

# **Gendered social norms for programme design**

Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action (SOBA)

## Case study

Erin Markel  
Emily Miller

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The BEAM Exchange  
c/o PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
7 More London Riverside  
London SE1 2RT  
United Kingdom  
[contact@beamexchange.org](mailto:contact@beamexchange.org)  
[www.beamexchange.org](http://www.beamexchange.org)

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# 1. Introduction

This case study on the Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action (SOBA) programme is one of two in-depth studies addressing how gendered social norms influence women's empowerment in market systems development.<sup>1</sup> A gap currently exists between academic research and knowledge on social norms and the extent to which market systems programs incorporate social norm analysis to address constraints to women's economic empowerment. Like the majority of market systems programmes implemented today, SOBA is not a gender-focused programme, but aims to reach both men and women through facilitative market systems interventions. This study therefore provides insights on how programmes not specifically targeting women's economic empowerment (while nonetheless looking to reach women beneficiaries) can explore and integrate the complex world of social norms in feasible and useful ways.

The overall research objectives are to understand the influence of social norms on women's roles in market systems, and to test methods for collecting information on gendered social norms to address challenges and opportunities in programme design. The SOBA case study represents an opportunity for the programme to more strongly integrate women's economic empowerment considerations within its market systems change initiatives.

## Research methods and overview

Research methods consisted of in-depth interviews (IDIs) with SOBA programme staff and six wholesale vegetable traders (two male and four female), and three focus group discussions (FGDs) of ten people each with male and female farmers and female wholesale traders. The farmers were based in rural areas while the female traders were based in and around the city of Makeni. The IDI and FGD guides are included in Annex 2, along with research recommendations.

The FGDs were highly participatory and collaborative, focusing on common domestic activities and enterprise level tasks specific to the project's selected sub-sector (listed in Annex 3), the time burdens associated with each of these activities, and gender roles. These discussions paid particular attention to whether activities were perceived as primarily the role and responsibility of men or women, or were interchangeable. This was used as part of the evidence base for identifying, and assessing the strength of gendered social norms related to remunerative and non-remunerative work. The ranking of flexibility in gender roles allowed for an indirect examination of social norms relevant to the project sub-sector.

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The IDIs focused on questions around women's engagement relative to SOBA activity and interventions, benefits and risks around social norms and market systems, and other information and insights most critical to SOBA for planning and designing future interventions

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<sup>1</sup> This study complements [The Social Norms Factor: How gendered social norms influence how we empower women in market systems development](#) published by the BEAM Exchange and authored by MarketShare Associated (2016), by providing greater detail on the research methodology and findings.

and measurement frameworks that may take social norms into account. The IDIs with male and female market actors (i.e., wholesale vegetable traders) questioned six wholesale traders about their interactions and relationships with women (in the case of the male IDI) and men (in the case of the female IDI). It analysed barriers, opportunities and supports, as reflected by gender roles and norms in the vegetable trade.

## Background

SOBA began in September 2013 (under the name of the Sierra Leone Market Development Programme), moving from the inception phase to pilot phase in mid- 2014. The programme is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by Adam Smith International.

SOBA adheres to a market systems development approach, seeking to improve the underlying pro-poor performance of a range of market systems in agriculture, light-manufacturing and sustainable energy that increase opportunities for better access and improved growth for poor and disadvantaged people. Gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) is a cross-cutting programme imperative, alongside green growth. Early programme design explicitly included GESI in the selection of target sub-market sectors for further due diligence in the market systems analysis.

In facing the setbacks posed by the Ebola virus in 2014, SOBA adapted to the changes in market dynamics and provided targeted support designed to mitigate the negative economic ripple effects of the disease. Following the epidemic, SOBA set a new strategic direction in 2015 to target more interconnected markets and a wider range of partners, including formal and informal private sector partners, new investors, and an expanded array of medium-tier businesses. SOBA is also targeting investment in associations, working groups, and GoSL activities that further burnish a pathway to systemic change.

