

Purchasing 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 culture

Sustainability is one of Lidl's core strategic goals for a brighter future. Wherever our actions impact people and the environment, we are there to take responsibility. This is how we reaffirm our commitment to quality each and every day, thereby ensuring the best possible future for the Company.

It is against this backdrop that we have developed our CSR strategy, which gives us clear guidance in fulfilling our commitment to act responsibly. We demonstrate how we at Lidl understand our responsibility for the environment, people and our customers. We have developed six strategic focus areas to put this understanding into practice: We take action aimed at “protecting the climate”, “conserving resources”, “respecting biodiversity”, “acting fairly”, “promoting health” and “engaging in dialog”.

Our responsibility for gender equality

Addressing the topic of gender equality in the supply chain is another part of our strategic focus of acting fairly. Acting fairly means, among other things, ensuring fair and just working conditions, social standards and employment opportunities for those working in our supply chains. This is why we will continue to be vigorous in our commitment to implementing our duty of care with respect to gender equality in the supply chain going forward.



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 – frequently in the upstream value creation stages in food and textile supply chains. This often/especially affects women and girls.

There are many reasons for this, ranging from discriminating socio-economic structures and practices to cultural and social norms, such as patriarchal conditions.¹

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, they earn on average 23% less than men and are more likely to be employed in precarious or poorly paid jobs.⁶ In addition, 90% of their income goes towards food for their families and their children's education,

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

whereas this is only 30% in the case of men.⁷ Women working in the textile industry are exposed to particular risks. This includes unequal treatment in terms of pay, 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 prevents them from, among other things, setting up a business.¹⁰

Equality is both a legal responsibility and a social imperative, because 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: a further study of 34 developing countries shows that equal opportunities would increase their agricultural production by an average of approx. 4%. This would

¹ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in globalen Lieferketten. Forderungen an Politik & Unternehmen, 2020

² Fairtrade Germany: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit. Fairtrade fördert die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern, 2020.

³ Greenpeace: Wer billig kauft, kauft teuer! Fast Fashion: Die dunkle Seite des Modekonsums, 2018.

⁴ Fairtrade Germany: Fairtrade und Geschlechtergerechtigkeit. Fact Sheet, 2019.

⁵ German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019.

⁶ Oxfam: Im Schatten der Profite. Wie die systematische Abwertung von Hausarbeit, Pflege und Fürsorge Ungleichheit schafft und vertieft, 2020.

⁷ Fairtrade Germany: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit. Fairtrade fördert die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern, 2020.

⁸ Greenpeace: Wer billig kauft, kauft teuer! Fast Fashion: Die dunkle Seite des Modekonsums, 2018.

⁹ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Geschlechtergerechtigkeit in globalen Lieferketten. Forderungen an Politik & Unternehmen, 2020.

¹⁰ World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report 2020, 2019.

¹¹ FAO: The State of Food and Agriculture, 2011.

simultaneously mean up 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 for people all over the world and raise overall income per capita.¹³

¹² UN Women Germany: Wirtschaftliche Stärkung von Frauen, 2020.

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



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



Our commitment to greater gender equality in the supply chain

Code of conduct: freedom from discrimination also applies to our business partners

The protection of human rights is firmly anchored in the Schwarz Group's > [Code of Conduct](#) and therefore also constitutes an integral part of agreements with our direct business partners. In this connection, we require our business partners to uphold gender equality within their own field and to require their suppliers to do the same. Our business partners thereby undertake to prevent any form of gender discrimination – whether in the recruitment or professional development of employees. They also ensure that employees are subjected neither to sexual harassment, nor to physical or psychological violence in the workplace. Trade union freedom and the right to collective bargaining, in particular that of women, must also be respected.

To verify compliance with these principles, business partners 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 Code of conduct are not discriminated against in any way.

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Everyone involved in our supply chains should be able to work under the same conditions and requirements. Therefore, gender equality is a key component of our approach to acting fairly. We take responsibility for this – and do so where the effects are greatest.

Eduardo Tursi | Chief Purchasing & Marketing Officer Lidl Malta

As one of the largest food retailers with relationships with suppliers all over the world, we at Lidl have a particular responsibility. This responsibility includes actively supporting women in production regions and sites and guaranteeing fair and equal working conditions. By acting responsibly, we can make a huge difference at the start of the value chain since this is where the greatest environmental and social impact lies.

