

Buying policy

Gender equality in the supply chain



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**Our
responsibility** for
gender equality
in the supply
chain



Our responsibility for gender equality in the supply chain

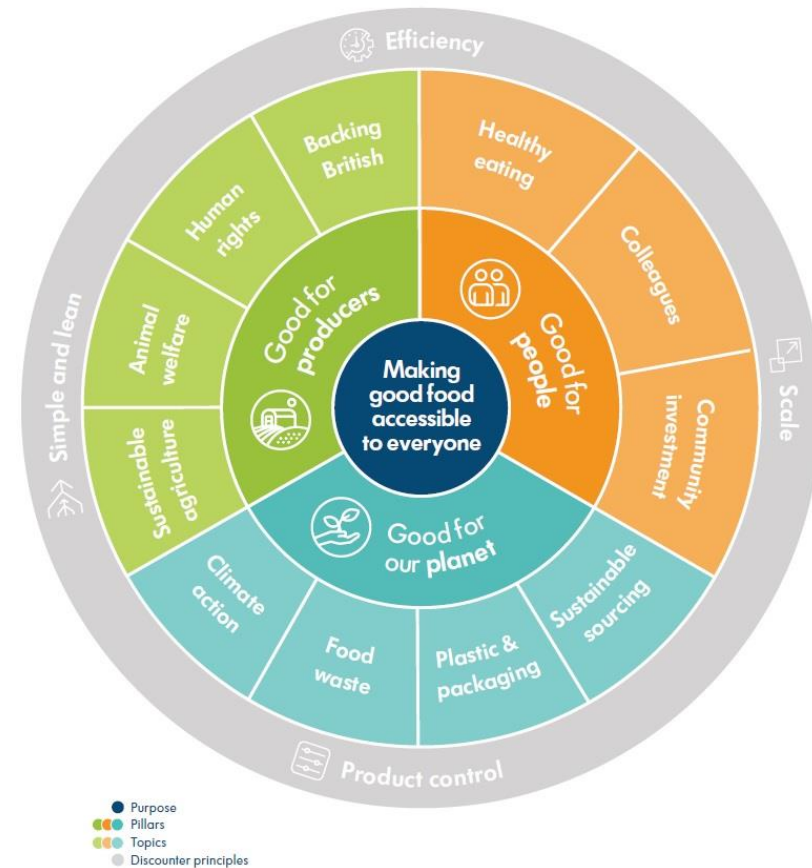
Our CSR strategy

At Lidl, we believe that everyone should be able to shop sustainably. We have set a clear sustainability purpose to ‘make good food accessible to everyone.’ We deliver against this purpose by embedding our sustainability strategy, the ‘Good Food Plan’, into the core of our business, challenging the common misconception that sustainability necessitates higher prices. Good food is more than being high quality and affordable, it is food which is Good for Producers, Good for People and Good for the Planet.

We approach sustainability across these three themes of Producers, People and Planet, with each theme housing priority topics ranging from human rights to healthy eating. We regularly consult with key stakeholder groups to ensure that our approach remains relevant and ambitious. Changing stakeholder expectations alongside shifting social and environmental factors shape our topic plans. Across each topic we’ve set long-term targets, working with industry leads to build partnerships and strive for greater transparency and accountability. This is the framework of our strategy to provide Good Food.

Our responsibility for gender equality

Addressing the topic of gender equality in the supply chain is part of the strategic focus ‘Good for Producers’ and is a key element of our human rights strategy, which outlines our commitment to ensuring safe and just working conditions, social standards and employment opportunities for those working in our supply chains.



Background to gender equality in the supply chain



Background to gender equality in the supply chain

People around the world experience limitations to their rights in the workplace because of their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. This frequently occurs in the upstream stages of food and textile supply chains, primarily impacting women and girls. There are many reasons for this, ranging from discriminatory socio-economic structures and practices to cultural and social norms, such as patriarchal conditions.¹

23%:
on average, this is how much women earn less than men

Women perform 43% of agricultural and 85% of textile production work worldwide.²³ At the same time, at least 70% of the people living in extreme poverty worldwide are female.⁴ Although they do the same work, women often earn significantly less than men.⁵ Worldwide, women earn on average 23% less than men and are more likely to be employed in precarious work or poorly paid jobs.⁶ In addition, 90% of

women's incomes go towards food for their families and their children's education; this is only 30% in the case of men.⁷ Women working in the textile industry are exposed to particular risks including: unequal payment terms, termination of employment in the event of pregnancy and sexual harassment in the workplace.⁸⁹ Moreover, in many countries, women are noticeably discriminated against when it comes to accessing land, finance or potential inheritance. This limits a wide array of opportunities, including preventing women from setting up a business.¹⁰

Equality is both a legal responsibility and a social imperative. Equal rights for all have proven to be the prerequisite for more stable, just and prosperous societies. For example, the FAO calculated that farms could increase their harvests by 20-30% if women farmers had the same access to production resources.¹¹ This would benefit developing countries in particular, as a study of 34 developing countries shows that