The SOBA1 pilot phase funded with £3.9m was successfully finished in January 2016 and the programme has now entered the SOBA2 expansion and implementation phase. Under the £5.6m SOBA2 contract with DFID, the programme will continue until January 2018.

### **Women's economic empowerment (WEE):**

SOBA is not a gender or WEE focused programme but rather aims to increase the net income of men and women living in poverty<sup>2</sup> by 10 percent. It has a target of 106,425 individuals (male or female) across the life of the programme. Market sectors are selected primarily on the basis of their potential for impact toward these overall targets. To this end, SOBA also weighs the potential for viable partnerships and the ability to scale successful activities to maximise positive impact for target beneficiaries. SOBA's activities in the agricultural inputs and services market, which primarily target vegetable crops where women comprise approximately 70 per cent of the producers and traders, have proven the most successful to date. Under the initial phase 1 of SOBA, 18,000 poor women and men vegetable traders saw an increase in net income by 10 per cent or more through interventions such as quality local agricultural inputs and better distribution channels outside of towns.

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<sup>2</sup> The Sierra Leone Progress Out of Poverty Index's (PPI) definition of poor people is used.

## 2. Interpretation and summary of key findings

### Key findings from focus group discussions with both male and female farmers

During the FGDs, women and men assigned different ratings or scores for how flexible different roles are along gender lines, termed “gender flexibility.” The activities to be ranked for gender flexibility are: 1) house cleaning 2) laundry 3) providing money for food and school fees 4) title of home 5) purchasing of agricultural inputs 6) providing business start-up capital 7) developing agreements with suppliers and 8) overall business decision-making. For all these activities, women perceived their roles to be more flexible than men did. The men were likely to say that this is “their responsibility” or that is “a woman’s job.”

**Pressure on men to assert a culturally-fixed role** – Men made statements such as, “Only women do cooking and laundry. If men do this they would lose respect in the community as they would be seen as being dominated by their wife.” Men were concerned that speculation might arise in the community that they were under a “woman’s black magic.”

#### **Box 1: SOBA – Inflexible roles and “sticky” social norms**

One woman farmer said; “If a man wants to cook, the belief is that the woman wants to control and dominate the husband, and her in-laws and community would be disapproving.” The wife would not allow this because of the local traditions and cultural perceptions. “We are not used to other ways, this is how it is here. And if the tradition was broken, our children would not be “blessed children” following the true path according to our religious beliefs.”

**Gender role rigidity limits access to economically vital assets for women.** Men said, “Only men have title to property (house), provide money for rent, are responsible for decision making in business, and make house repairs. These are inflexible, non-negotiable roles.” Men in polygamous households said that if the man dies first, keeping the title with the man or their children helps avoid problems if a wife wants to remarry. Of the nine women farmers participating in the FGD whose families owned property, three said the title was held jointly with their husband, five said the title was in the name of their children and one woman said it was solely in the name of her husband.

**Decision-making and asset control dominated by men.** Legal title to an asset at the household and business levels determine to a large extent, decision-making over the use of those assets. As men by and large hold the title deed to the house and land, they make the final decisions in those domains. This is especially true with access to credit where collateral is required. Another household asset is livestock, where men assume ownership and decision making over the most valuable animals such as cattle. The household garden, which in most cases is used for income generation and household consumption is deemed by men to be under their control although women and other family members may provide most of the labour. Men say they have the final decision on agricultural inputs. Where assets are used in the household as well as for income generation, the decision over their use is likely to be dictated by whoever has ownership. The FGDs did not directly discuss this issue, but the findings around who holds the title to capital assets suggest they have overall decision making and control over their usage.

Both men and women acknowledged that according to their local culture and traditions men have the final say in business decision-making. The male farmer FGD participants said they knew of instances where a decision was made jointly, but the man was acknowledged for making it. Women participants said, “If it goes well the man gets credit. If not, the wife is seen as interfering and at fault.”

