Gender, standards & certification workshop

Workshop date   : Monday 19 May 2014

Time   : 12:00 – 16:30 hours plus drinks

Location   : Crystal, London

Workshop objective : To determine practical steps that can be taken by standards and certification systems regarding gender inclusiveness

Outcome   : A guideline for standards and certification systems (for small holders and plantation settings)

Workshop discussion will look at **three levels**:

1) The standard itself: what can be improved in standard description/text
2) The instructions for auditors / auditor training
3) The inspection practice

For **level 1** there will be an overview of what is included in the standards, what we can learn from what is included in only one or a few standards, and examples, from for instance the flower sector as starting point of the discussion.

For **level 2 and 3** it is important to look at how inspectors check on standards and be gender sensitive, to look at the composition of the inspection team and how the inspection report reflects gender aspects. Based on pre-workshop conversations with standards and certification systems best practices will be shown before we open the floor for discussion.

The objective is to end the workshop with a set of recommendations for standards and certification systems and identify which elements could already be taken to the pre-conference workshop organized by ISEAL the following day.

Background to workshop approach

Over time there has been quite some discussion and research into criteria dimensions (social, environmental and economic), which indices and indicators to use and how to measure impact. Gender rights offer an opportunity for standards and certification systems to reach higher impact within the social criteria dimension and tackle gender inequity.

A recent review called "The State of Sustainability Initiatives Review 2014 – Standards and the green economy published by IISD and IIED, shows, however, that gender is lagging behind within standards criteria and auditing practice. Below two tables as presented in the 2014 Review depicting the social indices analysis. http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2014/ssi_2014.pdf

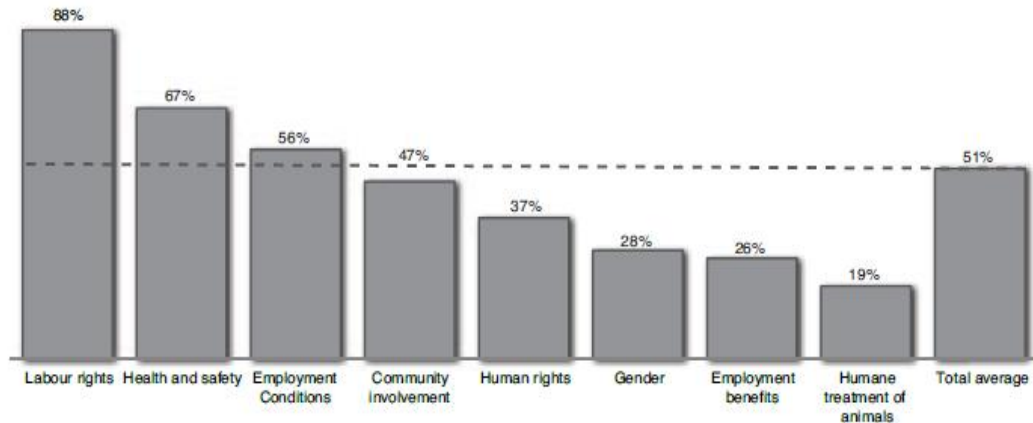FIGURE 3.9 AVERAGE COVERAGE OF SSI SOCIAL INDICES AMONG ALL 16 VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES.[45]

TABLE 3.8 AVERAGE COVERAGE OF SSI SOCIAL INDICES FOR EACH VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE.

	Labour rights	Health and safety	Employment conditions	Community involvement	Human rights	Gender	Employment benefits	Humane treatment of animals	Total average
SAN/RA	100%	80%	80%	90%	80%	53%	90%	100%	84%
RTRS	100%	80%	92%	80%	67%	67%	50%	NA	76%
RSB	100%	83%	80%	100%	100%	67%	0%	NA	76%
Fairtrade	91%	100%	100%	0%	67%	73%	80%	NA	73%
ProTerra	83%	50%	76%	90%	27%	0%	80%	NA	58%
UTZ	100%	93%	84%	0%	93%	33%	0%	NA	58%
IFOAM	86%	53%	80%	0%	20%	67%	0%	100%	51%
RSPO	97%	87%	36%	90%	0%	7%	40%	NA	51%
ETP	89%	87%	44%	0%	20%	40%	60%	NA	48%
GLOBALG.A.P.	20%	100%	20%	0%	33%	20%	20%	100%	39%
FSC	100%	50%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	NA	36%
PEFC	100%	50%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	NA	36%
4C Association	83%	37%	40%	0%	47%	27%	0%	NA	33%
CmiA	60%	30%	48%	50%	40%	0%	0%	NA	33%
Bonsucro	100%	40%	32%	50%	0%	0%	0%	NA	32%
BCI	94%	47%	76%	0%	0%	0%	0%	NA	31%

Note: the criterion humane treatment of animals is only applicable to three of the 16 standards; therefore, all other standards list "NA" for "not applicable."

The tables show that labour rights earn the highest coverage across all social indices and in a way reflect the broad international consensus on labor practices as defined under ILO core conventions.

On the other hand, coverage of the human rights index is relatively low. It could be because human rights, as a general rule, depend on broader cultural and geopolitical factors that are not directly controlled by the supply chain. The review therefore indicated that the relatively low coverage among the initiatives arguably points to a lack of consensus on how far into the community supply chain responsibilities extend[1].

Gender is the other area with a rather low coverage with six initiatives having no reference at all while only SAN/RA, Fairtrade and ProTerra show higher than average scores. They are based on three criteria only:

- Gender in governance;
- Women's labour rights;
- Women's health and safety (SSI Review page 69).

Not included in the SSI Review 2014 are the UN defined the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN 'Women Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business', yet a number of large food companies[2] has signed up to these principles.

Luckily, there is a growing sense of urgency among sustainability standards and certification systems that gender needs to be addressed more clearly and implementation strategies should be put in place. The proposed workshop wants to look at several best practices and examples in the following areas:

- The standard itself: what can be improved in standard description/text;
- The instructions for auditors / auditor training;
- The inspection practice.

In general standard texts are described in relative generic terms like small holders or workers without explicit references to gender. One could say that the non-discrimination clause has great influence over the other criteria, but does it really work like that in audit practice?

Many sustainability standards and certification systems indicate that even though their standard might be generic, instructions for auditors are far more gender specific especially when they audit labor rights and have the non-discrimination clause in mind like 'do women get equal pay as men for the same kind of jobs/activities' but how well is this incorporated in auditor trainings and refresher courses? Let's find out and make it more known. Let's also look at the composition of inspection teams. It might work better with a gender mixed team to detect gender inequalities and establish corrective actions. During the workshop we want to show some practical examples like one of Imaflora on detecting unequal pay – and how that translated into an immediate corrective action, but also from the flowers & plants sector.

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[1] SSI-2014 review, published by IISD and IIED, Page 71

[2] See Oxfam Campaign: Behind the Brand