- ¹ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in globalen Lieferketten. Forderungen an Politik & Unternehmen, 2020 (*Gender equality in global supply chains. What politicians and companies need to do – German only*).
- ² Fairtrade Germany: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit. Fairtrade fördert die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern, 2020. (*Gender equality. Fairtrade calls for the equality of women and men – German only*)
- ³ Greenpeace: Wer billig kauft, kauft teuer! Fast Fashion: Die dunkle Seite des Modekonsums, 2018. (*Buy cheaply, pay dearly. Fast fashion: the dark side of fashion consumption – German only*)
- ⁴ Fairtrade Germany: Fairtrade und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit. Fact Sheet, 2019. (*Fairtrade and gender equality. Fact sheet, 2019 – German only*)
- ⁵ German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019 (*Social and ecological challenges in the global textile industry. Solutions by the German development cooperation, 2019 – German only*).
- ⁶ Oxfam: Im Schatten der Profite. Wie die systematische Abwertung von Hausarbeit, Pflege und Fürsorge Ungleichheit schafft und vertieft, 2020. (*In profits' shadow. How the systematic devaluation of domestic work and care work creates and intensifies inequality, 2020 – German only*).
- ⁷ Fairtrade Germany: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit. Fairtrade fördert die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern, 2020. (*Gender equality. Fairtrade calls for the equality of women and men – German only*)
- ⁸ Greenpeace: Wer billig kauft, kauft teuer! Fast Fashion: Die dunkle Seite des Modekonsums, 2018. (*Buy cheaply, pay dearly. Fast fashion: the dark side of fashion consumption – German only*)
- ⁹ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in globalen Lieferketten. Forderungen an Politik & Unternehmen, 2020 (*Gender equality in global supply chains. What politicians and companies need to do – German only*).
- ¹⁰ World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report 2020, 2019.
- ¹¹ FAO: The State of Food and Agriculture, 2011.

equal opportunities could increase agricultural production by an average of approximately 4%. This would simultaneously correspond to 150 million fewer hungry people in the world.¹²

For these reasons, gender equality has the potential to combat poverty and reduce income inequality globally and raise overall income per capita.¹³

¹² UN Women Germany: *Wirtschaftliche Stärkung von Frauen, 2020 (Strengthening Women's Economic Empowerment, 2020 – German only)*.

¹³ Business for Social Responsibility: *Building Effective Women's Economic Empowerment Strategies. Sector-Specific Opportunities and the Case for Collaboration, 2016.*



**Our
commitment to
gender equality
in the supply
chain**



Our commitment to gender equality in the supply chain

Code of conduct: freedom from discrimination

The protection of human rights is firmly anchored in the Schwarz Group's [Code of Conduct](#) (CoC) which constitutes an integral part of contractual agreements with our direct business partners. We require our suppliers to uphold gender equality within their organisations and ensure they enforce the same requirements to their own suppliers. As part of the CoC our suppliers are required to prevent any form of gender discrimination, including in the recruitment or professional development of employees. They must also ensure that employees are not subjected to sexual harassment, or any form of physical or psychological violence in the workplace. Trade union freedom and the right to collective bargaining must also be respected.

To verify compliance with these principles, suppliers and their subcontractors must provide information and facilitate inspections of their operations when requested to do so. The establishment of an internal grievance mechanism is also compulsory. This system must be set up in such a way that those reporting violations of the CoC are not discriminated against in any way.



Everyone in our supply chain should be able to work under equal conditions and requirements. For this reason, gender equality is a key component of our human rights strategy. We take responsibility for this and prioritise our efforts where the impacts are greatest.

Amali Bunter | Head of Responsible Sourcing and Ethical Trade, Lidl GB

As one of Europe's largest food retailers, with suppliers all over the world, we have a responsibility to actively support women in production regions, guaranteeing fair and equal working conditions. The start of the value chain is where the highest risk environmental and social impact lies.

The topic of gender equality is a key focus of our human rights strategy in buying, which we outline in detail in our [Human Rights in the Supply Chain Policy](#). This policy sets out our goal of improving the living and working conditions of those who work for us by the end of 2025. With regard to gender equality, this means providing women in our supply chain with equitable access to employment and wages while also protecting them from discrimination and violence.

We will improve the living and working conditions of the people who work for us by the end of 2025



1

Understand our impact

Our intention is to take decisive action to proactively respond to the human rights risks inherent to our business activities, particularly where gender equality is concerned. To do so, we continuously review the potential risks arising in the manufacturing of our products. As part of this strategic pillar, we are increasing transparency in our supply chains and conducting human rights impact assessments (HRIAs).

For more information on our commitment in this pillar, please refer to:

> [Gender-specific risks in the supply chain](#)

> [Human rights impact assessments taking into account women's rights](#)

> [Gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms](#)

2021 **We will publish the results of three HRIAs, one of which will place a specific focus on gender.**

To achieve this, we will collaborate with rights holders, women's rights organisations and incorporate gender-specific objectives into our action plans.

2025 **We will carry out three HRIAs per year in high-risk supply chains and will publish the findings alongside the associated action plans.**

Ongoing **We continue to engage women's rights organisations and local labour organisations/ unions in the development of our 'Gender Equality in the Supply Chain Policy'.**

2

Enforce standards

We promote the ILO's core labour standards through our work with internationally recognised certification bodies and social audit programmes, whilst ensuring that employees in our supply chains have access to effective grievance mechanisms. In addition to this, we develop training that enables our suppliers to identify human rights and gender-specific risks effectively, implement remediation and proactively prevent further risks occurring.

For more information on our commitment in this pillar, see:

[> Fairtrade products for gender equality](#)

2021

We will encourage our strategic suppliers to sign the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) by the end of 2021.

2025

We will ensure access to gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms in high-risk supply chains by the end of 2025.

In 2021 we are initiating access to effective grievance mechanisms in three high-risk supply chains. We will adhere to UNGP criteria and publish information on the functionality of the grievance mechanisms.