**Box 2: Gendered household roles**

One female farmer interviewed for the SOBA case said, “If a man spends hours cooking he is not putting his family’s welfare first. However if a husband was not able to provide because of physical or mental limitations then that is accepted and understood by the family and the community. “The children’s and family’s welfare must be maintained and this is expected by society.” Women farmers said that they get happiness and recognition in their communities through their friendships, family and neighbours. If they are appropriate (submissive) to their husbands, their children will be blessed and successful. One participant said, “I am here and blessed because of my mother who was submissive to her husband, and I am someone that the family can be proud of.”

**Seven hours of a woman’s day are typically taken up by household chores.** Housekeeping, laundry and cooking are estimated to take up to seven hours a day and are undertaken by female farmers directly or by their extended family. Both male and female groups said that men take full responsibility for activities that require heavy labour such as using larger farm equipment or making house repairs.

**Female farmers are respected in their community for being “good housewives.”**

Interestingly, the women’s discussion around their most time consuming activities did go back to social norms around women’s expected roles and possible sanctions from their in-laws or the broader community if the woman was perceived to be dominating her husband (and possibly using black magic to do so). Female farmers are respected for being good housewives, mothers and helpmates to their husbands. It is noted that female farmers are reliant upon, and part of, the family enterprise; they are not running their own enterprise, as is the case with women traders.

**Male farmers are respected by their community for being providers and decision-makers.**

The farm men’s discussion group revealed that they are respected by the community for being good providers to their families and the ultimate decision makers. Deviation from these expected roles would bring shame onto the entire family and be especially damaging to their children if they are not seen as following the true path of their faith.

**Key findings from focus group discussions with female traders**

The focus group discussion with ten female wholesale traders provides striking contrasts to the two farmers’ groups in the level of work burdens at home and in gender flexibility of roles. The female traders (who are the founders and proprietors of their enterprise) report that housecleaning and laundry each take 30 minutes a day. Cooking is their largest consumer of time, requiring 2-3 hours per day. These women say that their husbands and other family members help out with these chores.

**Greater gender role flexibility perceived by female traders than by female farmers.** The women say that there is some gender role flexibility in all areas with these exceptions: 1) only the women (not the men) are at their enterprise point of sale which seems to suggest women’s interest lies in maintaining primary engagement with the customers they have developed. 2) Women buy the agricultural input supplies for farmers they contract. 3) The women oversee quality control of the vegetables. 4) The women negotiate for and purchase vegetables, themselves.

**When a woman owns her own enterprise, she exercises greater control over decision-making.** Role flexibility findings clearly suggest that when a woman has her own enterprise she exercises decision-making control over business activities, including the use of productive resources – strong components and evidence of women’s economic empowerment. In addition,

**Box 3: SOBA – Appropriate work for women and men**

Women farmers said, “If a woman did an activity that men should do, like field preparation, a woman would not feel happy or loved by her husband.”

participants said that they are able to move around and travel on business, though they first inform their husbands of all of their business activities to gain their consent and approval.

**Box 4: SOBA vegetable traders – empowered through tradition**

Marie Kamara has been a successful trader for 20 years. Her mother was also a trader. All of her children have graduated from college with the support from her business and husband, an office worker. She takes joint decisions with her husband. She has control of her income and reinvests into the business. She would like to expand but is not sure of alternative sources of credit. She says that although she knows how to make a profit she lacks knowledge about financing and credit. Aramatu Mansaray has been in vegetable wholesale trading since she was 8 and she is now 33. From her enterprise she has built her own house which is in her name. Her husband, a surveyor, is supportive and pays for household expenses. Her profits go back into the enterprise. She befriends the wife of the farmer and over time they build a trusting relationship. When she goes into a new community she goes to the chief first and will interact with his wife. Her daughter is also very interested in trading.

