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GENDER STUDY OF THE ORGANIC SECTOR IN UKRAINE



KYIV, 2024

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This publication highlights the main findings of the study on the gender profile of the organic sector in Ukraine as well as conclusions and recommendations for the Ukrainian organic sector stakeholders that will improve the gender balance in the sector and contribute to creating better conditions for women's involvement.

The publication is intended for organic sector stakeholders as well as for a wide range of readers interested in organic production and gender issues.

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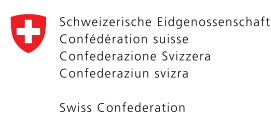
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FOREWORD



**Liudmyla
Shemelynets,**
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Ukraine is consistently moving towards the implementation of the approved Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine until 2030 and, in particular, under martial law, has adopted the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030.

The Strategy provides for creating conditions for equal economic opportunities to reduce the pay gap, equal participation of women and men in environmental policy decision making, equal access of women and men to natural resources, increased participation of women entrepreneurs in sustainable development projects, support for agroecological food systems, family farming, etc.

The Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, for its part, strongly supports and promotes the improvement of the position of women in the agricultural sector and in organic production in particular.

Organic agriculture is one of the flagship sectors of the economy that is actively adapting to the EU legislation, and the need for this study is driven by the requirements of today.

The study you are reading now describes the existing distribution of the roles of women and men in the organic sector of Ukraine and the changes caused by the full-scale war.

The findings indicate positive trends in the changing roles of women and men in the organic sector, compared to the overall situation in the Ukrainian agricultural sector.

The study shows that, despite gender stereotypes in the agricultural sector, the organic sector is a leader in engaging women, particularly in leadership positions.

The role of women is especially important now due to the wartime challenges in Ukraine. The impact of the war on businesses and shortage of male professionals and technicians caused by mobilisation demonstrates that we have to learn to overcome stereotypes about purely “male” or “female” professions. Opportunities, qualifications, and roles for men and women should be equal, and the issue of gender equality in the sector is becoming part of national food security.

Together we should promote changes in the industry and destroy gender stereotypes!

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural development is key to the well-being of people on the planet as the world's population continues to grow and access to food remains a pressing global issue. The level of global hunger remained almost unchanged from 2021 to 2022, but was still significantly higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting approximately 9.2% of the world's population in 2022, compared to 7.9% in 2019¹. At the same time, more and more recently, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been hearing about the need to transform the world's food systems and move towards more sustainable agriculture.

“Overcoming hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture” is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit² on 25 September 2015.

The achievement of this goal is inextricably linked to the role of women in agriculture as both in Ukraine and other countries many women are employed in the agricultural sector. They produce food and play an important role in managing natural resources³.

Ensuring gender equality, as stated in SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, is particularly important for sustainable agricultural development. And this is not only about empowering women, but also about access to the labour market, access to resources such as land, means of production, and access to finance.

Women, including in Ukraine, are often responsible for the diet in households. Therefore, gender policies can also have an impact on promoting healthy eating and sustainable diets and facilitate the transition to more sustainable agricultural practices.

As noted in the OECD report⁴, in the countries of the region⁵ women own an average of only 21.35% of agricultural land. Although in the European Union women in rural areas make up almost half of the rural population and 45% of the economically active population. In Central and Eastern European countries (non-EU), women outnumber men in rural areas, and their incomes are strongly linked to agricultural production. At the same time, there is a significant share of informal employment of women, as well as a lack of clear division between household and work responsibilities.

¹<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/state-food-security-and-nutrition-world-report-2023-urbanization-agrifood-systems-transformation-and-healthy-diets-across-rural-urban-continuum> (OCHA)

²<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

³National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihood – Ukraine, revised. Country gender assessment series — Europe and Central Asia. Budapest. FAO. 2021. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB4501EN>

⁴Gender and the Environment. Building Evidence and Policies to Achieve the SDGs. OECD. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1787/3d32ca39-en>

⁵OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) is an international organization with 38 member countries, including Ukraine.