3

Promote fair supply chains

We promote living wages and incomes and a just distribution of value throughout our supply chains. A specific focus within this strategic pillar is safeguarding the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. We intend to do this by increasing the proportion of Fairtrade certified goods in our product range by the end of 2025. We also intend to focus on buying from smallholder farmers at fair rates for the long term. A key project to safeguard living wages and address gender equality in the cocoa sector is our [WayToGo Fairtrade chocolate](#), which we launched in 2020.

For more information on our commitments in this pillar, see:

[> Fairtrade products for gender equality](#)

[> ACT for higher wages](#)

2021

We continue to develop our WayToGo project by empowering women in the cocoa supply chain.

Ongoing

We promote living wages and incomes in our supply chains.

Lidl will further expand its risk-based approach to living wages and incomes. This will include our work on the WayToGo chocolate range, cooperation with ACT on living wages in textile supply chains and current work involving orange and banana supply chains. As we further refine our approach, we will ensure that the situation of women workers and farmers is carefully considered. We will publish a report on the annual progress achieved from mid-2023.

2025

We will ensure access to gender-sensitive health and safety mechanisms.

We are working with our suppliers to remove barriers for women (e.g. access to sanitary facilities, protection against harassment, etc.) in supply chains. We are making this a priority in three high-risk supply chains between now and the end of 2025.

2022 **We will support our suppliers in promoting gender equality.**

To achieve this, we will provide our suppliers in high-risk supply chains with information and resources on the topic of human rights and non-discrimination by the end of 2022.

2022 **We will support our suppliers with guidelines on appropriate occupational safety regulations for pregnancy and maternity leave.**

We will define the guidelines in our Sustainable Purchasing Policy while taking national legislation and international recommendations into account.

Ongoing **We support sourcing from producers and facilities run by women.**

Where economically possible, we buy products from producers and processing facilities run by women and report on our progress.

2022 **We will publish an action plan for gender equality by the end of 2022.**

This action plan will contain the following elements:

- From 2023 onwards we will publish gender-specific data for at least three high-risk supply chains.
- We will publish an action plan on decreasing the gender pay gap in three high-risk supply chains by the end of 2023. We will report on the progress achieved by the end of 2026.
- In accordance with ILO Convention 190, we will publish a plan outlining our approach to tackling gender-based violence by the end of 2023.

2021 **We will implement the requirements of our ACT membership by the end of 2021**

ACT aims to achieve better wages and strengthen freedom of association in the global textile industry, where around 80% of those employed are women.

4

Driving systemic change

We are active in multiple development programmes, initiatives and projects to drive change beyond our own business operations and supply chains. We aim to continuously address the root causes of gender inequality in food supply chains by exerting our influence as well as collaborating with industry partners.

For more information on our commitment in this pillar, see:

[> Project in Guatemala,](#)

[> Partner of Cotton made in Africa initiative ,](#)

[> Membership of the Ethical Trading Initiative,](#)

[> Membership of the World Banana Forum,](#)

[> Women's Empowerment Principles](#)

Identifying gender risks in the supply chain

We continuously monitor the actual and potential human rights risks throughout our product supply chains. This enables us to risk assess our supply chains and to take appropriate measures.

The causes of gender-specific discrimination in global supply chains are complex. The objective of the risk assessment is to identify the goods and/or raw materials and countries in our supply chains that are high-risk for gender-based challenges.

Risk assessment: three steps to identify the highest risk raw materials and countries

To begin the risk assessment process, we reviewed the findings from our overarching human rights risk assessment, based on our entire product range. Within each of the identified high-risk product categories, we subsequently identified the raw materials of primary importance for Lidl: fruit and vegetables, coffee, cocoa and tea.

Using recognised human rights indices, we identified the countries in our supply chain where gender equality is deemed high-risk. To do this, we combined different indices: the United Nation's Gender Inequality Index, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index and the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index.

These provided information on the extent to which women are discriminated against in the individual countries i.e. where they (1) are paid less (2), have unequal access to employment (3) or are exposed to violence (4).

In line with the **first pillar** of our human rights strategy, we continue to identify the gender-specific risks in our supply chains.



- 1 We identify risks of gender discrimination using the Gender Inequality Index which has been published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 2010 and compares gender equality in 162 countries.** By covering a wide range of factors, the index provides a good indication of the situation for women in production countries.

2 & 3 We identify the gender-based pay gaps and access to employment with the help of the Global Gender Gap Index, an index that has been published by the World Economic Forum annually since 2006. This index currently assesses 156 countries using a large number of individual indicators. For unequal pay, we used the “Estimated earned income” indicator, which compares the annual income of women and men. We used the “Labour force participation rate” indicator to measure the share of the female population of employable age (15-64 years) that are active in the labour market and compared it against the share of the male population. This data is compiled by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

4 Using the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), we examine the extent to which women are exposed to violence in individual countries. This index was published by the OECD for the first time in 2009; the most recent report was released in 2018 and includes data for 180 countries. We focus on the “Violence against women” indicator, which takes into account and combines three different factors: the extent to which local legislation protects women from violence; the percentage of women who consider physical violence to be justified; and the percentage of women who have already suffered physical or sexual violence.

Finally, we combine the results of the country and raw materials review. This allows us to identify the countries and raw materials considered highest risk for gender equality within our focus product categories, e.g. tea from Kenya, coffee from Guatemala or roses from Ethiopia. Overviews of these high-risk countries and raw materials, [tea](#), [roses](#), [coffee](#), [cocoa](#) and [strawberries](#) are included in the individual sections of this policy.