**Traditional social norms among enterprise-owning women observed within the household – though external labour often hired.** Like the farm groups, the female traders reported following the same social norms and beliefs around traditional men’s and women’s roles at home. Although if financially able and if no unpaid labour within the family is available, women and men may hire casual help for household repairs and chores such as cleaning, laundry and cooking. Several women said that they are praised by their husbands for food preparation that is pleasing to the family and which gives these women self-worth. Families almost always hire casual workers to help clean and sort vegetables prior to marketing due to the higher seasonal demands of farming activities.

**Adherence to traditional gendered roles reinforced by perception of community acceptance.** Any unusual behavior (such as a man cooking or a woman doing heavy chores) would likely be attributed to the woman using black magic on her husband, causing embarrassment to the family. Bringing shame onto one’s family is the major deterrent to unusual behaviour according to the women wholesale traders. However, both men and women are sensitive to mental and physical disabilities or limitations of an individual. They expressed that in these circumstances, gender roles are more flexible and family and community members help out and are understanding.

## In-depth interviews with market players

Six IDIs were conducted – two with male-owned wholesale vegetable trading enterprises based in Waterloo, and four with women-owned wholesale vegetable trading enterprises in Makeni. The male-owned enterprises were described as ‘large’ and the women owned enterprises were described as ‘medium’ sized. The key findings from these interviews include:

- **Men and women in wholesale vegetable trading are highly interdependent, profitable, and have good professional relationships.** The male vegetable wholesalers reported that wholesale female vegetable traders are their primary trading partners and women make up

50 percent of the workers in vegetable production. Female traders aggregate from farmers and smaller traders and often sell larger volumes to male wholesalers. Often females buy and then wholesale to smaller traders at local and regional markets, who retail. Traditionally, women buy from and sell into local markets, and this has been common over generations.<sup>3</sup>

- **As related to social norms, the male traders prefer to work with women traders as they are “more loyal customers, very experienced and agile in their markets, and have quick turnover.”** Also, women traders prefer to buy from men as men are often quicker to make a cash offer on the spot and women traders are more ‘difficult’ (time consuming) to come to an agreeable offer and terms. Thus, social norms permit women in this area to conduct business interactions with men. Moreover, not only is it acceptable for women to interact with men, but the research showed that women tend to have a strong voice while dealing with men through their businesses and are successful at bargaining. This was stated by both male and female traders. Lastly, women traders say that they have control over the profits they earn from these business transactions, and while they inform their husbands of their activities and plans, their spouses (if alive) are supportive.
- **Spouses play an important role in transactions and business relationships.** If business disputes arise, it is commonly expected for the man of the house to have the final say and settle disputes with a buyer or customer for female family members. Also, while female traders negotiate directly with the male-headed farm enterprises, they must first develop trust with any female farmers who may be present in the negotiations. There is a social norm around women first establishing trust with other women before being able to engage in a professional relationship with men.

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<sup>3</sup> This was corroborated by a network analysis of vegetable traders, conducted in November 2015 for SOBA with MSA, which found that highly connected women were more likely to be connected to well-connected male traders. Moreover, male traders were far more likely to trade with other women than with other men. The broader picture indicates that male traders played centrally positioned wholesale roles, with large numbers of female traders managing businesses that ranged widely in size, both upstream and downstream.

### 3. Lessons learned

The following lessons learned focus on the relationships between gendered social norms and market systems programmes that aim to economically empower women. Lessons specific to the research design, the tools used and the research are presented in Annex 1: Research guidance.

**Differentiated empowerment and type of work.** The strength of social norms and how women experience them vary according to the different sub-groups of women involved in the research (i.e. female farmers, traders and wholesalers). The complex relationship between the type of work that a woman is able to undertake and how she experiences different social norms has important implications for the entry points and strategies through which programmes are most likely to promote empowerment.

