. It means that there are obvious difficulties to directly control the further advantages of programs provided to women. These discoveries demonstrate that women are more passive to take credits than men under equal conditions because they are not generally ready to take risks and leadership positions. These limitations on women’s access to capital have a quantifiable negative effect on their production abilities and effectiveness.

Access to innovation and new technologies is another key essential in maintaining and enhancing agricultural profitability. Significant gender gap exists for a variety of farming innovations, including machinery, devices, and management systems. This, in turn, leads to gender imbalances in access to and selection of new technologies and in utilization of obtained inputs and existing innovations as well. The effective utilization of acquired inputs relies upon the accessibility of correlative resources, for example, land, credit, training, and work, all of which have a tendency to be more difficult to obtain for female-headed families than for male-headed family units. The underlying causes of this are the difficulties for female actors to gain access to credits and resources due to the absence of collateral, their ordinary avoidance for taking risks, and their limited knowledge of new technologies.
23. What is women’s own perception of change? Did they gain more self-confidence and credibility?

Generally, the answers of female respondents show that women do not perceive their inputs in production separate from those of men. They perceive the production outputs to be the results of joint efforts both from men and women. For instance, if men normally work to clear the field, women plant and weed the yields, and both men and women are included in harvesting. In these and other comparative cases, it gets quite difficult to differentiate purely ‘feminine’ and purely ‘masculine’ contributions. The heterogeneity of their commitment is a fundamental issue if strategies and interventions are to be powerful. It was interesting to explore women’s perceptions about the profitability of farm units led either by men or women. The respondents generally believed that if men were involved in the production process, their opportunities for higher profits increased subsequently. As pointed out earlier on the pages of this analysis, men are in a more advantageous situation when the issue is about transportation, technology maintenance, or price negotiation. All these skills are vital prerequisites for good deals and high profits. It seems reasonable to assume that these factors contribute to the increased profitability across the value chain if men are engaged.

Training and education is a meaningful approach to handle the obstacles that women face in the value chain. Trainings focused on leadership, decision-making, and risk-taking skills development will enable women to learn new or enhanced technology and management systems, get prepared for extension, and get ready for increased inputs and markets.

Gender segregation dependably happens within a particular sociocultural and legal setting, and all these relations perpetuate gender-insensitive practices across the value chain, constraining women’s possibilities for new markets and income. Correspondingly, technological innovations do not appear to be gender-sensitive and unequal power relations continue to exist. In this regard, women lack the needed abilities and opportunities to produce with their fullest potential.

While the issue is now broadly recognized and raised by various actors and organizations acting in the field, especially the ones working for women’s rights, systemic changes are still lacking in this direction. In most cases, it is challenging for women and troublesome to take part in extension trainings because of their duties and position in society. Although women make significant contributions to family well-being, men generally control the generated income and its distribution. The inability to esteem their work diminishes women’s role in financial transactions, allocation of family assets, and community decision-making processes.

**Gendered Influence on Enabling Factors**

24. What is women's ability to influence decisions, policies, or programs at all levels?

Notwithstanding women’s commitment to family well-being and flourishing in rural areas, their efforts and decision-making capacities are ordinarily overlooked. Even after several interventions,
they have encountered few, little advantages. Their living conditions were not bettered after the execution of these programs.

Indeed, a general thought was discovered during the focus group discussions with field experts: they have asserted the idea that value chain development does not need to be designed in gender-related terms, and that the overall value chain development will bring opportunities both for men and women equally. However, policies and extension program approaches at the national and community levels still lack elaborated mechanisms and tools to address gender issues. Given the prior significance of family as a propelling unit for development, reliable motivators and arrangements should be built upon the promotion of women’s status and diminishing gender imbalance in basic leadership positions and roles.

Gender mainstreaming includes guaranteeing that all broad policy arrangements and measures straightforwardly and effectively consider, analyze, and assess the impact of various support programs on leadership roles and self-realization opportunities both for men and women. It likewise involves an integral approach in the application and assessment of particular measures to advance fairness and to help women in the value chain for participation in extension programs and taking advantage of them equally.

Women in rural areas are very dependent on their husbands, especially in financial terms. From early ages, girls get used to complying and living with their father’s choices and preferences. After marriage, women greatly rely upon their spouses for financial support and living conditions. Such gender disparities in economic opportunities are largely conditioned by women’s obligation to take care of children and household responsibilities, and by men’s roles as ‘family breadwinners’. A very important effect of financial dependence is the lifelong obstacle to their identity development and motivation for individual accomplishments and self-realization.

25. **Do they have access to specific spaces of power (invited or claimed spaces) and places of power (municipal council, parliament, and so on)? Do they have the opportunity to speak? Are women’s voices heard? Are they listened to? Which women’s voices?**

Unfortunately, in the years of independence, women’s rights and opportunities for self-realization have experienced various shortcomings and disadvantages. New institutional, structural, and policy settings in many ways were not conducive to the enforcement of women’s rights and opportunities as equal members of society. These conditions had more severe implications due to a relatively high level of poverty and limited opportunities in rural areas.

Although Armenia’s scores are quite high in terms of equal educational opportunities and positive health outcomes for both sexes, according to various study results in national and international levels, these positive trends do not necessarily lead to the political empowerment or economic opportunities for women. To illustrate, only 22 rural communities, out of 866 rural communities
in Armenia, are administered by women, and only 8.3 percent of women were included in the Community Council.