Developing actions and tracking progress

All of our targets and actions are based on the results from this risk assessment process.

Other detailed assessments include our [human rights impact assessments \(HRIAs\)](#), in which considerations on gender equality are also identified and taken into account. HRIAs can help to indicate how specific projects can promote gender equality within high-risk supply chains.

Human rights impact assessments with a focus on women's rights

HRIAs: identifying risks for women and taking action

HRIAs are intended to help us understand where and how specific business and supply chain activities have the potential to impact internationally recognised human rights. HRIAs can provide information on the systemic causes to why certain groups are impacted more than others. We use these assessments to develop measures to mitigate the risks identified as part of time-bound action plans.

When preparing and conducting HRIAs, we involve a range of stakeholders and rights holders to ensure we take the different perspectives of those who may be impacted by our business activities into account. Through local partnerships we obtain information to help us understand the impacts first-hand.

Our HRIAs are part of an ongoing due diligence process and not a one-off assessment. We therefore continue to expand partnerships in order to support our action plans and ongoing monitoring.

HRIAs in practice

Lidl is one of the first international retailers worldwide to have conducted two HRIAs with published findings and mitigation action plans.

We have conducted assessments in the [Kenyan tea supply chain](#) and the [Spanish berry supply chain, based in the province of Huelva](#). This will be followed by a third HRIA - an analysis of the banana supply chain in Colombia, due for completion by the end of 2021.

We work with recognised, expert organisations when conducting our assessments. As part of the Spanish berries HRIA, we involved three local women's rights organisations to better understand gender-

specific impacts such as discrimination. Their views and assessments of how impacts can be reduced were incorporated into our action plan. We are also drawing on the expertise of women's rights organisations in our assessment of the banana supply chain.

In line with the **first pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are identifying the gender-specific risks associated with our supply chains.



”

We will continue our dialogue with external stakeholders, whilst simultaneously drawing on the specialist expertise of civil society organisations, trade unions and other experts. By collaborating in this way, we identify the greatest challenges to upholding human rights, particularly the protection of women’s rights and freedom of association. Based on our findings, we develop measures to remove obstacles to upholding human rights.

Amali Bunter | Head of Responsible Sourcing and Ethical Trade, Lidl GB



Results from our tea HRIA in Kenya - focus on gender equality

Gender discrimination

Most areas in Kenya have a structural barrier to women's land ownership and across nearly all smallholder communities most registered members are men, though this is slowly changing in some areas e.g. Bomet County where the proportion of registered women growers has reached 30%.

Gender-specific violence

Identified challenges with sexual harassment and structural barriers due to the informal nature of the sector and ineffective mechanisms to report cases.

Gender pay gap

Gender segregation of roles has an implication for wages – e.g. operation of machinery is deemed skilled and therefore earns higher wages.

Gender risks in the tea supply chain



Country	Risk level	Risk-related aspects
1 China	High risk	> Violence against women
2 Sri Lanka		> Gender discrimination > Violence against women
	Very high risk	> Gender pay gap > Access to employment
3 India		> Gender pay gap > Gender discrimination > Access to employment
4 Kenya		> Access to employment
5 Vietnam		> Violence against women



Results from our berry HRIA in the Spanish province of Huelva - focus on gender equality

Gender discrimination

Identified cases of gender discrimination and sexual harassment
- in particular for female migrant workers.

The protocols on “Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities” (Art. 35) and “Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment” (Art. 36) in the collective bargaining agreement have not yet been implemented.

Gender differences in accessing employment

Reports of discriminatory hiring conditions in specific recruitment agreements.

The sector’s structural dependence on potentially vulnerable workers including women, low-income earners and migrant workers.



Gender risks in the strawberry supply chain¹⁴



Country	Risk level	Risk-related aspects
1 Brazil	High risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender pay gap > Access to employment
2 Greece		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to employment
3 Italy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender pay gap > Access to employment
4 Poland		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to employment
5 Romania		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to employment
6 Hungary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender pay gap
7 Argentina	High risk and very high risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Violence against women > Access to employment
8 Morocco		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender pay gap > Violence against women
9 Egypt	Very high risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender pay gap > Access to employment > Gender discrimination
10 India		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to employment
11 Paraguay		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to employment > Gender discrimination

¹⁴ As part of our broader risk assessment, the berry supply chain in the Huelva region in Spain was identified as a hotspot for human rights impacts. As a result, we carried out a HRIA, in which gender-specific risks were determined. In the course of the gender-specific risk assessment at country level shown here, Spain as a whole does not rank among the highest-risk areas. This shows that careful consideration of the complex relationship between country risks, product-related risks and risks to individual human rights dimensions such as gender equality is required.

WayToGo chocolate: Improving income for women cocoa farmers

Women farmers play a crucial role in the sustainability of the cocoa supply chain and cocoa-producing communities¹⁵. In Ghana, women account for a large percentage of the value created in the cocoa harvest: official figures show that a quarter of cocoa producers are female, however the actual figures are likely to be much higher. According to our gender risk assessment, women farmers are exposed to greater risks, especially within Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Gender risks in the cocoa supply chain




Country	Risk level	Risk-related aspects
1 Ghana	High risk	> Violence against women
	Very high risk	> Gender discrimination > Equal pay
2 Côte d'Ivoire		> Gender pay gap > Gender discrimination > Violence against women > Access to employment

In addition to unpaid care work, such as raising children, women work long hours every day, yet do not earn an adequate income. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, women make up almost 70% of the workforce in the cocoa sector, yet only earn about 21% of the generated revenue.¹⁶

Despite this, women are dependent on the income from the cocoa harvest. Women are also economically disadvantaged as they have fewer educational opportunities and are less likely to own land as a result of inheritance systems. Overall, this leads to poorer access to cooperatives and, as a result, it is harder for women to establish their own businesses and livelihoods.¹⁷

In line with the **third pillar** of our human rights strategy, we promote living wages and incomes.