**Unpaid work and empowerment.** The time burden of unpaid work is a prime example where household roles and activities are perceived as inflexible, and women are more heavily burdened than men across various types of work (farmer, trader, and wholesaler). There is a perception that these roles cannot change and that social sanctions are imminent if a mainstream approach is not followed. However, this research shows that when women have their own business enterprise, allowances can be made for support from adult family members or female paid assistance. The traders are provided with more time flexibility in managing their household chores due to their better economic situation. Understanding the nuances of time use and how it differs between women and men, across sub-groups of women and even how changes are perceived differently by individual women gives important insight to programme design and can help to mitigate the risks around overburdening women with additional responsibilities.

**Current situation bias.** The research points out that women's and men's perceptions of how gendered roles are inflexible versus flexible is solely from their own perspective. Women and men are less aware of how these gendered roles can change as their situation changes, such as a new job or position at work. That is to say, their current situations bias leads them towards believing that their own perceived flexibility of roles is common across situations. Often market systems programmes focus on upgrading schemes that move women and men into new and better jobs or income status. With a more sophisticated recognition of current situation bias, and the internal and external barriers to upgrading and shifts in gender roles, programmes may find it useful to explore strategies for addressing current situation bias. Potential strategies include highlighting examples and role models to demonstrate a broader range of activities that women and men can be involved in.

**Strong social sanctions influence willingness to defy norms for both women and men.** The type of sanctions for women who shift across commonly accepted gender roles were the same for greater and lesser economically empowered women (judging by decision-making powers, income and job status, and mobility). They commonly mentioned fear, shame and sanctions from the community such as black magic, harm to their children and shame to their family and husbands. Both groups mentioned black magic, a belief outside of human control, as keeping them within the acceptable social norms and behaviors of their community and faith. Harm to their children from acting outside the boundaries of what is acceptable is reinforced by their common religious belief of 'following the true path' and to do so means their children are blessed. Neither group of women was willing to risk these sanctions to improve their economic situation. This shows the importance of understanding the strength of the norm and how it affects women's behaviour. Market development programmes such as SOBA would do well to conduct group discussions among targeted beneficiaries about strong social sanctions in advance of scaling up an intervention.

**More economic independence, more empowerment.** A higher degree of women's economic empowerment is clearly demonstrated by women wholesale traders who run their own businesses. As women gain experience, confidence and income from their businesses they approach a more equal footing with their husbands and male market players concerning household decisions. This supports a common assumption by market systems programmes that as a woman experiences economic gains, she indirectly experiences changes to her agency.

**Building on areas of existing empowerment to promote shifts in norms.** The research showed that while women may have decision-making power over household expenditures, they have much less so over their mobility. Working collectively with other women to develop options for moving agricultural products closer to the market, where prices may be higher than at the farm gate, could be a first step to addressing these mobility constraints. If income generation is improved, this may provide the catalyst for women to then negotiate their mobility with support from the family.

**Build new networks.** Breaking down information about, and awareness of, social norms across varying economic circumstances can encourage new ideas, practices and acceptance among more isolated groups. Networking platforms for women across atypical business networks may be a helpful tactic to this end. These help highlight women role models and the support and sanctions these women faced when moving into different economic roles or positions. Finding ways for these different sub-groups of women to interact and network with each other is critical.

**Upgrading.** Findings demonstrate the importance of upgrading schemes for women within a sub-sector. It is important to identify sub-sectors where a large number of women are already working, and where some women have already been empowered economically. These role models can help other women become exposed to potential alternative roles. Value addition, such as vegetable processing and the packaging of market ready convenience foods, is one example where market development programmes may facilitate women working within a production or marketing association. This allows them to advance economically and develop social networks, which lead to personal enrichment and empowerment.

**Spotlight male and female role models.** Interventions that change the mindsets of husbands, and other family and community members around women's work helps to address strong social norms that are less flexible. Without changing the perception of how others view women, women may feel nervous about changing their situations and this limits income and new economic growth opportunities. Programmes have successfully addressed this by showcasing women leaders to a community as well as the male leaders that support them.