Women’s opportunities for access to political power in national and regional administrations as well as access to resources and assets crucial for economic advancement remain less than promising. In recent years, the governmental policy in this regard has become more complex and holistic, taking into consideration not only women’s issues but also various types and forms of gender disparities among men and women in all aspects of socioeconomic and political life. The gender policy of the Government of Armenia is mainly structured along two basic documents:

- The Concept Paper on Gender Equality

These official documents refer to issues of gender gaps in education, politics, economic advancement, health provision, media strategies, and gender-based violence. A new law was also adopted in 2013—Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. There are also governmental institutions operating in this field: Council on Women’s Affairs (under the Office of the Prime Minister) and the Division of Family, Children, and Women’s Issues within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Social expectations of women’s role and responsibilities hold them back from gaining political or economic power. As a rule, active women have an actual opportunity to run for office in central or regional governmental structures in their late 40s and 50s. Some of the participants also mentioned that there were cases when men took good ideas from women and initiated loan taking and the project themselves. There is a lack of success stories of women entrepreneurs, politicians, and/or leaders.

26. Are women in specific segments of this value chain, sector, or activity organized?

In the wild harvest value chain, women operate as separate actors. According to study results, the value chain is highly individualized. Each agent acts as an individual unit—harvests as much as the time permits, and sells the product under changing and unstable conditions. Thus, the value chain is characterized by a low level of integration and cooperation between chain members.

The only exception constitutes the members of the family of a single agent: family members and children often help in harvesting when a preorder exists. Low integration and cooperation is a crucial obstacle for opportunities for women to negotiate their product prices and adjust to existing market conditions, which may become a good source for added value and income generation. Joint and properly organized efforts have a potential to raise the voice and decision-making capabilities of operating women actors.
27. Do they build strategic alliances with institutions working on gender issues such as women’s rights organizations and platforms?

In most cases, women representing the wild harvest value chain lack necessary information, knowledge, and enthusiasm to initiate or participate in platforms that deal with women’s rights and other relevant issues. The low-profitable and time-consuming nature of the wild harvest value chain does not allow female participants to afford time and money for self-development, and hence for looking at ways for their further empowerment through participation in professional associations and unions.
CHAPTER 2: MESO-ANALYSIS

GENDER ROLES

28. What are women’s role and positioning within these organizations?

Admittedly, women are less likely than men to become a member of professional unions or associations. There are numerous hidden and obvious reasons for such a situation. One of the main reasons is that a majority of women are expected to spend a significant amount of their own time on household needs. In some cases, they do not simply have the consent of their husbands, fathers, brothers, or even sons to participate in such unions because it is widely accepted as men’s space, especially in rural areas. The other reason is a lack of enthusiasm of women to step up from their comfort zone. To conclude, currently, the women’s role and positioning in professional organizations are very weak, which hugely reduces their opportunities to have tangible contribution on ongoing processes. Participation in professional bodies will definitely multiply women’s chances to be heard and enhance their communication and entrepreneurial skills, which over time will lead to the increase of their self-confidence and credibility.

29. Do they face specific constraints (representation in decision-making instances, power to influence decisions, and so on)?

According to the Global Gender Gap report 2015, Armenia occupied the 105th place out of 145 ranked countries. Despite some noteworthy achievements of Armenian women in different areas of social life, for example, Armenia ranks first in the professional and technical workers indicator with 64 percent of female, the other indicators leave much to be desired. Armenia has the 120th and 105th positions in Women in Parliament and Women in Ministerial Positions indicators. Regardless of the introduction of a quota system to assist women to enter politics, women’s low level of representation in national government persists. At present, women represent only over 10 percent of parliamentarians and about 11 percent of high-level government staff. Women are much better represented in supporting and non-leadership positions in the public sector. This entails women’s inferior representation in decision-making instances and hence lessens chances to have any significant influence on decision-making processes.

GENDERED ACCESS TO RESOURCES

30. Do women have access to land, water, and technology?

Women in Armenia, especially in rural areas, continue to face various forms of discrimination in access to land, credits, property, and other productive assets that significantly restrict possibilities for innovations and management systems in agriculture. On the contrary, access to information and technologies could ease their workloads. Unequal access and women’s inability to guarantee farming efficiency are progressively connected with resource relocation and expanding urbanization processes.
Environmental change, the spread and diversification of business sectors, and rapid urbanization processes present new challenges and new difficulties for women’s entrance to land, credits, and other valuable assets required for production. Adequate response to access challenges for women in the value chain is vital for the development of the value chain both in the short and long run. Discriminatory practices in ownership rights over land are caused mainly by discriminatory inheritance traditions, lack of women’s access to expanded markets, and gender-insensitive privatization reforms in the 1990s.

31. Do women have access to information and education?

The main trends in the educational system of Armenia indicate that girls are more likely to get higher education than boys. Moreover, in various fields of study, girls show higher rates of advancement than boys. The main exception is the domain of natural science education. However, high levels of advancement in education among girls do not necessarily lead to their successful career paths in the future. Men continue to dominate in high-wage occupations both in the public and private sectors. One of the most visible consequences of such stratification of the labor market is a large gender-wage gap. Women’s average monthly wages represented only 64.4 percent of men’s in 2012, which gives Armenia one of the largest gender pay gaps in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Even employers are yet inclined to give priority to male candidates due to traditional gender-discriminatory values connected with the roles and responsibilities that women have to carry simultaneously. Girls in rural areas face a quite difficult situation in getting an education that is compatible with their aspirations and abilities. The main challenge is that they mainly come from poor rural families and experience great difficulties with tuitions and transportations costs. It does not necessarily means that boys from the same families and communities do not face the same challenges. However, taking into account gender-discriminatory practices at various stages of women’s lifespan, such obstacles obviously have more serious impacts on women’s opportunities and quality of life.