¹⁵ Oxfam: Women's Rights in the Cocoa Sector. Examples of emerging good practice, 2016

¹⁶ African Development Bank: Economic Empowerment of African Women through Equitable Participation in Agricultural Value Chains, 2015.

¹⁷ Südwind: Preisgestaltung in der Wertschöpfungskette Kakao – Ursachen und Auswirkungen, 2018 (*Pricing in the cocoa value chain – causes and effects, 2018 – German only*)

Living wages in the cocoa sector

Through the WayToGo chocolate bar, Lidl aims to contribute to higher wages in the cocoa sector. We have been selling WayToGo chocolate bars internationally as part of our permanent product range since 2021. In partnership with Fairtrade, the NGO Rikolto and the Kuapa Kokoo farmers' cooperative, Lidl pays an extra premium in addition to the Fairtrade Premium for every tonne of cocoa used in WayToGo chocolate. This money funds projects that make additional and sustainable improvements to the incomes of agricultural producers. In 2020, a total of 870 farmers, 60% men, 40% women, benefited from the various initiatives and succeeded in raising their incomes.

Improving women's livelihoods with WayToGo

From 2021, we will expand the WayToGo concept to include a second strategic pillar which prioritises the needs and skills of women and other vulnerable groups in all WayToGo activities. This will include measures to diversify incomes that are tailored to the specific situation of women, for example, women will be prioritised when it comes to activities that facilitate and increase their access to funding. In addition, the Fairtrade "Gender Module" used to support married couples in making joint decisions within their households, is to be implemented. Barriers to greater female representation and membership at cooperative level will be reviewed and removed, for

example with regard to illiteracy, health care issues or gender-based violence.

For over ten years the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative has been committed to the advancement of women through involvement in various projects. The cooperative have supported the diversification of women's income by cultivating other agricultural products to safeguard their livelihoods. Proposals made by women are specifically taken into consideration, which has led to greater participation by women. As part of one diversification project, participants were given the opportunity to produce and distribute soap independently. Each group was given materials and start-up capital of around EUR 320, roughly twice the average monthly salary in Ghana.¹⁸ This has enabled the participants to develop new sources of income and gain a degree of independence from their fluctuating incomes from cocoa farming.

Retailer Cocoa Collaboration

Since 2018 Lidl have been members of the Retailer Cocoa Collaboration, a pre-competitive group that supports industry efforts to drive environmental and social improvements in the cocoa sector. As part of this membership we support the annual trader assessment whereby selected cocoa traders are assessed on progress in cocoa sustainability, covering topics such as deforestation, traceability, gender equality, farmer incomes and child and forced labour.

¹⁸ Statista: Ghana: gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, 2021.

Promoting gender equality through Fairtrade certification

Non-discrimination and gender equality are among the social factors addressed by certification bodies. The Fairtrade Standard in particular includes these factors in many of its criteria.

Fairtrade and gender equality

Farms certified under the Fairtrade Standard for small-scale producers must meet certain requirements aimed directly and indirectly at gender equality. Beyond these standards, Fairtrade pursues a gender strategy to specifically promote gender equality. A recent study shows that a gender strategy leads to greater participation and equality for women in Fairtrade organisations.¹⁹



Lidl has been stocking a large number of Fairtrade-certified products for many years. These include products such as roses and tea, which according to our [gender risk assessment](#) pose high risks for gender equality. Since 2019, Lidl have had a year-on-year increase in the volumes of cocoa, bananas, tea, wine and sugar sold on Fairtrade terms. In 2020, we had the largest overall combined 'all that can be' and 'Fairtrade sourced ingredient' cocoa sales among all UK retailers, representing 22% of the UK market for Fairtrade cocoa. These sales generated more than £1 million in Fairtrade Premium for cocoa growers.

By listing a variety of Fairtrade products, we help farms address the root causes of inequality for smallholder farmers and workers. Specifically, the Fairtrade Standard calls for protection against sexual violence, basic standards to prevent discrimination, the protection of expectant and nursing mothers, and the establishment of grievance mechanisms with a focus on women. In addition, the Fairtrade Premium gives Fairtrade-certified cooperatives the financial scope to address the issue of gender equality through specific projects.

In line with the **third pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are promoting Fairtrade, a scheme that is taking focused action on gender equality.



¹⁹ Fairtrade: Factsheet Gender Studie, 2021. (German only)

Gender risks in the rose supply chain



Country	Risk level	Risk-related aspects
1 Ethiopia	High risk and Very high risk	> Access to employment > Gender discrimination > Violence against women
2 Uganda		> Access to employment > Gender discrimination > Violence against women
3 South Africa		> Gender discrimination > Violence against women
4 Costa Rica	Very high risk	> Gender pay gap
5 Ghana		> Gender pay gap > Gender discrimination
6 India		> Gender pay gap > Gender discrimination
7 Indonesia		> Gender pay gap > Gender discrimination
8 Kenya		> Gender discrimination > Violence against women
9 Morocco		> Gender pay gap
10 Mozambique		> Gender discrimination
11 Papua New Guinea		> Gender discrimination > Violence against women
12 Zambia		> Gender discrimination > Violence against women
13 Vietnam		> Violence against women
14 Mexico		> Gender pay gap



ACT: Contributing to higher wages for female textile workers

Pay in the textile sector is extremely low, and often does not guarantee a living wage.²⁰ This affects women who make up around 85% of the workforce employed in textile factories.²¹

Women are often paid lower wages for the same job than their male co-workers.²²

In line with the **third pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are promoting living wages and incomes.