The topic of gender equality is therefore a key focus of our human rights strategy in purchasing – which we described in detail in our [Human Rights Purchasing 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 the topic of gender equality, this means, in particular, providing women in our supply chain with equitable access to employment and fair pay while also protecting them from discrimination and violence.

Our goal is improving the living and working conditions of those who work for us by the end of 2025



1. Keeping track of impacts:

We constantly determine the risks and potential for improvement on the ground.

2. Safeguarding standards:

We promote compliance with the ILO's core labour standards.

3. Expanding fair trade:

We promote living wages and incomes.

4. Driving change:

We are active in development programs, initiatives and projects.

1

Keeping track of impacts

Our intention is to take decisive action to counter the human rights risks inherent in our business activities, particularly where gender equality is concerned. To do so, we continuously review the risks potentially arising in the manufacture of our products. This is why 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](#) and [> Gender-sensitive grievance mechanisms](#)

2021

We will conduct an HRIA with a specific focus on gender.

To achieve this, we will enter into a dialogue with rights holders and women's rights organizations and incorporate gender-specific issues in our action plan.

2025 We will carry out three HRIAs per year in high-risk supply chains.

Ongoing We include women's rights organizations and local labor organizations or unions in the further development our Gender Equality Purchasing Policy.

2

Safeguarding standards

We promote actions to strengthen and comply with the ILO's core labor standards. For this purpose, we draw on internationally recognized certification and social audit programs. At Lidl, we also work to ensure that employees in our supply chains have access to grievance mechanisms. In addition, we develop training that enables our suppliers to identify human rights and gender-specific risks effectively, implement remediation and actively prevent them.

For more information on our commitment in this pillar, see [≥ Fairtrade products for gender equality](#)

2021 **We encourage our strategic suppliers to sign the UN 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 starting to set up access to effective grievance mechanisms in three high-risk supply chains. We adhere to UNGP criteria and publish information on the functionality of the grievance mechanisms.

3

Expanding fair trade

We are promoting living wages and incomes and a just distribution of value throughout our entire supply chains. A specific focus here is on smallholder farmers so as to safeguard their livelihoods. We therefore intend to increase the proportion of Fairtrade certified goods in our product range by the end of 2025. Our focus is on buying from smallholder farmers at fair rates over the longer term. A stand-out project to safeguard living wages while taking smallholder women farmers into account in particular is our [Way To Go Fairtrade chocolate](#), which we launched in 2020.

For more information on our commitment in this pillar, see [Fairtrade products for gender equality](#) and [ACT for higher wages](#)

2021 **We continue to develop our Way To Go project by empowering women up to the end of 2021.**

Ongoing

We are promoting understanding of the challenges in relation to living wages and incomes in our supply chains.

Lidl will further expand its risk-based approach to fair pay. This comprises our Way To Go 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.

Together with our suppliers we are working 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 2022.

2022 **We will support our suppliers with regard to appropriate occupational safety regulations in pregnancy and maternity leave guidelines.**

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

Ongoing **We promote procurement from producers and processors 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 selected 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. Furthermore, we will take steps and 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 gender-based violence before the end of 2023.

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

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

4

Driving change

We are active in development programs, initiatives and projects to drive change beyond Lidl. We continuously address the root causes of gender inequality in food supply chains. To achieve this, we will exert our own influence as well as our joint influence together with our 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-specific risks in the supply chain

We continuously review which risks to human rights exist or could potentially arise in the manufacture of our products in our supply chains. This enables us to assess these risks and to take appropriate measures.

The causes of gender-specific discrimination in global supply chains are complex. The objective of the risk analysis was to identify the goods and/or raw materials and countries in our supply chains that are associated with high risks in terms of gender equality. For this reason, we examined the risks to which women in particular are exposed.

Risk analysis: three steps to identify the raw materials and countries with the highest risks

First of all, we drew on the findings from our risk analysis of the entire product range. This provided information on the product groups in our food range that feature a high risk of human rights violations. Within the product groups, we subsequently identified the raw materials of particular relevance for purchasing by Lidl. We primarily identified these to be fruit and vegetables, coffee, cocoa and tea.

In a second step, using recognized indexes, we identified the countries in our supply chain where gender equality is particularly at risk. To do this, we combined different, recognized indexes: the United Nation's

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



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 (1), are paid less (2), have unequal access to employment (3) or are exposed to violence (4).

- 1 We determined gender discrimination using the Gender Inequality Index which has been published by the United Nations Development Program (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 the production countries.