32. Do women have access to and responsiveness of value chain development services?

Land reforms can play a significant role in dissolving gender imbalances in access to land and property. In Armenia, land markets have not been a viable method for ensuring women’s ownership rights over land and other productive resources. Enhanced access to water and other meaningful natural resources will contribute to the reduction of women’s workloads, expansion of production, and provision of more opportunities for high-value production, additional income, and active participation in sociopolitical life.

In addition, women face more prominent obstacles in accessing irrigation systems for crop production and household consumption. Focus group members also mentioned that women in their communities encountered more difficulties to benefit from user associations. Fair access to
infrastructures and management systems are vital components of women’s economic empowerment. Improvements in transport infrastructures can increase women’s capacity to access markets, schools, and various services, yielding higher efficiency and life standards.

Extension programs in various rural communities, to a large extent, were organized in gender-insensitive ways, thus not reflecting women’s specific needs and abilities. Higher access to technologies and information exchange will profoundly improve the existing situation, because women will have more free time for diverse economic activities. The benefits that information, communication, and new technologies can yield are not yet fully recognized by women in rural areas. They are lacking the needed flexibility for market demands and new marketing strategies.

Housing is a key resource for guaranteeing women’s autonomy and economic independence. Absence of housing undermines women’s capability to pursue well-being, participate in trainings, and occupy positions that fit their needs and abilities. The government can become an essential actor in encouraging fair access to satisfactory housing conditions through legislative change and reforms. Women’s access to financial resources and assets, such as savings, credits, and insurance, is vital to permit them to fully realize the advantage from financial opportunities. However, till now, all these resources and assets seem to be more or less inaccessible for women because of institutional, legal, and sociocultural constraints.

33. Do female producer groups have the same access to business development services? If not why?

Access to credits and other financial resources are crucial for rural populations to ensure their economic stability and living standards. Access to credits enables farmers to expand their productions and generate more income in two main ways: short-term benefits, when the producer is able to purchase production inputs, for example, fertilizers, paid labor, and so on, and the long-term benefits, when the producer is able to purchase new technologies, establish a small dairy or crop activities, and grow over time.

To be effective, microcredit must constitute a part of the more comprehensive development strategies, addressing issues of property rights, access to natural resources, markets, innovations, extension programs, and feasible financial frameworks in rural areas. Producers with constrained assets, particularly women, get a little share of formal agrarian credit. Because land is the significant resource utilized as collateral to get credit, women have constrained access to credit opportunities. Some financial organizations even perceive that married women are at a greater risk, and if marriages are disrupted, they will be unable to pay the loans back. Women’s inability to get credits implies that they are forced to depend vigorously on the unregulated informal sector to cover their basic living needs.

Although the informal financial sector may at times become a good facilitator of economic development, in the absence of strict and fair legal regulations, they comprise a risk to an
exploitative source for poor producers. In Armenia, the withdrawal of government credit support in rural areas and expanded liberalization and privatization of the market and financial sector in many instances have led to difficulties and inabilities of poor producers to obtain credits. Basically, farmers need skills necessary for applying for a credit. These challenges have more impacts on women, who are by and large less adapted to new market conditions and often avoid taking risks.

On the other hand, microcredit interventions are an influential tool on the path to poverty reduction and women empowerment. However, the impacts of microcredit tools provoke different, sometimes even contradicting, opinions. Some studies have proven that effective application of microfinancial tools has considerably improved the negotiating power of women through the access to credits and assets within their households and communities. However, at the same time, there are study results indicating that the overall goals of the microfinancial system have been displaced because they are designed and applied more for helping the poor and women to overcome their difficulties than for addressing the roots and causes of poverty and inequality in a proper manner.

34. Are technological innovations and investments specifically addressed at men or also at women? Are they adapted to women’s needs (physical strength and daily schedules)?

Innovations and technology advancements in agriculture support the development of new crops, diverse chemical inputs, technical equipment, and farming practices, allowing extreme poverty and food security issues to be overcome. Technological advancement includes the promotion of reliable infrastructures—roads, reliable supplies of power, and information exchange systems. However, technological advancement in rural areas of Armenia has been made mainly without any regard to local women’s needs and tasks. Innovations in technology were typically designed and applied in accordance with the demands of large landowners and farmers, possessing extensive knowledge, experience, resources, and capital for production.

Women respondents have expressed a point of view that they are more inclined not to take risks, when risks are connected with food security issues and are not managed properly by adequate administrative practices. Thus, they become generally marginalized in terms of benefiting from technological advancement. Family security and survival are the most important concerns for the majority of women in rural areas. If women are to take up risks and use new technologies and grow new crop varieties, the risks should be minimal.

The study participants also pointed out the fact that very often, technological advancement had far little to do with the local needs of rural women, because they were usually excluded from the research process and chosen topics. They expressed more interest in staple food and labor-saving technologies. Rural women should be provided with consultancy on the possible effects of new technologies as well as become an active side of the research agenda setting, which will meet their needs and concerns.
35. Are women-specific business development services needed to support female producers?

According to the study results, more than half of the participants have not heard of or directly participated in extension programs. This fact evidences that extension programs in rural areas are often implemented in gender-insensitive ways. Rather, they are opening up new opportunities for already established and stable farm-holder units even complicating the gender equity concerns. The study results highlight the necessity to improve the delivery of valuable extension services both for men and women.