Textiles play an important role within Lidl's product range. Our suppliers source a significant proportion of our textile range from Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar (see our [list of non-food suppliers](#)). Statutory minimum wages in these countries are extremely low and as one of the largest retailers in the textiles sector, Lidl bears a great responsibility to advocate for living wages in production countries, and to improve the income of women in particular.

²⁰ German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019 (*Social and ecological challenges in the global textile industry. Solutions by the German development cooperation, 2019 – German only*).

²¹ Greenpeace: Wer billig kauft, kauft teuer! Fast Fashion: Die dunkle Seite des Modekonsums, 2018. (*Buy cheaply, pay dearly. Fast fashion: the dark side of fashion consumption – German only*)

²² German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019 (*Social and ecological challenges in the global textile industry. Solutions by the German development cooperation, 2019 – German only*).

Lidl joined the Action Collaboration Transformation (ACT) initiative in 2019. We are committed to implementing the requirements of our ACT membership by the end of 2021.

We are currently developing our implementation strategy to meet one of the initiative's main objectives: responsible buying practices.

This involves working with our suppliers to create mechanisms to facilitate a progressive increase in wages in the textile production sector. In so doing, we can make a direct contribution to improving the income of women in the textile supply chain. We also participate in a mediation process that has been put in place to deal with cases of labour rights violations occurring within the supply chains of ACT members.

ACT and gender equality

ACT is an alliance between global brands, retailers, trade unions and governments to ensure living wages in garment, textile and footwear factories. Upon joining, we began establishing industry-wide, national collective bargaining agreements in production countries.



Ethical Trading Initiative: strengthening gender equality

In 2021, Lidl submitted an application to join the multi-stakeholder Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI).

Ethical Trading Initiative and gender equality

ETI's mission is to leverage the collective strength of businesses, trade unions and NGOs to realise the vision of a world in which all workers benefit from labour rights that are respected by companies and protected by the state. ETI cooperates with various players to identify solutions to systemic challenges.



For workers' rights.
For better business.

As part of its own gender equality strategy, ETI's vision is to enforce equal rights, freedoms, access and benefits in the workplace within the participating companies' supply chains. The ETI raises awareness of the issue of gender equality and advocates for greater participation by women in supply chains.

In accordance with the **fourth pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are actively driving change to strengthen gender equality beyond our own supply chains.



Ethical Tea Partnership: supporting women in the tea supply chain

Lidl has been a member of the multi-stakeholder initiative, Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP), since December 2021. The aim of the ETP is to bring companies together to achieve transformative change for producer groups in collaboration with multiple stakeholders. Lidl aims to contribute to a more sustainable tea industry through this membership.

From the findings in our [gender risk assessment](#) we have identified tea as a high risk raw material and therefore tea sourced from Kenya became the focus of [our first HRIA](#). In order to address potential human rights risks in this sector effectively, we rely on cooperation with a wide variety of recognised stakeholders.

Ethical Tea Partnership & Gender Equality

The ETP places particular emphasis on the advancement and empowerment of women in the tea sector. The initiative is committed to supporting job security, higher incomes and better workplace care for women.



Empowering women to grow coffee sustainably and productively

Women play an important role in global coffee production: between 20-30% of coffee farms are run by women. Depending on the region, up to 70% of the work on coffee farms is carried out by female workers,²³ however women often earn less than their male co-workers. Strongly fluctuating coffee prices put further pressure on the income of women farmers. Furthermore, women coffee farmers are often at a structural disadvantage, in terms of access to land, cooperatives or loans.²⁴ Our [risk assessment](#) also confirms the high risks that women are exposed to in the coffee sector.

Lidl is addressing these risks in a project based around 50 kilometers outside Guatemala City. Alongside the organisations Rainforest Alliance (previously UTZ) and CARE, we are supporting a total of 92 female members of the “Agrícola Integral Acatenango” coffee cooperative. The specific aim of the project is to train women coffee farmers in sustainable cultivation and processing methods. This has empowered the women farmers to earn a higher income for high-quality coffee, as well as to pass on what they learn to future generations. This project ran until the end of 2020. Today, 95% of the project's women-run coffee farms have systems in place to ensure better farming practices and adaptation to climate change. For the participants, the project resulted in greater decision-making power and greater control over resources on their farms and in their homes.

Lidl and Fairtrade are also working with six coffee cooperatives in Caranaví, Bolivia, making a direct contribution towards strengthening democratic structures and addressing gender equality for smallholder farmers. This new collaborative project will reach a total of 300 smallholders and a further 90 people in the community.

The project was developed by the cooperatives through a participatory process, with the help of the Fairtrade producer network in Bolivia and Latin America. It aims to improve their management processes, engage young people and promote the implementation of climate change adaptation plans. In addition, a gender equality analysis has been carried out, which examined the division of tasks within the family, leadership roles and participation in the community. As part of the project an analysis on the causes of gender inequalities has been conducted and proposals to improve the inclusion of women in the cooperatives have been developed. The findings show that it is important that the cooperative's contracts (i.e. articles of association) and planning documents consider the participation of women in decision-making, meaning that the promotion of gender equality is embedded throughout the cooperative. In addition, women are receiving leadership training to enable them to make a greater contribution to the cooperatives and improve overall gender equality.

