The Gendered Impact of Standards

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International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) Programme of Work on Standards

• About ICTSD
  • Geneva-based not-for-profit organisation that conducts policy-oriented research and holds dialogues to advance sustainable development through trade-related policy-making

• Reporting on standards since 1996 through *Bridges* periodicals

• Programmatic work fostering inclusive economic transformation

• Two recent projects on standards and sustainable development:
  • Private Sustainability Standards, Trade and Sustainable Development (2017): 3 papers
  • Gender, Standards and Trade (2018): 3 papers
ICTSD’s Ongoing Work on Gender, Standards and Trade

• Research part of ICTSD project “New Thinking on Trade and Gender”
• Funded by Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia
• Current research on standards, gender and trade:
  • SPS, gender and trade
  • Voluntary sustainability standards, gender and trade
  • Standards, gender and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
• Being consolidated into a background paper on gender, standards and trade for WTO/WB Global Report on Trade and Gender
• Complemented by regional engagement (dialogues, dissemination)
A World of Standards

Public
- Codex
- WTO
- IPPC
- OIE

National and Regional SPS and TBT Standards
- EU
- Aflatoxin Rules

Private (Voluntary)
- Plurilateral
- Firm Consortia B2B
- British Retail Consortium
- GLOBALGAP

For Quality
- ISO
- ISEAL

For Sustainability
- NGO
- Rainforest Alliance
- Organic
- Fair Trade
- FSC
- Fair Trade
- British Retail Consortium
Standards Impact on Women as Producers (1)

- High costs of compliance
- Difficulty accessing resources for compliance (e.g. information, finance)
- May lack skills required to benefit from standards (e.g. literacy, numeracy)
- Risk of exclusion from standard-governed global value chains (GVCs), or
- Changes in women’s position in GVCs
Impact of SPS Measures on South Asian Shrimp Sector
Standards Impact on Women as Producers (2)

• Adoption may improve women’s access to land, credit, technology
• Positive effects on health, safety, education
• Increase in workload disproportionately affects women
• Some positive impacts on hired labour
• Opportunities for ongoing upgrading in GVCs to improve livelihoods
Standards Impact on Women as Consumers, Caregivers, and Citizens

• As consumers:
  • safety of food, cosmetics, medicines, cars, bikes

• As mothers, wives and caregivers:
  • some VSS provide for childcare
  • Some evidence of reduced domestic violence
  • Improved household dynamics, inc. increase female decision-making

• As citizens:
  • Membership in producer organizations boosts voice, collective action
  • Can facilitate power over production management decisions
Insights from ICTSD research on Gender, Standards and Trade

- Standards have gendered impacts
- Need women’s voices in standards setting, documents & organization
- Gender-sensitive technical assistance and measurement can boost progress towards SDG5
- Trade policy-makers can help through gender-sensitive SPS, TBT, government procurement rules
- Options for mainstreaming gender in standard-setting organizations
Thank you

www.ictsd.org