Among other constraining factors, the most important obstacles for equally accessing business development projects were mentioned as the weak transportation systems, very tight schedules of women households, and the necessity of permission from husbands. Yet, there are women who wish to participate in such extension programs, but due to limited information networks and exchange systems, they either do not get information about projects or get it too late. The vast majority of women feel they are excluded from information and communication channels and decision-making processes within the communities. Rural women’s economic empowerment seems to be impossible without the provision of the basic right to information adequately and on time. For improving women’s capacity in acquiring, getting, and effectively applying the advancements of information and communication technologies, they need trainings, information, higher mobility, and independence.

36. Are business development services adapted to female producers’ specific needs (daily schedules, lower educational levels, and so on)?

Women’s access to new information and communication systems is limited due to many institutional, sociocultural, and educational constraints. The amount of accessible information to rural women is very limited, and their affordability to take part in trainings and educational programs is quite low. In Armenia, business development services in rural areas should meet the needs and specific deficiencies of smallholder units and especially of women.

As a matter of fact, business development services have two basic characteristics that need to be improved in the near future: its main orientation to large farm units and its gender-insensitive content and services. Difficult financial and economic conditions of women in rural areas constrain their accessibility to even basic devices of information: Internet, cell phones, or radio. The geographical location of business development services, weaknesses of infrastructures, and cultural values create more constraints.

Women have overloaded schedules; they should take care of children and elder family members, prepare food, and work for additional income. It is very hard for them to find free time and take an advantage from offered extension programs or information and communication technologies. Thus, business development services and information and communication technologies become
only men’s space, because women are not able to access them in the time and space convenient to them.

37. Is childcare available?

In rural areas of Armenia, childcare is carried out inside the home by the mothers, family members, and/or relatives. Childcare in rural areas is performed within informal structures, which means that this is a kind of unpaid work. The only option for rural women is kindergartens, but very often, they are far from homes and women are not able to use childcare services because of the weak transportation infrastructure. This undermines their capacity for full self-realization and opportunities for other economic and educational activities.

38. Do service providers know how to perform gender mainstreaming to better analyze, understand, and address these constraints? Are they attentive to delivering gender-sensitive services? Are they gender-sensitive in their approach?

An overwhelming workload and childcare obligations make it hazardous for women to participate in extension programs and trainings. Few of the female respondents have even mentioned that they were not able to take part in trainings because they did not have the permission from their husbands. There are some informal constraints on women’s participation in extension programs, for example, they are not able to communicate freely with male farmers without the presence of their husbands. In some cases, they are not able to leave the home alone or go to neighboring villages for training. All these obstacles deny the right of women to take part in trainings in neighboring villages or work as male farmers do.

39. Do service providers apply institutional or organizational gender mainstreaming?

Numerous initiatives and projects lack the right distinction in the assets accessible to men and women, their special tasks, and the constraints they confront. Therefore, it is frequently expected that intervention programs toward innovation and market access have the same effects on men and women, when in fact, these impacts are far from being the same. However, gender roles are not given stable parameters. They are dynamic and can change over time by properly designed intervention programs. Any targeted intervention programs in this value chain have not been initiated yet. Rather, the latest changes in the functioning of the value chain are mainly conditioned by general change trends and new interaction models in the agricultural sector.

The value chain development priorities put forward a demand for new technologies and for more complex commercial and marketing strategies. These changes pose difficulties and at the same time present new opportunities for farmers; yet, women confront additional social and legal obstacles that decrease their capacity to adjust and make higher profits. The government of Armenia and international donors have made some efforts to boost the development of the field; yet, their endeavors will yield better results if women are to benefit from these programs along
with men. Women should be recognized not only as ‘valuable productive forces’ but also as actors with their own claims and voice equal to those of men.

40. Employment in business development services: does it foster employment of women? Are employment opportunities equitable? How are the working conditions?

The study results highlight that, in fact, only a small number of women are involved in business development services. Extension program specialists for a vast majority of cases are men. Thereby, their working styles and concerns are more connected with men’s responsibilities and needs. The further inclusion of women specialists in extension projects will significantly increase the outputs and benefits of business development services for the female population in rural areas. However, the best results will be achieved when men’s awareness is increased of all the negative impacts that unequal distribution of resources and opportunities have on the society, in general.

41. Access to and responsiveness of financial services. Do women who concentrate in specific segments of value chains face particular constraints in accessing financial services? What are these constraints?

New market mechanisms are favorable for large agribusiness companies with technical, financial, and information resources. However, for smallholders, including women, there continue to be substantial difficulties in accessing markets. Transactions on the food market often tend to be individualized, unpredictable, and unstable. By this new situation, poor smallholders are more likely to survive than get used to new market arrangements, chains, negotiations, price-setting, and gaining marketing skills.

The second major obstacle for smallholders, like actors in the wild harvest value chain, is the lack of information about market conditions and operating mechanisms. The results of the study provide a sound base to conclude that the majority of smallholders do not possess any preliminary knowledge about market pricing, price fluctuations, and opportunities for financial aid to enlarge their productions.

42. What are their specific needs (investment and cash flow needs, social pressure to face, school fees, and food items)?

Legal reforms should address all the critical limitations that women face in getting financial resources or leadership positions. Women are more vulnerable in terms of different life crisis (unemployment, disability, and ill health) because of myriad circumstances: unequal property rights, childbearing responsibilities, employment in less-regulated areas, and lower levels of compensation. The insecurities produced by the world financial crisis, unstable markets, and globalization processes make the role of the state even more important to guarantee and deliver necessary social services to women.
There is no need to prove that social security systems are more accessible to those involved in formal employment. A general way to deal with social security that all states are obliged to deliver is the social protection floor for all citizens. This provision is fixed under the conditions of the International Labor Organization as well. The four components of the social protection floor—ensured income security for all children; ensured access to essential means of life; social help for poor, disabled, elder, and unemployed people; and access to basic medical services—are to be designed in a gender-equal manner.