²³ International Coffee Organisation: Gender Equality in the Coffee Sector, 2018.

²⁴ Südwind: Auf ein Tässchen. Die Wertschöpfungskette von Kaffee, 2020. (*For a little cup. The coffee value chain, 2020 – German only*).

Gender risks in the coffee supply chain



Country	Risk level	Risk-related aspects
1 Argentina	High risk	> Violence against women
2 Peru		> Violence against women
3 El Salvador	Very high risk	> Access to employment
4 Guatemala		> Gender pay gap > Access to employment > Gender discrimination
5 Guyana		> Gender pay gap > Gender discrimination
6 Honduras		> Access to employment
7 Columbia		> Gender pay gap
8 Nicaragua		> Gender pay gap > Access to employment
9 Paraguay		> Gender discrimination
10 Suriname		> Gender discrimination
11 Venezuela		> Gender pay gap > Access to employment > Gender discrimination



World Banana Forum: standing up for better wages and access to work in the banana sector

Traditionally, banana cultivation has been carried out by men. Women's work is often limited to packing the fruit. This gender segregation of roles has an impact on women's access to employment and is also the main driver of the industry-wide gender wage gap. As a result, women workers in the banana sector consistently earn less than their male peers. To tackle these challenges, Lidl was the first discount retailer to join the multi-stakeholder initiative, the World Banana Forum, back in 2016.

World Banana Forum and gender equality

The World Banana Forum's Task Force on Gender Equity seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the causes of the lack of gender equity along the global banana supply chain and increase women's participation in all decision-making processes that affect them.



In 2021, Lidl and Fyffes launched the BSR HERessentials programme, a new digital gender programme aimed to train workers in the banana supply chain on gender-specific topics, including sexual harassment, domestic violence, the use of grievance mechanisms and health and hygiene (with a particular focus on COVID-19). Through this programme we aim to reach 10,000 workers by 2025.

In accordance with the **fourth pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are actively driving change to strengthen gender equality beyond our own supply chains.



Cotton made in Africa Initiative: empowering women by buying certified textiles

The textile industry is frequently in the spotlight due to critical social and ecological production conditions. The cultivation of cotton in particular poses high risks.²⁵ In Africa, the world's third-largest cotton exporter, the livelihoods of around 20 million people are dependent on cotton.²⁶ Over 50% of the work carried out in the cotton fields is done by women, however they are paid up to 30% less than their male peers while also performing unpaid domestic work. They are also discriminated against by structures that privilege men, which consequently limit their access to loans, land and producer organisations.²⁷

Studies show that under the same preconditions, women are equally successful and also invest more of their income in their children's health and education. Therefore, empowering women also improves local living conditions in the wider community. This is the approach taken by the Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) initiative, which Lidl joined in 2020. As part of the partnership, we not only ensure the buying of sustainable African cotton, but also support the initiative by empowering women who grow cotton in Africa. This is a long-term commitment and it is set to be expanded over the next few years.

In accordance with the **fourth pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are actively driving change to strengthen gender equality beyond our own supply chains.



²⁵ German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019 (*Social and ecological challenges in the global textile industry. Solutions by the German development cooperation, 2019 – German only*).

²⁶ BMZ: Baumwollanbau – auf dem Weg zu mehr Nachhaltigkeit, Höhere Einkommen für Kleinbauernfamilien durch nachhaltigen Anbau, 2019. (*German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [BMZ]: Cotton cultivation – generating greater sustainability and better incomes for smallholder families through sustainable cultivation, 2019 – German only*).

²⁷ Südwind: Afrikas weißes Gold – Frauenarbeit im Baumwollanbau, 2014. (*Africa's white gold – women's work in the cultivation of cotton, 2014 – German only*).

Cotton made in Africa and gender equality

CmiA is one of world's leading standards for the production of sustainable cotton.²⁸ One of its main focus areas is non-discrimination and empowerment of women, for which the standard sets out specific requirements. For example, it requires CmiA-certified cotton cooperatives to pay women and men the same wage, and to protect mothers by providing parental leave and the option to return to work. CmiA also advocate for greater gender equality in the cultivation of cotton, including transferring knowledge on gender-related issues in cotton-growing communities. CmiA adapts its training courses on the cultivation of sustainable cotton to the needs of the female participants with a view to strengthening their role and dismantling prejudice.



²⁸ Cotton made in Africa: Position paper on Gender Equality, 2021.



Establishing gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms

Access to effective grievance mechanisms is a key element in detecting, correcting and remediating human rights violations. Violations include cases of discrimination or gender-based violence.

In order to ensure their effectiveness, UN Guiding Principle 31 stipulates that non-judicial grievance mechanisms, both state-based and non-state-based, should be: legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights compatible, a source of continuous learning, and based on engagement and dialogue.

At Lidl, we know that grievance mechanisms can only be effective if employees in the supply chain have access to them. However, there are often many obstacles to doing so, for instance, insufficient knowledge of the local language in the case of migrant workers or fear of retaliation. These obstacles are even greater for women than for men in some instances. For example, those processing grievances often lack sensitivity with regard to gender-specific complaints, trust in these mechanisms declines as a result. Furthermore, women frequently have poorer access to digital technology and due to unpaid care work, have limited mobility.