There are also gender gaps between women and men in Ukrainian agriculture, with only 20.8% of farms managed by women at the beginning of 2021⁶. At the same time, the average remuneration of men in 2020 was 20.3% higher than that of women.

The full-scale war launched by Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 creates conditions for additional risks and has a significant impact on global food security. Among the gender risks are the following: significant population displacement both within and outside the country — these are mainly women of working age with children; partial mobilisation of men which tends to increase; reduced resources to support agriculture and rural areas, etc.

In August 2022, the Government of Ukraine adopted the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030⁷ which is driven by the need to ensure the implementation of a unified state policy aimed at achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres of society.

The Strategy, developed in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals, should contribute to the implementation of gender equality objectives within the framework of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, commitments to Euro-Atlantic integration, and EU Directives on non-discrimination and gender equality.

Several operational goals of this strategy are related to creating conditions for equal economic opportunities: reducing the gender pay gap, creating conditions for equal participation of women and men in environmental policy decision making and equal access to natural resources for women and men, increasing the participation of women entrepreneurs in sustainable development projects, agroecological food systems, family farming, etc.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of women in the organic sector of Ukraine, as well as the changes that are taking place, in particular, due to the full-scale war, to study the challenges for the sector, and possible ways to overcome them.

Based on the study findings, conclusions and recommendations were prepared for the participants of the organic sector of Ukraine which will improve the gender situation in the sector and help to create better conditions for women's involvement in the organic sector.

⁶ Statistical collection "Labour Force of Ukraine, 2021". State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2022/zb/07/zb_RS_2021.pdf

⁷ Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 752-r of 12.08.2022 "On Approving the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030 and Approving the Operational Plan for its Implementation for 2022-2024" <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/752-2022-%D1%80#Text> (in Ukrainian).

SECTION 1

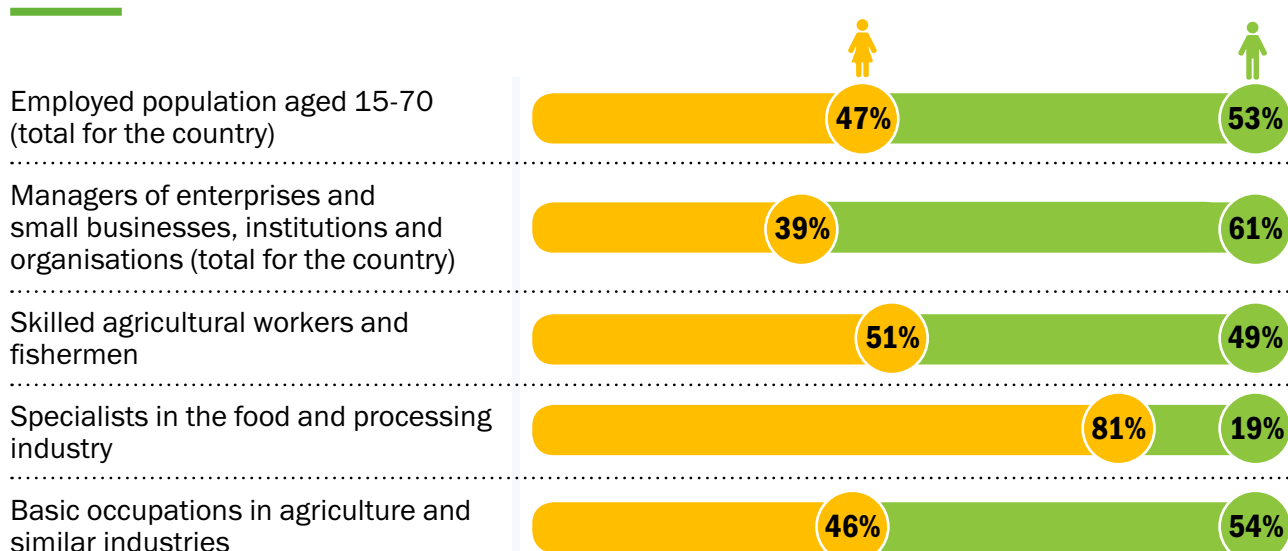
OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER SITUATION IN THE ORGANIC SECTOR

1.1. General overview

As of 1 January 2022⁸, the population of Ukraine was 41.2 million, of which 54% were women and 46% were men. Since the outbreak of the full-scale war, a significant number of Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of 31 December 2023, 6,357,100 people⁹ left Ukraine.

