



## SUCDEN GENDER POLICY

### CONTEXT

Within the Sucden Group, there is a strong and widely held belief that a broad diversity of human resources brings the company increased opportunities and innovation, as it advances the consideration of a variety of viewpoints and produces different approaches to solving problems.

Empowering women is a key mechanism for increasing diversity both within the Sucden business and the supply chains in which it operates. Corporately, Sucden therefore strives to eliminate gender bias in the workplace and implements relevant assessment techniques to fairly compare the remunerations of men and women bearing similar responsibilities in the performance of their work.

Sucden's materiality assessment identified potential adverse impacts on women in the cocoa supply chain as the most salient gender-related risk area, based on severity and likelihood. This Policy sets out how we address this priority area.

### BACKGROUND

Within the global cocoa supply chain, women face many challenges that relate to a lack of recognition of their rights. In many regions of the major cocoa producing countries, cocoa farming is a male dominated activity. At the community level, women are often not considered to be cocoa farmers, despite making up half of the labor force on the family farm and being responsible for additional unremunerated household work. Beyond this, women are often deprived of access to land and to banking or other financial services, situations that can increase and perpetuate their vulnerability.

This historical and cultural perspective has resulted in a functioning system in which monetary compensation from the sale of cocoa often flows exclusively to the oldest male in the household. These systemic attitudes and practices have led women in many households to lack a voice in how household finances are spent. This in turn limits many women in the opportunities they might have to develop skills, interact in financial matters, and pursue other sources of income.

### SUCDEN'S COMMITMENT

Within Sucden, we recognize the challenge for women in the cocoa sector. Through our cocoa sustainability strategy and on the ground programs, we seek to address the issue of women's empowerment in a holistic manner. Foundational to Sucden's work is the belief that women's equality and empowerment are fundamental human rights. In practice, Sucden understands empowerment as strengthening women's ability and opportunity for equitable decision-making and access to resources, including financial instruments. This position is confirmed by ILO Conventions 100 (Equal Remuneration, 1951), 111 (Discrimination, 1958), 156 (Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981) and 183 (Maternity Protection, 2000). It is further emphasized by various articles within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that address equality for all people.



Beyond this belief, the empowerment of women in the cocoa sector has been demonstrated to be a critical positive driver that significantly contributes to the improvement of a cocoa farming family's well-being and livelihood. Research has shown that women's empowerment leads to better education and nutritional outcomes for children, thereby tackling some of the root causes of child labor.

## Sucden's Actions

To address and improve the complex situation facing women in cocoa, Sucden's cocoa sustainability team is working with farmers and farmer organizations from whom it receives cocoa to raise awareness about gender issues, women's rights, and women's empowerment.

Based on its beliefs and commitments, Sucden implements a variety of women's empowerment initiatives within its cocoa supply chains, with those showing the greatest impact on women's income and empowerment noted here:

- **Village Savings & Loan Associations:** A historical part of Sucden's household income enhancing activities, VSLAs – typically comprised of a majority of women members – enable communities to build collective financial resilience, support income diversification within households, and expand women's opportunities for economic participation. Beyond traditional VSLAs we are championing the digitization of VSLAs, further creating a financial footprint that can help both women and men to access microloans, insurance, and other savings products.
- **Income Generating Activities:** Sucden supports women in cocoa communities to diversify household incomes through on and off-farm IGAs. Activities include financial literacy training, entrepreneurship, and business planning – with a focus on enhancing women's economic participation and decision-making power within the household. In addition, through coaching on nutrition and food security, focusing on the needs of younger children, women are being supported to launch nutrition oriented IGAs, such as preparing, serving and selling nutritious meals as another approach to income improvement.
- **Cash Transfer Programs:** Through the implementation of cash transfer programs with clients, Sucden is building evidence on how cash transfer mechanisms can increase household income as well as incentivize the adoption of practices that enhance family well-being, with particular attention toward empowering women. In some cases, household cash transfers are split so that incentives go directly to the wives of farmers, recognizing and enhancing their role in household decision-making.

Beyond these examples, we consider gender in the full range of activities we implement. Recognizing the often-unequal division of labor among men and women, including the responsibility of many women to care for children and household matters, Sucden Cocoa continues to consider training opportunities that maximize the participation of women in those trainings.

For each of these efforts, we track our progress to understand the impact of the intervention and publish annual updates on our progress, challenges and lessons learned in Sucden's public Responsibility Report.



## LOOKING FORWARD

Sucden is continually evaluating how to best adapt its sustainability activities, such as training, to improve the inclusion and participation of women. As part of this continuous learning and application approach, Sucden's cocoa sustainability team collaborates with others in Industry and experts in Civil Society to better understand women's working environment and how to address their needs.

Given the critical role that women play in the cocoa sector and the need for participating women to achieve greater voice and agency, it is Sucden's objective to improve its approach to empowering women in an ongoing manner, to eliminate gender bias within its own operations, and to adopt a more gender focused strategic approach in the implementation of our sustainability programs.

## DOCUMENT VERSION

This Policy has been approved on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026 and is made publicly available on Sucden's website. It replaces any previous version.