Lidl has set itself the objective of ensuring that all workers in its high-risk supply chains have access to an effective grievance mechanism. We take care to ensure that grievance mechanisms are structured in a

gender-sensitive manner. Since the beginning of 2021, we have been providing access to effective grievance mechanisms in three high-risk supply chains. Our experience and learnings will be applied to further supply chains. We are aiming to ensure that multiple grievance channels are in place and that the mechanisms are designed to be straightforward and trustworthy.

In non-food, we have also begun working with initiatives like ACT and the ILO Better Work programme. The Better Work programme pursues its own gender strategy and is actively committed to gender equality. This also benefits the numerous textile factories participating in the programme. In addition, Lidl was an active member of the working group on the first Bangladesh Accord. The Accord on Fire and Building Safety was founded in 2013 and promotes the rights and safety of workers in textile factories. A recent follow-up agreement under the umbrella of the RGM Sustainability Council (RSC) has been established.²⁹ The working group's objective was to develop an appropriate grievance mechanism for textile workers in Bangladesh. Based on this, the mechanism was adapted to explicitly include

In line with the **first pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are determining the gender-specific risks associated with our supply chains. In the **second pillar**, we are working on implementing ILO standards.



²⁹ Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh: About, 2021.

grievances concerning working conditions for pregnant workers as well as cases of gender-based violence. Care was taken to address potential gender-specific barriers, e.g. by ensuring grievances can be reported anonymously.³⁰

³⁰ International Labour Rights Forum: Calling for Remedy, The Bangladesh Accord complaint mechanism has saved lives and stopped retaliation across hundreds of factories, 2019.

Women's Empowerment Principles: setting an international example

Lidl Great Britain signed up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) to promote its commitment to the advancement of women internationally. The WEPs resulted from a joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact. It is the first global initiative to target the advancement and empowerment of women in supply chains and businesses. It is aimed at the business community and comprises seven principles for the empowerment of women in companies. By signing up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles initiative, we are signaling our commitment to empowering both women and the transgender community. This Gender Equality Policy contains information on how we intend to implement the WEPs. This includes preventing and mitigating women's rights violations in global value chains and working proactively towards a fundamental transformation to achieve women's rights.

In accordance with the **fourth pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are actively driving change to strengthen gender equality beyond our own supply chains.



UN Women's Empowerment Principles

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

Glossary



Glossary

Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT)

ACT is the first global agreement to strive for collective bargaining at industry level in the countries of production. The wages negotiated in this context will be backed up by responsible purchasing practices from the participating businesses as well as binding commitments on purchasing volumes. ACT has also developed a mechanism to evaluate the impact of the initiative: textile manufacturers and workers' representatives assess how effectively the company has met its obligations and facilitated higher wages accordingly. ACT's current focus countries are Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Turkey. The initiative will be extended to other countries over time.

Code of conduct (CoC)

A code of conduct (CoC) is a collection of policies and/or rules that businesses set themselves as part of a voluntary commitment. The instructions they contain serve as a (basic) guide for employees to encourage desired conduct and avoid misconduct. The topics covered can be very broad, ranging from corruption through dealings with customers down to working hours.

Cotton made in Africa (CmiA)

Cotton made in Africa, an initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation, is one of world's leading standards for the production of sustainable cotton. Its mission is to help small farmers in Africa to help themselves through trade instead of donations, improve their living and working conditions and to promote environmental protection.

Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is a leading alliance of companies, trade unions and NGOs that promotes respect for workers' rights around the globe. Its vision is a world where all workers are free from exploitation and discrimination, and enjoy conditions of freedom, security and equity.

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is an indicator of wage differences between the sexes. It indicates the percentage difference in the average gross earnings between women and men.

Grievance mechanism

A grievance mechanism is a complaint processes that enables individuals or groups of people to complain and seek a remedy in cases where businesses potentially have adverse impacts on human rights. The UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights³¹ call on states and businesses to provide those affected with access to effective grievance mechanisms. For companies, this means putting in place operative grievance mechanisms that are accessible to persons potentially affected inside and outside of the business, and/or requesting that suppliers or business partners do the same. The UNGP define eight criteria that a human rights grievance system must fulfill in order to be effective, namely, legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights-compatible, based on engagement and dialogue, and a source of continuous learning.

Human rights impact assessment (HRIA)

A human rights impact assessment (HRIA) is a process applied to systematically identify, predict and respond to the potential human rights implications of a business operation, government policy or trade agreement.

³¹ UN Human Rights: Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011.

ILO Better Work programme

The Better Work programme is a partnership between the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, working to improve working conditions and respect for workers' rights at all levels of the garment industry. At present, there are 1,700 factories employing more than 2.4 million workers in nine countries participating in the programme. Apart from advising textile producers, Better Work also works together with governments and textile companies to initiate improvements in this area as well.

International Labour Organisation

Headquartered in Geneva, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the oldest specialised agency of the United Nations. It is responsible for developing, formulating and implementing binding international labour and social standards. The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen social dialogue.

Migrant worker

The ILO describes migrant workers as foreign nationals who are accepted into a host country for the specific purpose of performing an economic activity for which they receive remuneration within the host country. The length of their residence is usually limited in the same way as the work they perform. Their family members (where permitted to join them) are likewise included in this category.

According to the ILO, crossing national borders to work is one of the key motivations for international migration, whether due to economic inequality, seeking work or a combination of the two.³²

Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of principles that provide guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

³² ILO: Global estimates on migrant workers, 2015.

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