Before the full-scale invasion, Ukraine had 17.3 million¹⁰ of working age population, of whom 15.6 million were officially employed (47% of them were women and 53% — men). In addition, about 2.7 million people (officially) were employed in agriculture (including forestry and fishing) as of the end of 2021. At the same time, more than 45% of people involved in agricultural production are informally employed, and agriculture is the main activity of the informally employed population.

Chart 1: Employment of women and men by occupational group, 2021 (%)¹²



⁸ Statistical collection “Ukraine in Figures, 2021”. State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2022/zb/08/zb_Ukraine%20in%20figures_21u.pdf (in Ukrainian).

⁹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

¹⁰ Statistical collection “Labour Force of Ukraine, 2021”. State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2022/zb/07/zb_RS_2021.pdf

¹¹ Same source

¹² Same source

Agricultural production in Ukraine is characterised by a division of activities both in terms of job hierarchy and specific types of work that have historically been associated with women's or men's activities. Despite the huge role of women in agricultural activities, many of them are employed informally, especially in rural areas and family farms.

Formally, women constitute a substantial percentage of land owners, but the average land area owned by female-headed households is smaller than the average land area owned by male-headed households¹³. And, as mentioned above, only 20.8% of farms were run by women at the beginning of 2021. In the European Union, this figure was 32% in 2020.

In terms of organic production in the EU, the share of organic farms run by women was 26%¹⁴ in 2020, which is lower than the share of nonorganic farms. Organic farms managed by women are engaged in the cultivation of olives (13% of all organic farms managed by women), arable crops (13%), livestock production (11%), and fruit production (9%).

Organic agriculture is characterised by its higher labour intensity. Organic production requires 4% more labour to produce the same amount of products as nonorganic (conventional) production.

1.2. Relevance of gender balance for sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas

Agricultural development is key to the well-being of people on the planet, as the world's population continues to grow and access to food remains a pressing global concern. In addition, agriculture and agrifood production are the main place of work for 36% of working women and 38% of working men worldwide¹⁵ and an important source of livelihood.

There is a gender gap in agriculture worldwide. Farms run by women have 24% lower productivity than those run by men. At the same time, women are less likely to own land and have limited access to other resources and technologies. Women who work as hired workers in agriculture earn 82 cents of every dollar earned by men¹⁶.

Why is it important to decrease the gender gap and strengthen the role of women in agriculture?

A growing global population, negative environmental impact of agriculture, climate change and pandemics are driving the transformation of food systems around the world and transition to more sustainable agriculture. The current food production system and consumer diets were

¹³ National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihood – Ukraine, revised. Country gender assessment series — Europe and Central Asia. Budapest. FAO. 2021. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB4501EN>

¹⁴ Organic farming in the EU – A decade of organic growth, January 2023. European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Brussels. https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/agri-market-brief-20-organic-farming-eu_en.pdf

¹⁵ The status of women in agrifood systems. FAO. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc5343en>

¹⁶ Same source

formed in the middle of the last century on the basis of stable factors – cheap and accessible fossil fuels, a stable climate, and healthy biodiversity¹⁷.

Today, it is necessary to change not only approaches to food production, but also diets, and move towards more sustainable diets.

Since women, including in Ukraine, are more likely to be responsible for their diets, empowering women is important and can also help to promote healthy eating and sustainable diets, and facilitate transition to more sustainable agricultural practices.