2 & 3 We determined the gender-based gaps in pay and access to employment with the help of the Global Gender Gap Index, which has been published by the World Economic Forum every year since 2006. It 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 is actively engaged in the labor market and compared it with the share of the male population. The data for this are compiled by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

4 Using the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), we examined the extent to which women are exposed to violence in the individual countries. The 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. Specifically, we focused on the “Violence against women” indicator, which takes into account and combines three different factors: the percentage of women who consider physical violence to be justified; the extent to which local legislation protects women from violence; and the percentage of women who have already suffered physical or sexual violence.

In the last step, we combined the results of the country and raw materials review. In this way, we were able to identify the countries and raw materials that are particularly problematic in terms of gender equality for each of the product groups under review, e.g. tea from Kenya, coffee from Guatemala or roses from Ethiopia. Overviews of the high-risk countries identified for the high-risk raw materials selected, e.g. [> tea](#), [> roses](#), [> coffee](#), [> cocoa](#) and [> berries](#) are included in individual sections of this publication.

Developing actions and tracking progress

We derive our [>targets](#) and actions from this analysis. This includes more detailed risk analyses such as [>human rights impact assessments \(HRIAs\)](#), in which gender equality aspects are also taken into account. The analysis indicates how specific projects can promote gender equality in the supply chains affected.

Human rights impact assessments taking into account women's rights – determining the impact, identifying the causes

HRIAs: identifying risks for women and taking action

Gender equality risks in our supply chains are the subject of human rights impact assessments (HRIAs). HRIAs are intended to provide us with information on our potential influence, our role and responsibility regarding risks to human rights. In addition, they provide us with additional information on the systemic causes and reasons why certain groups are particularly affected, among other things, with regard to gender discrimination. We use the identified risks to derive measures to minimize these risks. A key element in this context is the action plan with deadlines.

When preparing an HRIA, we involve stakeholders and rights holders while taking the different perspectives of those who may be impacted by our business activities into account. It is through local partnerships that we obtain information to help us understand the impact at first hand. At the same time, we are aware that an HRIA is part of an ongoing duty of care process and not just a once-off assessment. Therefore, we will continue to expand partnerships in order to support our action plans and ongoing monitoring.

Our HRIAs in practice

Lidl is one of the first international retailers worldwide to already have conducted two HRIAs.

Specifically, we have analyzed the [tea supply chain from Kenya](#) and the [berry supply chain from the Spanish province of Huelva](#). This will be followed by a third HRIA, an analysis of the banana supply chain from Colombia, due for completion by the end of 2021.

We worked with recognized expert organizations when carrying out our analyses. As part of the HRIA on berries, we involved three local women's rights organizations to better understand gender-specific impacts such as discrimination. Their views and assessments of how

these impacts can be reduced were incorporated into our action plan. We are also drawing on the expertise of the women's rights organizations in our assessment of the banana supply chain.

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



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We will continue our dialog with external stakeholders, while simultaneously drawing on the specialist expertise of civil society organizations, trade unions and other experts. We include women’s rights in this dialog wherever possible. By working together in this way, we identify the greatest challenges to upholding human rights, especially the protection of women’s rights and freedom of association. Based on our findings, we develop measures to remove obstacles to the upholding of human rights.

Eduardo Tursi | Chief Purchasing & Marketing Officer Lidl Malta



Results of the HRIA of the tea supply chain from Kenya of relevance for the topic of gender equality

Gender discrimination

Structural impediments to women's ownership of land: most of the registered members in nearly all smallholder communities in Kenya are male.

Gender-specific violence

Cases of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the Kenyan agricultural industry

Additional challenges arising from the sector's informal nature and an ineffective mechanism for reporting cases of sexual harassment.

Gender pay gap

Adverse impact of perceived gender roles on wages

Gender-specific 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 of the HRIA of the berry supply chain from the Spanish province of Huelva of relevance for the topic of gender equality

Gender-based discrimination

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.

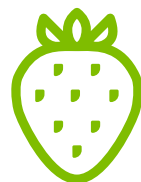
Gender-specific differences in accessing employment

Reports of discriminatory hiring conditions in specific recruitment agreements

The sector’s structural dependence on potentially vulnerable workers such as women and low-income earners in general, and migrants in particular.