43. Are financial services adapted to their needs? What are the most suitable financial products?

Microfinancial tools might become effective means for addressing financial issues of women by innovative frameworks and measures, addressing gender-related limitations. In addition, financial services might be consolidated with a set of social services for increasing efficiency. However, what is the real effectiveness of microfinancial tools for women is not yet agreed upon. There is also additional evidence of the positive impacts of microfinance in technology advancement.

Microfinance associations are under extensive pressure to become fiscally stable, partially because field specialists pay more attention to the ways that the savings of poor people may become effectively mobilized. There are also numerous studies proposing that commercialization, inherent in microfinancing, will negatively affect the access for women. Women are more likely to operate within a scope of small or medium businesses, due to their obligations of unpaid work, absence of financial resources, or deficiency of business skills.

**Gendered Control over Benefits**

44. Are women members of producer groups? Do they take part in meetings? Do they have the right to voice their needs and vote?

In Armenia women are well-educated, according to different sources of data, while the number of women in governmental positions both in the central and regional administrations is low. Even women politicians and office holders act and speak in a gender-blind way. This is paradoxical and controversial. A deeper insight into the question proposes that gender-blind action and speech is ingrained not only in the consciousness and behavior of individual politicians but far more in the institutional structures and organizational ethos. Very often, women try to play a ‘boy’s game’ to succeed in a masculine environment of politics and business. They try to seem more severe and ‘masculine’, because they believe that feminine traits such as caregiving and inclusiveness will depict them as ‘weak’ and unable to make decisions.
45. Do women have the opportunity to be elected to governing bodies, and if so, are they elected and to what degree? Are there any special measures in the Articles of Association, such as quotas, to guarantee their participation in decision making?

In the political arena, a little positive change has been identified. After the parliamentary elections in 2012, women members constitute about 10.7 percent of total seats by 14 female members of the Parliament. However, it is worthy to note that political parties have met the legal requirement for 20 percent quota for women. On party lists, 22 percent of candidates were women. However, before the election, some female candidates had dropped their candidacy for the benefit of their male colleagues.

The share of women is high in governmental staff with cultural, educational, social, labor, scientific, and health care responsibilities. The evidence shows that women in Armenia are underrepresented in high political and administrative positions, while their number is higher in lower levels of bureaucratic infrastructures. The same pattern exists in regional governance as well. There is only one female deputy marzpet in Armavir marz, and there are no female deputy mayors. The number of female mayors in Armenia is 22 and all of them are in rural areas.

**Gendered Influence on Enabling Factors**

46. What are female leaders’ capacities to influence collective decision making about sector services and value chain development?

The limiting conditions for equal distribution of benefits are the physical difficulties for market access and lack of transportation means. These conditions contribute to a perpetual unequal distribution of profits made from the production by women. In addition, smallholders and most women lack up-to-date skills, knowledge, and confidence in marketing, contracting, and negotiating. All these factors create conditions not conducive to economic independence and stability of women. In fact, women perform the ‘invisible’ side of the work, but in most cases, they are excluded from the stages of the value chain where profits and benefits are generated.
CHAPTER 3: MICROANALYSIS

GENDER ROLES

47. What is the sexual division of labor within the household (socially determined gender roles)? What are men’s and women’s reproductive roles? What tasks are performed by men and women?

Child-rearing and household chores are mainly on the shoulders of women, which substantively decreases their time for economic activity. They are engaged in unpaid housework, while men are free to devote their time to economic activities. Economic empowerment of women in rural areas is to be overcome by the provision of legal rights over the most important means of production. The big challenge in this regard is the informal employment, which tends to expand in family businesses and single-person units.

Moreover, the power of customary law is quite influential and significant in rural areas, and in most cases, women are not able to be employed in areas that their husbands do not authorize. The same is true for trainings and various projects initiated for women’s economic empowerment. They are not able to take part in such initiatives without their husband’s permission. In fact, formal legal restrictions do not exist for women in different types of employment, but actual, informal limitations and restrictions continue to be tangible obstacles.

48. How does the work performed in the value chain add to their work burden?

Although women’s role is expanding across different stages of the value chain, women’s opportunities to turn from subsistence farming to high-value production remain restricted. Limited opportunities and visions for development are to some degree explained by the lack of motivation and aspiration among women actors. Bearing in mind the striking levels of poverty in rural communities, women are more concerned about satisfying the very basic needs of their children than about the issues of gender equity or economic empowerment of women.

GENDERED ACCESS TO RESOURCES

49. What is women’s and men’s access to resources needed to perform tasks? Are there any specific constraints faced by women in particular?

Some progress has been made through the efforts of national and international nongovernmental organizations, but the progress is hindered by prevailing social norms and cultural settings as well as women’s lack of knowledge and literacy about their rights and entitlements. Societal traditions in many ways predetermine the formats of property rights, including the enforcement of individual and joint right. As a result of privatization processes, the male family members and household heads became the main owners of land in Armenia. Women were endowed only by joint rights over land, which were only de jure rights. They do not possess any real and decision-making
authority over land, and all decisions about resource allocation and utilization forms are made by men. More efforts are expected to be continued for advancing gender-sensitive legislation, properly and fairly ensuring the enactment of existing laws and regulations, and making legal frameworks more open and responsive to women’s needs and rights.