Moreover, the analysis of the EU's gender balance, in particular as part of the European Green Deal, shows that in areas where more women are involved in management positions (ministers in the EU countries, members of parliamentary committees, etc.), the green transformation is faster. And when women are underrepresented among ministers responsible for agriculture¹⁸, the transformation process in this area slows down.

For Ukraine, especially during martial law, it is important to create equal conditions and opportunities for women and men. In particular, women should have the opportunity to hold traditionally “male” positions, especially in those areas where there is an urgent need for specialists due to mobilisation, otherwise it may lead to the shutdown of enterprises.

Another important challenge is the need to employ internally displaced persons (IDPs), both women and men. The agricultural sector has significant potential to create new jobs.

Gender issues are of particular importance for Ukraine today, not only in the context of a full-scale war, but also for further recovery, which should take into account many aspects, including, not least, within the Ukraine's European integration processes and based on the principles of the European Green Deal.

1.3. Purpose and methodology of the study

The purpose of the study on the gender profile of the organic sector in Ukraine is to examine the role of women in the organic sector of Ukraine as well as the changes that are taking place, in particular, due to the full-scale war, and to study the challenges for the sector and possible ways to overcome them. The goals and objectives of the study are in line with the objectives of the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 12 August 2022.

The study was conducted in December 2023 and January 2024 using an electronic questionnaire and telephone survey, as well as in-depth interviews. The questionnaire included 4 key sections: organisation's profile, gender balance, gender distribution of responsibilities and remuneration, and relevance of the issue.

¹⁷ The Global Food System — Reshaping. Green Dossier IC MCO. 2021. <https://www.dossier.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Future-Food.pdf> (in Ukrainian).

¹⁸ Gender balance in the European Green Deal. European Institute for Gender Equality. 2023. https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender%20balance%20in%20the%20European%20Green%20Deal_0.pdf

As of the end of 2022, there were 462 organic market operators in Ukraine, 380 of which were agricultural producers¹⁹. As part of the study, 219 organic market operators were covered by electronic questionnaires and telephone surveys, which is 47% of the total number of market operators.

Geographical distribution: 17% of the surveyed operators are located in Kyiv and Kyiv region, 40% in the central and northern regions (excluding Kyiv and Kyiv region), 30% in the western regions, and 13% in the east and south. At the same time, 5% of respondents indicated that their production facilities had been relocated due to the full-scale invasion.

Total 72% of the surveyed organic operators are agricultural producers, 17% are processors, 7% are traders, and 4% reported other activities.

The majority of the surveyed operators (37%) consider themselves to be microbusinesses²⁰, 33% — small businesses by the number of employees, 17% consider themselves to be medium-sized businesses, and only 7% — large businesses. It is worth noting that while 54% of the surveyed microbusinesses are run by women and 46% by men, 71% of larger enterprises are run by men and only 29% by women.

The survey was conducted on the basis of contacts of managers and owners of organic market operators, therefore, in most cases (74%) these were them who participated in the study. Among the respondents, 66% were men and 33% were women (1% of respondents refused to specify their gender). The gender distribution among managers and owners of organic market operators was 77% men and 23% women.

In addition, 16 in-depth interviews were conducted to expand and clarify the data obtained during the quantitative analysis. The in-depth interviews were conducted with women (9) and men (7): organic company managers and organic market experts who have been providing services to organic operators for many years and have extensive experience of cooperation and understanding of sector trends. The method was a telephone interview.

To visualise the results of this study, the data are presented in the form of tables and infographics. The cloud infographics are based on the findings of the quantitative survey.

¹⁹ Organic Map of Ukraine 2022. OrganicInfo.ua. <https://organicinfo.ua/en/infographics/organic-map-of-ukraine-2022/>

²⁰ Microbusinesses — up to 10 employees, small businesses — 11 to 50 employees, medium-sized businesses — 51 to 249 employees, large businesses — 250 and more employees in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On Accounting and Financial Reporting in Ukraine”.