**Speak the language of your market actors and suggest appropriately packaged incentives.** Research on social norms can be repackaged for market actors in the form of a business case. This would target women by supporting their needs and interests in a way that best reaches them in order to grow sales to a key customer base or attract business from quality producers.

**Economic empowerment for social change.** Changes in social norms are not always a result of interventions seeking to change norms directly. Interventions that look to empower women economically seem to have an indirect effect on changing social norms for women. In the case of Sierra Leone, as women upgraded the types of work they did within the market system, they were able to renegotiate the time they spent on unpaid care work. Thus, programmes, like SOBA, should be encouraged that their efforts to move female market players into new jobs may be a key way to bring a voice to women within their households and allow them to begin negotiating resource allocation for unpaid care tasks. Knowing that this may not always be the case for all women, it is important to monitor the results of upgrading schemes for women within a sub-sector and examine the impacts on household level indicators such as decision-making and time-use.

### 3. Conclusion

As market systems development policymakers and practitioners place more emphasis on women's economic empowerment, and set their sights higher for achieving systems change that shifts gendered social norms and open new opportunities for women, it becomes even more crucial for programmes to incorporate more social analysis and tools into their work. Identifying through relatively simple tools and methodologies how social norms influence women's access and agency within given market systems can lead to more effective programming and greater sustainability. The SOBA case study demonstrates how asking questions to assess social norms at the early stages of the programme cycle, and developing a more nuanced understanding of the gendered roles, obstacles and opportunities for women within different areas of the market system, is useful for identifying appropriate entry-points. This helps mitigate risks and boosts the effectiveness of a programme's interventions and potential to scale.

## Annex 1: Research guidance

### **In-depth interview guides**

- Pilot the guides with both male and female market players in advance. This prepares the researcher to prioritise the questions given the time constraints (one hour maximum) for conducting the interview.
- Avoid making assumptions about who in the family is involved in important decisions about household expenditures and always start with open ended questions. Women's empowerment literature often focuses on decision-making power between wife and husband. However, other family members also significantly influence the decision-making power of women. For example, multiple women mentioned that their in-laws held power over their household decisions. When conducting research it is not only important to engage women and their husbands, and to ask questions about these dynamics, but also to influence other family members.

### **Focus group discussions**

- Deliberately select the gender composition of focus groups. This requires careful thought about the social and cultural context of the participants, and what will be most conducive to honest and engaged discussions. Ideally, conduct a combination of FGD's with both single sex and mixed groups to observe and document how group dynamics and responses differ.
- Seek out different demographic subsets of groups to better understand nuances in social norms. When conducting an FGD, work to ensure that women are as homogenous as possible (i.e. from similar socio-economic and/or cultural backgrounds), as this may make it easier for women to openly express their experiences and opinions, without fear of judgement from women who are in different positions than themselves. This also allows the researcher to identify differences among groups, and where the greatest opportunities and risks may be.
- Collect basic background information on FGD participants (i.e. marriage status, age, etc.), as such characteristics may have important implications for the types of social norms that do or do not represent constraints to economic activity.

## Annex 2: Research tools

### Focus group discussion guide for vegetable traders and farmers

**Tool:** Participatory gender roles and social norm analysis

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

#### Materials needed:

Three large drawings of a man, a woman and a couple on poster/flip chart paper. Bring up 30 of the most common enterprise and domestic activities (11 are related to vegetable trading and 19 to domestic chores) have been pre-drawn and printed for the FGD for the exercises below.

**Introduction:** SOBA staff provide introductions and remarks about the SOBA programme. The purpose of the FGD is around enterprise growth and understanding women and men roles at home and at their enterprise as well as suppliers, customers and/or employees. The study researchers assume that the principles of gender equity are the basis for win-win strategies and relationships.

#### Part I: 30 to 45 minutes

**Research objectives:** 1. To understand what is typical in the (reference) group as related to trading vegetables; and 2. To understand what is the process for trading vegetables and what are the common market barriers for women working within vegetable trading and support or value addition economic activities.