**Gendered Control over Benefits**

50. Do women and men benefit equally at the household level? Who earns income? Who decides on the use of the income? Who decides on family budget allocation? What is women’s decision-making power on spending of the household budget?

Although both men and women encounter various difficulties in acquiring services and financial aid, these difficulties are more severe in the case of women. As a consequence, all decisions concerning the management and control over land or other resources are made mainly by men. However, it is worth noting that gender responsibilities and workloads continue to be very dynamic and if proper organizational, institutional, and structural changes are in place, these gender disparities might be a subject for transformation and change.

**Gendered Influence on Power Dynamics within the Household**

51. How are women’s contributions in the value chain perceived at the household level?

When the profits earned by women complement the family budget, the overall costs are decided by their husbands. Otherwise, the behavior of a woman is thought as disobedient and inappropriate in a ‘normal and acceptable’ family setting. As in other developing countries over the world, unrecognized and informal economy comprises the most poor and vulnerable population in Armenia as well. Therefore, families and children of women who are widowed or divorced in rural areas experience uneven survival difficulties because the earnings only of a woman are not enough to cover the basic needs of her family.

52. Are gender roles changing? If yes, is women’s changing role or increased income valued within the household? Within the community? Does it have an impact on decision-making and negotiating power?

The traditional and cultural settings and norms have more stringent implications for the behavior and consciousness of women in rural areas than in urban areas. They continue to perceive the role of their husbands, fathers, or sons as decisive in all areas of family life. On the other hand, despite the large share of women in informal employment in the selected value chain, they are inclined to view themselves more as ‘helpers’ for the family and especially for male family members. The same is true for the male representatives of the study. They point out that women take active roles in wild harvest by their free will to facilitate and share financial and economic burdens of their families. However, they are sure about the decisive role of men family members even in cases
when men are absent from their homes and communities for long periods due to seasonal work migration.
CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gender imbalance in the division of work, ownership rights, and basic leadership dynamic at the family and community levels was obvious during the whole study. It once more makes evident that strong sociocultural values, settings, stereotypes, and perceptions highly dominate the life and behavior of rural women in Armenia. Some of the explanations behind this disparity were the work migration of men because of the inability to satisfy the basic needs of the family, and women’s lack of access to assets and advanced technologies. Analysis results suggest that harvesting continues to be a predominantly feminine activity, due to low income and outputs. Income generated through wild harvesting primarily contributes to the satisfaction of ongoing needs of the family and children. Despite the low profitability and seasonal nature of the work in the selected value chain, the development of the wild harvest value chain has a great potential to benefit the economic situation for the women involved, taking into account the great number of women actors at all stages of the value chain. The future interventions, aiming at increasing the long-term utilization of the field, will have significant positive implications for female actors’ commitments to the value chain and their economic empowerment.

- The development of the wild harvest value chain requires the stabilization of both the demand and supply sides of the market. The process of stabilization implies the establishment of wild harvest cooperatives with high representativeness of women, aiming to provide stable supply in the market. Within these cooperatives, the value chain actors will be capable of sharing their experience, knowledge, skills, and information. On the other hand, legal entities are to be established for the stable demand provision. These legal entities are presumed to buy the products from cooperatives and manage the further realization and resale of the products in the market.

- The wild harvest industry needs investments for innovating harvest collection methods and processes creating a sound base to transform disjointed and often inefficient individual efforts into mechanized, collective, highly efficient, and standardized collecting procedures. More emphasis and efforts should be made to diversify the final outputs through offering high-value products intended for niche markets and by expanding processing activities. This will enable actors of this value chain to meet the full range of buyers’ and consumers’ predilections.

- The other component for innovation and change might be the establishment and maintenance of community networks among physical actors in the value chain providing sufficient preconditions for cooperation, experience exchange, and collaboration. Formation of business entities, in its turn, will upsurge chances of the value chain to become more productive and competitive. Promotion of cooperatives, in this case, is another stimulating prerequisite for women’s economic success. Cooperatives help women in taking risk and responsibility in economic matters and decision making.
What women need most in the value chain are projects that will establish the so-called regional hubs for buying the product and organizing its further realization in local and international markets. If the demand side of the market is stabilized, the motivation of women to collect more will undoubtedly increase.

The role and duties of women in Armenian rural areas are increasing year by year, but surprisingly, this does not necessarily lead to an automatic solution of the subordinate role of women in the economy. Even if they are performing most of the work virtually in all segments of a particular value chain, they are not considered as important players; their contribution to quality and value adding in producing is often disregarded. It means that market mechanisms alone are not able to solve the issue of discriminatory practices; there should be coordinated and continuing efforts toward the improvement of the situation, because the quantity increase of women workforce in diverse segments of the value chain does not guarantee the solution of their socioeconomic problems. In most cases, women feel they are undervalued and ignored. This results in the lack of incentives to participate as an equal partner in various initiatives.

The next goals also might be the work and efforts toward raising men’s awareness about all the negative effects that gender disparities endanger for family and society life. For example, the perceptions of men as ‘breadwinners’ for family often become a source of stress and conflicts in families, when men encounter financial difficulties during their life-span.

All value chain actors were keen to absorb new skills and knowledge and were open to any positive transformation. Training and education are significant factors to handle the obstacles that women face in the value chain. Trainings focused on leadership, decision-making, and risk-taking skills development will enable women to learn new or enhanced technology and management systems, get prepared for extension, and get ready for increased inputs and markets. Trainings and extension programs will become more effective in gender-related terms if the participation of women actors will be guaranteed. This can be ensured by providing special quotas for women. Besides that, evidence shows that women trainers and project coordinators are more sensitive toward gender issues and are more successful in providing effective trainings appropriate for women’s special needs.