SECTION 2

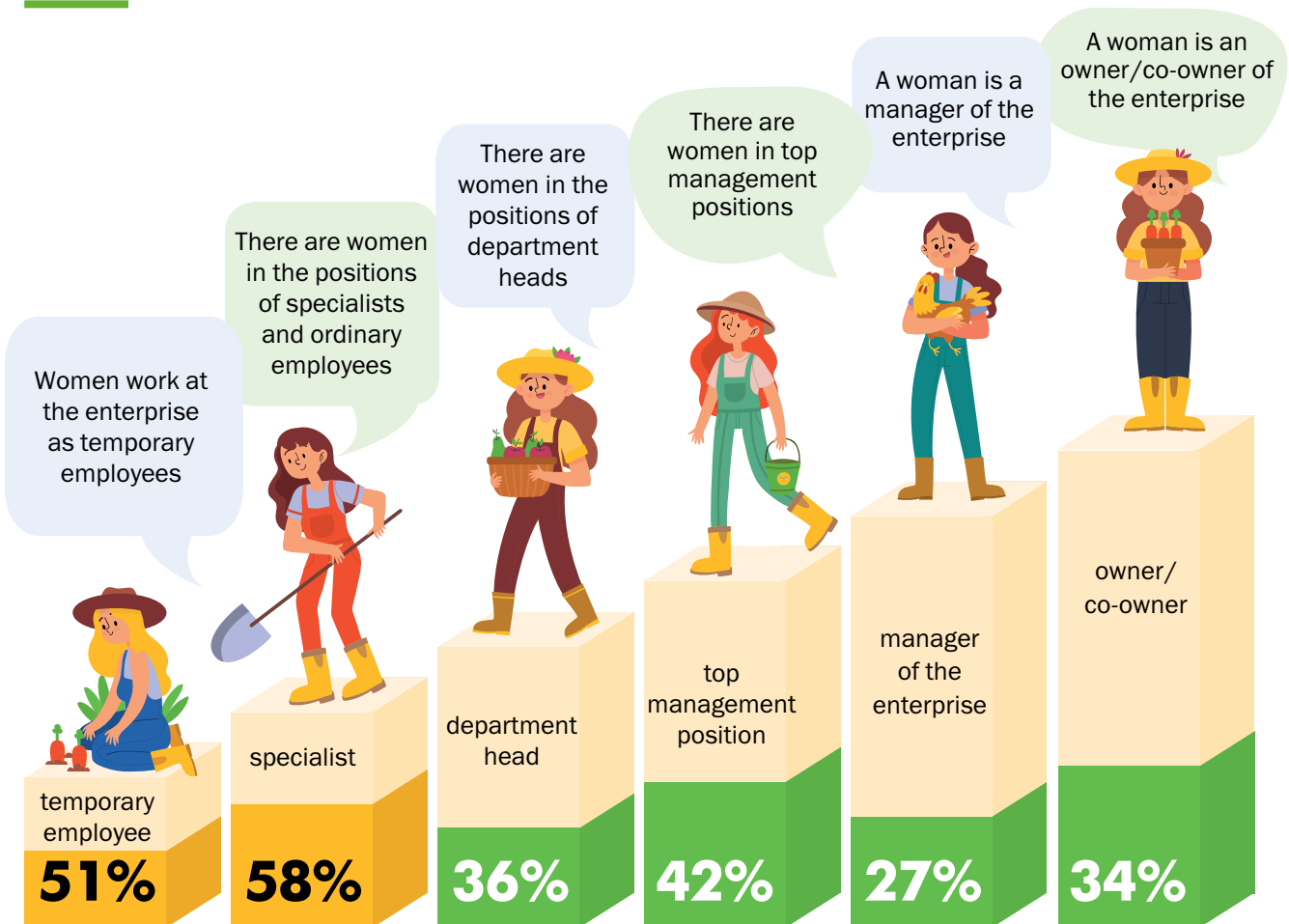
GENDER BALANCE

2.1. Overview of gender balance in organic enterprises

The definition of gender balance involves comparing the positions of men and women, so we used two types of questions to assess the gender balance in enterprises: the presence of women in positions at different levels, respondents' assessment of the share of men and women in the enterprise as a whole, and the ratio of the share of men and women by position level.