Gender-specific risks in the berry supply chain¹⁴

Country	Risk Level	Risk-related Aspects
1 Brazil	High risk	› Gender Pay Gap › Access to employment
2 Greece		› Access to employment
3 Italy		› Gender Pay Gap › Access to employment
4 Poland		› Access to employment
5 Romania		› Access to employment
6 Hungary	High risk and Very high risk	› Gender Pay Gap
7 Argentina		› Violence against women › Access to employment
8 Morocco		› Gender Pay Gap
9 Egypt	Very high risk	› Violence against women › Access to employment
10 India		› Gender Pay Gap › Access to employment
11 Paraguay		› Access to employment › Gender discrimination



¹⁴ As part of our broader risk analysis, 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 an HRIA there, in which the gender-specific risks presented here were also determined. In the course of the gender-specific risk analysis at country level shown here, however, Spain as a whole does not rank among the most outstanding high-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.

Strengthening women cocoa farmers' income situation with Way To Go chocolate

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. The actual figures are probably much higher. At the same time, according to our > [gender-specific risk analysis](#), they are exposed to higher risks – especially in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Gender-specific risks in the cocoa supply chain

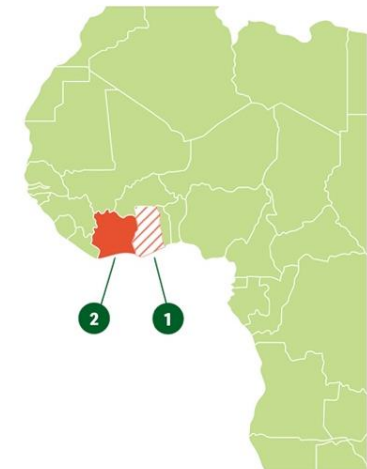
Country	Risk Level	Risk-related Aspects
1 Ghana	High risk Very high risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Violence against women > Gender discrimination > Equal pay
2 Côte d'Ivoire		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gender Pay Gap > Gender discrimination > Violence against women > Access to employment

In addition to unpaid care work – for instance, raising their children – they work long hours every day – yet do not earn an adequate income. In neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, for example, women make up almost 70%

of the workforce in the cocoa-producing sector, yet they only earn about 21% of the revenue generated.¹⁶

Despite this, they are dependent on the income from the cocoa harvest. Women are also economically disadvantaged because 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. As a result, it is harder for them to establish their own business and therefore a livelihood.¹⁷

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

For fair and living wages in the cocoa-producing sector

With its Way To Go chocolate range as an own-brand product, Lidl aims to contribute to higher wages in the cocoa-producing sector. We have been stocking Way To Go chocolate bars internationally as part of our product range since 2021. In partnership with Fairtrade, 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 Way To Go chocolate. This money funds projects that make additional and sustainable improvements to the income situation for agricultural producers. Lidl is committed to fair and living wages in the cocoa sector. 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 situation with Way To Go

As of 2021, we will expand the Way To Go concept to include a second pillar in order to prioritize the needs and skills of women and other vulnerable groups in all Way To Go activities in particular. Specifically, this is to include measures to diversify incomes that are tailored to women's specific situation. For example, women will now be prioritized when it comes to measures that facilitate and increase their access to funding. In addition, the Fairtrade "Gender Module" to support married couples in making joint decisions within their households is to be

applied. Barriers to greater female representation and membership at the cooperative level will be analyzed and removed across the board, for example with regard to illiteracy, health care issues or gender-based violence.

The Kuapa Kokoo cooperative has also been committed to the specific advancement of women in various projects for more than ten years now. This includes, for example, diversifying women's income, i.e. by cultivating other agricultural products to safeguard their livelihoods. In this case, proposals made by women were taken into particular account, which is also reflected in the current greater participation by women. The participants were, for instance, given the opportunity to produce and distribute soap independently. Each group was given materials and start-up capital of around EUR 320, which is roughly twice the average monthly salary in Ghana.¹⁸ This has enabled the participants to develop new sources of income and gain a certain degree of independence from their fluctuating incomes from cocoa farming.

For more information on the raw material cocoa, please refer to [Position Paper on the Responsible Sourcing of Cocoa.](#)

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

Promoting gender equality by including Fairtrade products in our range

Non-discrimination and gender equality are among the social factors taken into account via certification systems. 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 organizations.¹⁹

Lidl has been stocking a large number of Fairtrade-certified products for many years now. These include such products as roses and cocoa, which, according to our [gender-specific risk analysis](#) pose particularly high risks for gender equality.



By listing Fairtrade products, we help farms address the root causes of inequality for smallholder farmers or workers. Specifically, the Standard calls for protection against sexualized 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.