#### Process:

- Place the three large drawings of the people and couple on the ground or on the wall, in a row. Below these drawings, scatter the activity cards with the tasks.
- Ask the participants to sort the cards by categorising them under the three large drawings in columns, according to whether the task is generally performed by a man, a woman, or both.
- Let the participants take over the exercise and conduct the discussion.
- When some degree of consensus is reached, initiate a discussion about why the participants made the choices they did. If men happen to be present, be particularly sensitive to including women in the discussion.
- Ask the group to discuss the location of the tasks, and analyse the workloads. Ask the group to rank which tasks are the most burdensome.

#### Output template

Activity profile			
Location of activity	Activity	Gender	Time/Level of burden (# of hours/day)
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## Part II: 30-45 minutes

**Objective:** To understand how much role flexibility by gender is associated with the different tasks identified in Part I

**Process:** To discuss how much flexibility there is in changing the workload by task of men and women. Link the tasks and workloads to women's activities identified and ask the participants to rank the flexibility of gender roles by task.

### Output template

Gender roles flexibility profile		
Task	Gender	Gender flexibility Numeric scale of 0 to 2 (0=no flexibility, 1 some flexibility and 2 = most flexible)
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## Part III (30–45 minutes and would be conducted with 2–3 key group members post FGD)

**Objective:** Assess whether or not there are social norms in place making the gender roles fixed.

**Process:** Focus on the tasks that are deemed inflexible. Ask why these tasks are inflexible using the following discussion points:

- Do you think women should be able to carry out these tasks?
- Are there advantages in only men undertaking these tasks? Are there disadvantages?
- Do you think that other women in your community would support or condemn women to carry out this task?
- Do you think that men in your community would support or condemn women to carry out this task?
- What do you think would happen if a woman started to carry out this task? Would it be socially approved or disapproved of? Who in your community would approve and who in your community would disapprove? If disapprove, what actions would people go to ensure that she did not carry out this task?
- What would happen if you personally carried out this task? Who would approve and disapprove?
- What would need to change to allow women to carry out these tasks if they decided they wanted to do so?
- Do you think that women ever carried out these tasks, or has the role in carrying out these tasks changed over time?

## In-depth interview guide – female market actors expected to be active in the targeted market

**Objective:** Understanding social or other concerns of female market actors who are expected to be engaged in the sector/programme (focussing on their experience as a woman in business)

**Target:** Female market actor expected to be engaged in the programme/intervention as a business. Typically, the IDI will be one on one and should take around 40 minutes – unless the market actor has set aside specific time for you and is very interested in the discussion then it can go to an hour or more.

2 minutes **Introductions and purpose of the interview:** to understand the challenges and benefits around women's involvement as market actors in the vegetable subsector – mainly from their own perspective as a woman in business but also to some extent regarding the women with which they engage.

3 minutes **Business: what is your line of business?** Have you been engaged in this business for a long time or is this new – in particular, how did you become involved in this line of business?

5 minutes **Gender engagement:** How does your business engage with other women as producers and value chain actors? Is this traditional or customary? Why?

5 minutes **Barriers / challenges re participation:** What specific challenges do you think you face as a woman in this business? Is it more difficult for you than for men to be active in this business? Why? Do men or women prefer to work with women or with men business operators? Please explain. Are there other aspects of your business that you choose not to carry out because it is seen as socially inappropriate for women to do so? If so, which tasks / opportunities/current barriers? Do you think women should be able to carry out these tasks? What do you think would happen if a woman started to carry out this task? Who in your community would approve and who in your community would disapprove? If disapprove, what actions would people go to ensure that she did not carry out this task?

5 minutes **Advantages / opportunities:** What specific advantages/opportunities do you think you have as a woman in this business? Are these different from the advantages/opportunities that men in business experience? Are there advantages for your business to engage with women and/or men? Do women or men prefer to work with you because you are also a woman? Please explain.