When looking at the representation of women at each position level, we can observe a much smaller share of enterprises with women in management positions (at the level of owners, managers, senior managers and department heads) and a larger share of enterprises with women as ordinary specialists or temporary workers.

Chart 2. Statistics on representation of women at each level



The overall ratio of men to women at the surveyed enterprises (according to the data provided by the enterprises) is 56% men to 44% women. In a situation of gender balance, the distribution of men and women at the positions of all levels should be close to these figures. However, the survey shows a significantly higher share of men among business owners, managers and senior managers, and a proportion close to the general balance is at the level of heads of departments, specialists, and temporary employees.

Chart 3. Perception of male and female stereotypical professions/positions

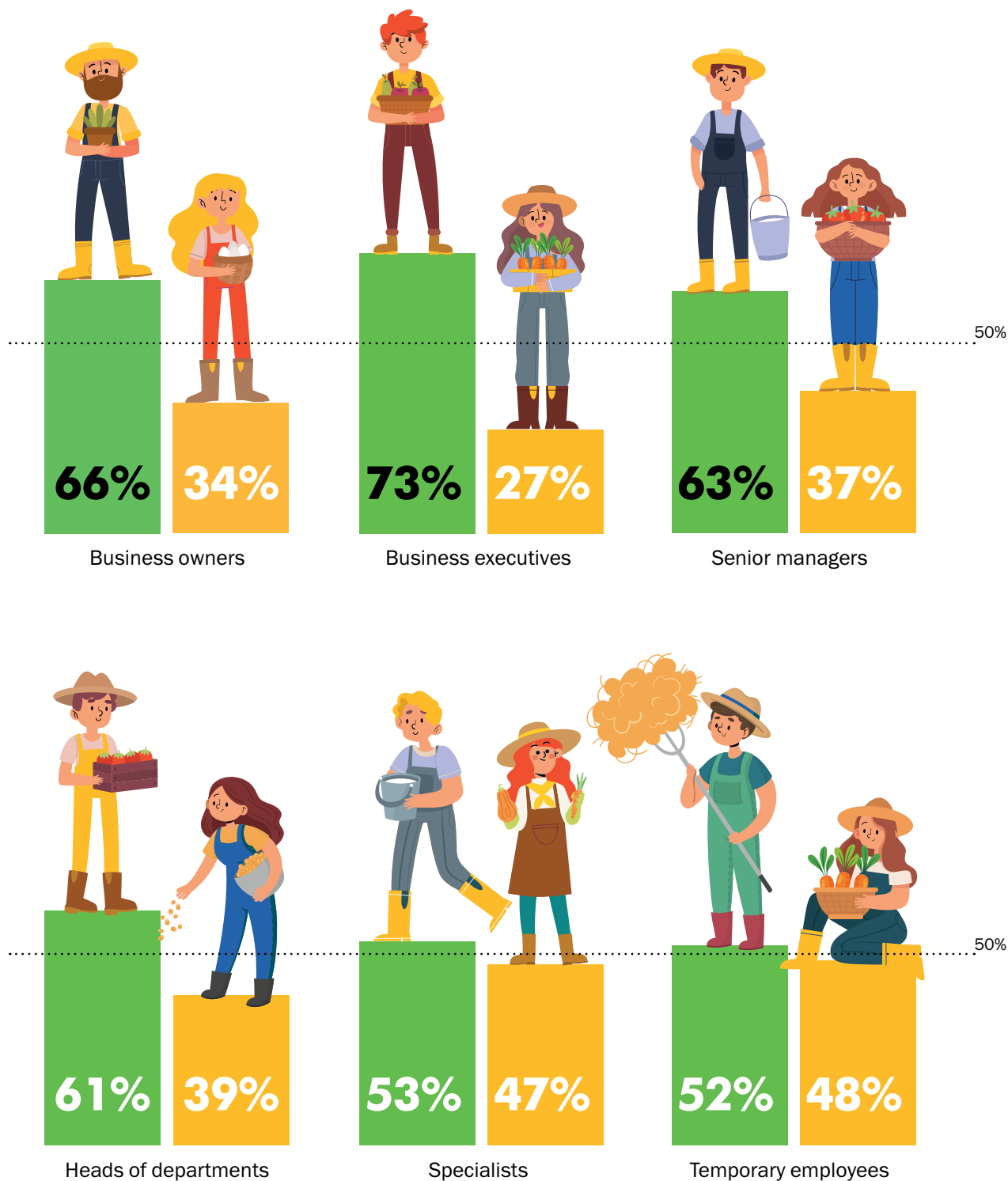
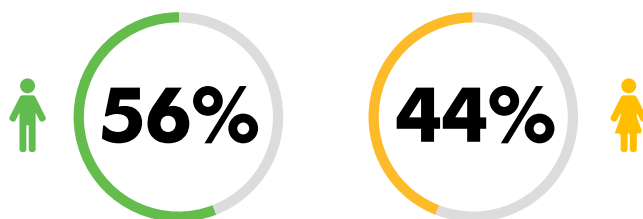