The results of the current study indicate that loans and financial aid should be provided to women actors in the value chain with low interest rates and longer repayment periods with the aim of improving women’s economic condition.

Currently, collection of berries and herbs is done mainly without following good harvesting practices applied for wild collection. This obviously leads to the disappearance of some valuable plants from some areas, hence not only having a disastrous impact on environment, but also hugely hindering the value chain’s future growth. From this alarming trend emerges an urgent need for the design and implementation
of corresponding measures ensuring sustainable development of the value chain. One of the major steps in this direction might be the organization of trainings under the leading theme of ‘Harvesting Practices for Wild Collection’ for both men and women participants with a local focus, concentrating on types of wild berries and crops, specific to a given arena. This will support the cultivation of the required skills and knowledge in harvesting practices on the one hand and, on the other, it will create a sound base for sharing knowledge and experience between male and female actors, given the differentiated tasks and responsibilities they perform.
Table 2 summarizes the main findings and proposed recommendations from the research and analysis of the wild harvest value chain:

**Table 2. Armenia Wild Harvest Value Chain Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>Factor Contributing to the Constraints</th>
<th>What Action Can Be Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women participate more in collection and processing than in trade in the value chain (poor development of the chain). Women’s share:</td>
<td>• Women are mainly represented in the production stage of the value chain. • There are transportation and trade issues. • Women are excluded from those stages of the selected value chain where income is generated and added value is accumulated.</td>
<td>• The development of the value chain will improve the economic situation for women. • Projects should be implemented that will help stabilize the demand side of the market (For example, regional hubs, intermediary structures, and companies,). • Help women networks to become legal entities to stabilize the supply side of the market. • Trainings focused on leadership, marketing, decision-making, and risk-taking skills and abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women have limited knowledge regarding different stages of the value chain. They are working through the traditional means of labor.</td>
<td>• Weak transportation systems, underdeveloped infrastructures in rural areas, and overloaded housework of women • Less access to trainings and extension programs • Lack of technical skills</td>
<td>• Help women to gain equal access to trainings and extension programs. • Provide special quotas for women during the trainings. • Provide targeted workshops and other educational events. • Equip women with necessary technological means and technical knowledge of the use of new equipment and machinery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of women, possessing ownership rights over land is incompatibly low, compared to that of men.</td>
<td>• Even when women are de jure co-owners of land in rural areas, all decisions over land and other capital resources, as a matter of practice, are made by men. • The hereditary rights are in favor of men. • The sons become the lawful owners of land and other types of capital.</td>
<td>• Gender-sensitive practices and policies should be implemented. • Policies in this regard should aim to transform generic cultural norms and settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraints</td>
<td>Factor Contributing to the Constraints</td>
<td>What Action Can Be Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women encounter difficulties in getting financial aid and loans, due to the absence of collateral.</td>
<td>• Women lack information about market mechanisms and loan-taking processes.</td>
<td>• Introduction of microfinancial tools.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women need collateral to get loans from banks.</td>
<td>• Provision of commercial loans for women that have low interest rates and longer grace periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women usually avoid risk-taking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gendered segregation of power relationships and division of labor continue to persist.</td>
<td>• Great gender-wage gaps.</td>
<td>• Establishment of cooperatives among women value chain actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decisions are made by men.</td>
<td>• Professional associations, alliances, and unions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formation of business entities will facilitate the exchange and collaboration among women participants in the selected value chain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women do not have equal opportunities in terms of economic empowerment and decision-making authority.</td>
<td>• The traditional stereotypes about women are very dominant in social life.</td>
<td>• The situation of women might be improved if social norms about the proper roles, rights, and responsibilities for men and women change over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Women constitute a significant part of informal and underpaid employment.</td>
<td>• Efforts toward raising men’s awareness about all the negative effects that gender disparities endanger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annexes

### Annex 1: Checklists for Value Chain Analysis

#### Table 1.1. Checklist for Macro-level Value Chain Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender roles</th>
<th>1. What is the share of men and women working in this specific sector/value chain by activity (supply, production, processing, transportation, and trade)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Are they part of the formal or the informal economy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. What are the functional as well as sexual divisions of labor and roles within the different segments of the value chain (production, processing, trading and marketing, consumers, and so on) according to gender roles?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Are there any segments where the presence of women is more important? Are women involved in stages where value addition is generated? Where is the actual income earned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. What is the visibility and value granted to women’s roles? What are the perceptions by women themselves, men, and the community? What is the nature of women’s work? Is it a temporary or casual type of work? Are women only used as unpaid labor?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gendered access to resources</th>
<th>6. What are men’s and women’s entitlements? What are the characteristics and factors that mediate men’s and women’s access to and control over different types of resources (natural, productive, and services)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. What is women’s access to information on production, organizations, and services available? Through what means of communication? Are these adapted to the possibilities of women?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. What are the capabilities of women to use these resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Who owns land, trees, harvest, and so on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Is information more difficult to obtain for women producers in ‘feminine’ or mixed value chains? What about access to information for women in other segments of the value chain (for example, processors or traders)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. If there are constraints, what are the main constraints faced by women in different segments of the value chain (women’s lower level of education; more marginalized and lesser access to ‘networks’, projects, and programs; less visible within segments of the value chain; less control over information; and so on)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Any specific information on market segments relevant for gender issues (for example, increase product offer to low-income consumers to improve quality of life such as nutrition)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. How can poor groups and other stakeholders obtain information about services in the sector or market information?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Gendered control over benefits