5 minutes **Overcoming barriers re participation?** If you have faced challenges as a woman in business how have you overcome these? Did you have to do something different from men to overcome the challenges?

5 minutes **Sanctions:** Has your business suffered any sanctions from others in business, your household or community for you as a woman carrying out this business? Have you observed any negative backlash for women or their households when they engage with your business?

5 minutes **Support:** Have you received any support for your business from others in business, your household or community around the issues that challenge you face as a woman in business? Have you observed any support for women or their households when women engage with your business? Have there been any other positive outcomes for your business?

5 minutes **Overall and wrap-up:** Are you satisfied / happy with yourself as a women in business? Are you dissatisfied or do you wish something would change for you or for the women and men with which you engage.

## In-depth interview guide – male market actors expected to be active in the programme/ intervention

**Objective:** Understanding social or other concerns of male market actors who are expected to be engaged with women programme/intervention clients/beneficiaries.

**Target:** Male market actor expected to be engaged in providing services to the vegetable subsector. The IDI will be one on one and should take around 40 minutes – unless the market actor has set aside specific time for you and is very interested in the discussion then it can go to an hour or more.

2 minutes	<b>Introductions and purpose of the interview</b> – to understand the challenges and benefits around women’s involvement in the vegetable value chain and specifically with the male market actor (I recommend not to use ‘social norm’ language with the market actor unless it feels right to do so.)
3 minutes	<b>Business:</b> What is your line of business? Please describe its range of products and services.
5 minutes	<b>Women’s engagement:</b> How does your business engage with women? Have you always engaged with women or did something lead you to become more involved with women in business?
5 minutes	<b>Barriers / challenges re participation:</b> Is it more difficult for you to work with women than men? If no response probe with examples such as: Is this related to the type of business you run, your employees, women’s capacity or willingness to engage, the attitudes of their families, location, etc.? Please explain.
5 minutes	<b>Advantages / opportunities:</b> Are there advantages for your business to engage with women? Are they better employees, buyers, sellers, producers? If so, please explain. Do families or communities promote women’s involvement?
5 minutes	<b>Overcoming barriers re participation?</b> If it is advantageous for your business to engage with women, but if there were challenges, how did you overcome these challenges?
5 minutes	<b>Sanctions:</b> Has your business suffered any sanctions from others for engaging with women? If so, which ones and what happened? Have there been any other negative outcomes for your business?
5 minutes	<b>Support:</b> Has your business received evidence of positive support from the business community or the women’s community for engaging with women? If so what type of support and what happened?
5 minutes	<b>Overall and wrap-up:</b> Are you satisfied / happy with the involvement of women in your business and market? Are you dissatisfied or do you wish something would change?

## Annex 3: Domestic and enterprise activities included in the FGDs

### **Most common domestic activities to be presented/portrayed at the SOBA FGDs with traders**

- House cleaning
- Laundry
- Fetching water for the home
- Cooking
- Providing money for food
- Childcare (getting the children off to school and looking after them at home)
- Providing money for childrens' school fees
- Providing money for hospital bills
- Providing money for renting the house
- Owner and holds the title of the dwelling house
- Buys clothes and other basic necessities for the children
- House repairs
- Paying bills and keeping records
- Household budget decision making
- Vegetable gardening
- Caring for poultry, goats, milk cow, etc.
- Buying household supplies
- Buying agricultural inputs for the garden
- Responsible for overall household decision-making

### **Most common trading enterprise activities to be presented/portrayed at the SOBA FGDs with traders**

- Owns business capital/provides the business start-up capital
- Sourcing (buying or growing) vegetables for enterprise
- Developing agreements (contracts) with suppliers
- Collection and transport of vegetables to point of sale
- Quality control of vegetable produce
- Selling at market or other point of sale
- Deposit and management of cash income
- Attending business meetings (associations, networking groups, with credit provider)
- Negotiating and acquiring lines of credit for enterprise
- Business planning for enterprise growth and sustainability
- Responsible for overall business decision-making