Chart 4. Ratio of men and women in the organic sector



Thus, it can be assumed that women have less access/opportunities to start and/or lead an enterprise and remain in lower and middle-level positions.

The study also showed that there is currently a stereotyping of professions in the sector and a division of roles into male and female. This is true for the sector as a whole and for men and women equally.

Table 1: Perception of stereotypical male and female professions/positions

The stereotypes	Total (N=219)	Male respondents (N=140)	Female respondents (N=70)
Think that there are positions or areas of responsibility in the enterprise where men perform better than women	69%	71%	70%
Think that there are positions or areas of responsibility in the enterprise where women perform better than men	71%	71%	73%

Let us consider the gender imbalance at each level of positions more closely and which positions are most often held by men and women in practice.

2.2. Men and women in senior management positions

According to the survey, the ratio of men to women in senior management positions (in companies that have such positions) is 66% men to 34% women. That is, the likelihood of seeing a woman in the role of general/commercial director or similar positions is half as likely.

The situation can be explained with a several groups of factors.

1) Supply and demand

During the in-depth interviews managers/ owners of enterprises declare that women are less likely to apply for such positions: it is typical for the majority of CVs submitted for a position to be male candidates or for there to be no CVs from women at all. Consequently, managers/ owners of enterprises do not have the opportunity to even consider women for such positions.

This situation influences another factor: managers/ owners of enterprises in the sector do not have sufficient and systematic experience of successful cases with female top managers.

Thus, the first candidate that comes to mind when it comes to hiring a top manager is a man. A respondent's quote: *"When I think about how I will choose a candidate for CEO, of course, a guy comes to mind first, but after our conversations, I will also think about a woman, because I know that there are women who are successful top managers"*.

2) Sociocultural context and gender stereotypes

Top positions are perceived to be very responsible, the working conditions are extremely difficult, the workload is high, they require complex decision making, longer working hours, and there is a high degree of stress in general in such positions. It is believed that such demands are easier for men to cope with, as they are less burdened with household and family responsibilities. Women, on the other hand, tend to sacrifice their working time and energy to domestic and family matters. Consequently, such positions are more often perceived as difficult for women, depriving them of time they could spend with their families and children. Repeatedly, experts of both genders referred to the stereotype that a man is better as a leader because men, not women, are more likely to:

- pursue an aggressive company development policy, which is often necessary at the stage of company development;
- respond flexibly and promptly to challenges in conditions of chaos and instability;
- think strategically.