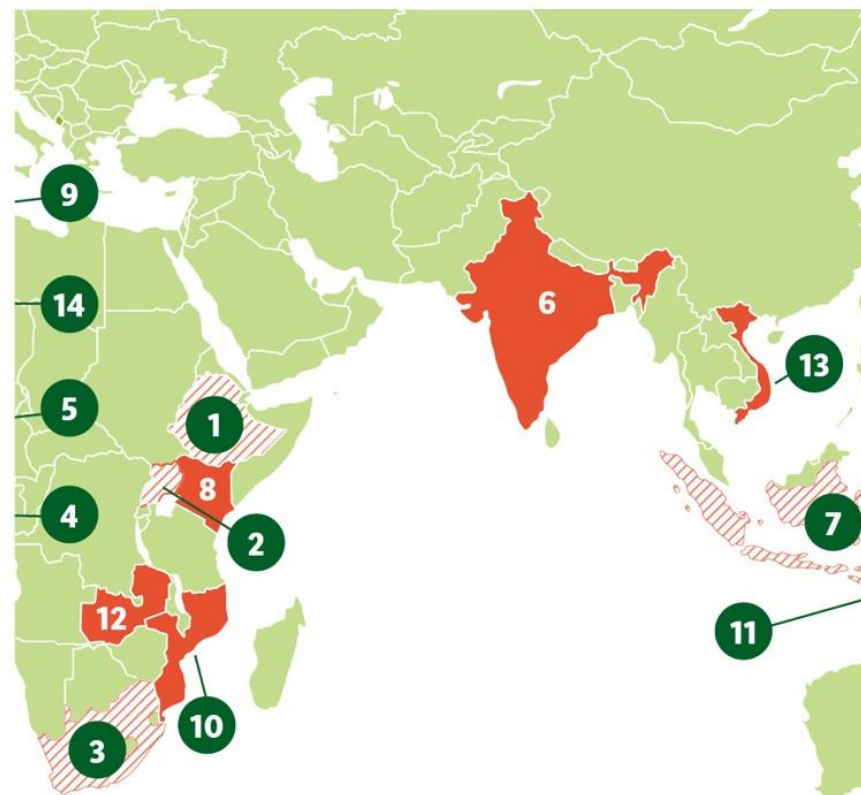
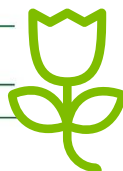
In line with the **third pillar** of our human rights strategy, we are promoting fair trade that takes gender equality into account.



¹⁹ Fairtrade: Factsheet Gender Studie, 2021.

Gender-specific risks in the rose supply chain

Country	Risk Level	Risk-related Aspects
1 Ethiopia	High risk and Very high risk	› Access to employment
2 Uganda		› Gender discrimination › Violence against women
3 South Africa	Very high risk	› Access to employment › Gender discrimination › Violence against women
4 Costa Rica		› 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



Contributing to higher wages for female textile workers with ACT

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

They 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 business partners source a significant proportion of our textile range from Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar. Statutory minimum wages in these countries are extremely low in some cases. As one of the largest retailers in the field of textiles, Lidl therefore bears a great responsibility to advocate for living wages in the production countries, and in so doing, to also improve the income situation of women in particular.

²⁰ German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019

²¹ Greenpeace: Wer billig kauft, kauft teuer! Fast Fashion: Die dunkle Seite des Modekonsums, 2018.

²² German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019.

Against this background, Lidl joined the Action Collaboration Transformation (ACT) initiative in 2019. We will implement the requirements arising from our membership of ACT by the end of 2021.

In this regard, we are currently developing our implementation strategy to meet one of the initiative's main objectives: responsible buying practices.

This involves, among other things, 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 situation of women in the textile supply chain. Furthermore, we also participate in a mediation process that has been put in place to deal with cases of labor 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 undertook to promote the establishment of industry-wide, national collective bargaining agreements in the production countries.



Membership of the Ethical Trading Initiative: strengthening gender equality in trade

Lidl joined the multi-stakeholder Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in 2021.

Ethical Trading Initiative and gender equality

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



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. To this end, the Initiative 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.



Empowering women to grow coffee sustainably and productively

Women play an important role in global coffee production: between 20-30% percent of coffee farms are run by women. In addition, depending on the region, up to 70% of the work on coffee farms is carried out by female workers.²³ 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, for example, in terms of access to land, cooperatives or loans.²⁴ Our [gender-specific risk analysis](#) also confirms the high risks that women are exposed to in the coffee sector.