14. Are there any uneven power relationships? Are there any gender-related discriminations or exclusions?
15. How is power distributed within production and exchange relationships across the value chain?
16. Are benefits distributed or concentrated in one segment of the chain?
17. Who decides? Who controls benefits?
18. What are the disempowering dynamics?
19. What are the entitlement capabilities of men and women throughout the value chain? Is there any uneven distribution of these capabilities?
20. What alternatives (choices) do women have regarding chain activities and chain management?
21. What is the ability of producers (male/female) to influence the price? What are the opportunities for negotiation (voice, participation, inclusiveness, indebtedness, and suboptimal contracting)? Who signs the contract for the sale of the product?
22. Do women in different segments of the value chain earn more income following the intervention (if any)?
23. Are women’s roles changing? Do they take leadership positions? Do they sign contracts?
24. What is women’s own perception of change? Did they gain more self-confidence and credibility?
25. Can these changes be interpreted as empowerment?

### Gendered influence on enabling factors

26. What is women’s ability to influence decisions, policies, or programs at all levels?
27. Do they have access to specific spaces of power (invited or claimed spaces) and places of power (municipal council, parliament, and so on)? Do they have the opportunity to speak? Are women’s voices heard? Are they listened to? Which women’s voices?
28. Are women in specific segments of this value chain, sector, or activity organized?
29. Do they build strategic alliances with institutions working on gender issues such as women’s rights organizations and platforms?
30. Are institutions working on women’s and gender issues in this sector? Are women producers or farmers associations involved in decision making at national policy and planning levels?

### Table 1.2. Checklist for Meso-level Value Chain Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender roles</th>
<th>31. What are women’s role and positioning within these organizations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32. Do they face specific constraints (representation in decision-making instances, power to influence decisions, and so on)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gendered access to resources | 33. Do women have access to land, water, and technology?  
34. Do women have access to information and education?  
35. Do women have access to and responsiveness of value chain development services?  
36. What is women’s access to business development services?  
37. Do female producer groups have the same access to business development services? If not, why?  
38. Are technological innovations and investments specifically addressed at men or also at women? Are they adapted to women’s needs (physical strength and daily schedules)?  
39. Are women-specific business development services needed to support female producers?  
40. Are business development services adapted to female producers’ specific needs (daily schedules, lower educational levels, and so on)?  
41. Is childcare available?  
42. Do service providers know how to perform gender mainstreaming to better analyze, understand, and address these constraints? Are they attentive to delivering gender-sensitive services? Are they gender-sensitive in their approach?  
43. Do service providers apply institutional or organizational gender mainstreaming?  
44. Employment in business development services: does it foster employment of women? Are employment opportunities equitable? How are the working conditions?  
45. Access to and responsiveness of financial services. Do women who concentrate in specific segments of value chains face particular constraints in accessing financial services? What are these constraints?  
46. What are their specific needs (investment and cash flow needs, social pressure to face, school fees, and food items)?  
47. Are financial services adapted to their needs? What are the most suitable financial products?  
48. Are there any institutions (private or public sector) which specialize in facilitating women’s access to financial services? |
|---|---|
| Gendered control over benefits | 49. Are women members of producer groups? Do they take part in meetings? Do they have the right to voice their needs and to vote?  
50. Do they have the right to access social and financial benefits offered by the organization?  
51. Do women have the opportunity to be elected to governing bodies, and if so, are they elected and to what degree? Are there any special measures in the Articles of Association, such as quotas, to guarantee their participation in decision making? |
| Gendered influence on enabling factors | 52. What are female leaders’ capacities to influence collective decision making about sector services and value chain development?  
53. How can those who do not have access to resources and services claim to be included?  
54. In what ‘claimed or invited’ spaces and places? |
Table 1.3. Checklist for Micro-level Value Chain Analysis

| Gender roles                          | 55. What is the sexual division of labor within the household (socially determined gender roles)? What are men’s and women’s reproductive roles? What tasks are performed by men and women?  
|                                     | 56. How much time and energy are spent?  
|                                     | 57. How does it relate to women’s and men’s other roles (reproductive/community)?  
|                                     | 58. How does the work performed in the value chain add to their work burden? |
| Gendered access to resources         | 59. What is women’s and men’s access to resources needed to perform tasks? Are there any specific constraints faced by women in particular? |
| Gendered control over benefits       | 60. Do women and men benefit equally at the household level? Who earns income? Who decides on the use of the income? Who decides on family budget allocation? What is women’s decision-making power on spending of the household budget?  
|                                     | 61. Are other types of benefits generated (financial, visibility, credibility, better access to information, and social networks)? |
| Gendered influence on power dynamics within the household | 62. How are women’s contributions in the value chain perceived at the household level?  
|                                     | 63. Are gender roles changing? If yes, is women’s changing role or increased income valued within the household? Within the community? Does it have an impact on her decision-making and negotiating power?  
|                                     | 64. Do women attend or participate in more meetings at community level? Do they speak up?  
|                                     | 65. For what purpose is the additional income spent?  
|                                     | 66. What are the changes in men’s behaviors and attitudes? Do men still take on their responsibilities within the household? Do they get involved in household chores and childrearing to support their wives? |
ANNEX 2: LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Lilit Asatryan, President of Armenian Young Women’s Association

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Elza Stepanyan, Dried Food Field Operations Manager, European Neighborhood Program for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Sona Begjanyan, Wild Collector

Gohar Khachikyan, Wild Collector

Heghine Gevorgyan, Wild Collector

Siranush Hanisyan, Wild Collector
ANNEX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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