Lidl is addressing these risks in a project around 50 kilometers outside Guatemala City. Together with the organizations 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 the women coffee farmers in sustainable cultivation and processing methods. This has empowered the women to earn a higher income for high-quality coffee over the longer term – and to pass on what they have learned to future

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generations. The project ran until the end of 2020. Today, 95 percent 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.

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

²⁴ Südwind: Auf ein Tässchen. Die Wertschöpfungskette von Kaffee, 2020.

With a new project, Lidl and Fairtrade are also directly contributing to reinforcing democratic smallholding structures and to improving gender equality in six coffee cooperatives in Caranaví, Bolivia. The measures involved in this project are intended to have an impact on around 300 smallholders and an additional 90 people in the surrounding area.

The project was planned and prepared by the cooperatives, with the help of the Fairtrade producer network in Bolivia and Latin America, in a participatory process in order to improve their management processes, to give young people a greater involvement and to promote the implementation of climate change adaptation plans. In addition to this, six of the cooperatives involved in the project carried out a collaborative analysis on gender equality, which looked at topics such as the distribution of tasks within the family, leadership roles and participation in the community. The causes of the inequality were analyzed in great depth and alternatives were developed to promote greater involvement for women. Among other things, it is important that cooperatives' statutes and planning documents better reflect women's participation in decision-making so that the promotion of gender equality is consistent throughout the entire cooperative. Women also take part in management training courses to facilitate greater participation for them and to improve gender equality in the cooperatives.

Gender-specific 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
5 Guyana		› Gender discrimination
6 Honduras		› Gender Pay Gap › Access to employment
7 Colombia		› Gender discrimination
8 Nicaragua		› Access to employment
9 Paraguay		› Gender Pay Gap › Access to employment
10 Suriname		› Gender discrimination
11 Venezuela		› Gender Pay Gap › Access to employment
		› Gender discrimination



Membership of the 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-based 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, 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.



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Partner of Cotton made in Africa Initiative: empowering women in production countries 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. 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 organizations.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. This is also 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 for us and it is set to be expanded over the next few years.

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²⁵ German Development Institute: Soziale und ökologische Herausforderungen der globalen Textilwirtschaft. Lösungsbeiträge der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, 2019.

²⁶ BMZ: Baumwollanbau – auf dem Weg zu mehr Nachhaltigkeit, Höhere Einkommen für Kleinbauernfamilien durch nachhaltigen Anbau, 2019.

²⁷ Südwind: Afrikas weißes Gold – Frauenarbeit im Baumwollanbau, 2014.

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 focal points 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 goes beyond the requirements of the standard to advocate for greater gender equality in the cultivation of cotton. This includes, for example, 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 in supply chains.

Access to effective grievance mechanisms (GMs) is a key element in detecting, correcting and obtaining redress for human rights violations. Violations also include cases of discrimination or gender-based violence.

In order to ensure their effectiveness, UN Guiding Principle 31 stipulates that non-judicial grievance mechanisms (GMs), 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 dialog.

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 only 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. In this regard, we take care to ensure that grievance mechanisms are structured in a gender-sensitive manner. Beginning in 2021, we have

been providing access to effective grievance mechanisms in three high-risk supply chains. The experience gained will help us to apply this to other supply chains. In this regard, 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 program. The Better Work program pursues its own gender strategy and is actively committed to gender equality. This also benefits the numerous textile factories participating in the program. In addition, Lidl was active as a member of a working group on the first Bangladesh Accord. The Bangladesh Accord on Fire Safety was founded in 2013 and promotes the rights and safety of workers in textile factories – and since then as a follow-up agreement under the umbrella of the RGM Sustainability

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.



Council (RSC).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 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

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

³⁰ International Labor 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 Malta signed up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) to lend expression to 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. Consequently, it is aimed at the business community and comprises seven principles for the empowerment of women in companies (more information on the Principles can be found in our [Duty of Care position paper](#)). By signing up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles initiative, we are signaling our commitment to empowering women and transgender persons. The Gender Equality Purchasing Policy contains information on how we intend to implement the WEPs. This includes preventing and mitigating women's rights violations in global value chains. We also intend to work proactively toward 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

A code of conduct 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 (GM)

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 dialog, 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 program The Better Work program is a partnership between the International Labour Organization (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 program. 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 Organization Headquartered in Geneva, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations. It is responsible for developing, formulating and implementing binding international labor 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 dialog.

Migrant worker The ILO describes migrant workers as a foreign national 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 labor 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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