Such stereotypes are much stronger among managers of enterprises in more remote regions of Ukraine, where conservative views prevail. Instead, women are more likely to apply for and hold top positions in enterprises located in Kyiv, Kyiv region, or in large cities. A similar dependence is observed for the size of enterprises: in large, systemic companies, women are more likely to have access to top positions.

3) The choice of a man or a woman for a position depends on the owner's outlook and experience

The overwhelming majority of respondents noted a positive trend in their readiness to see women in leadership positions, and successful examples are emerging. The in-depth interviews suggest that personal positive experience of working with women in leadership positions, if the owner or manager has any, increases the likelihood of selecting a woman for a top position.

In general, respondents declare that they choose the most relevant candidate for the position. Candidates are assessed on the basis of qualities, experience and competence that are important for the position; respondents say that they do not pay attention to gender. At the same time, with the exception of traditionally or stereotypically «male» positions, such as head of the machinery department or loaders, women are considered to be better workers — more reliable and efficient. And even in the case of top management positions, they mentioned very rarely that they would never choose a woman to lead the company.

At the same time, some women are not so optimistic and mention systematic cases where women in leadership positions are perceived negatively, devalued, and even have to “bring

a male manager to business meetings to be taken seriously in negotiations”. Production processes are also organised in such a way that only physically stronger and more resilient men can work there.

Let’s focus on the specifics of different levels of positions. To do this, we asked the participants of the quantitative stage of the study to name examples of positions held by men and women at their enterprise.

Chart 5: Positions of senior managers, men

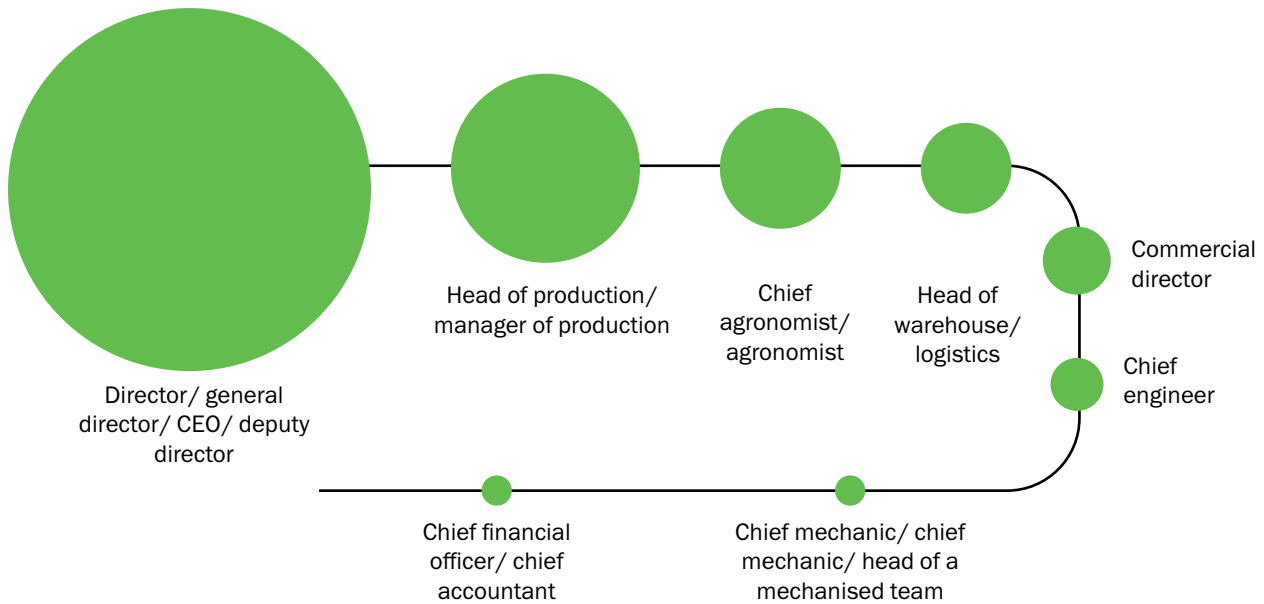
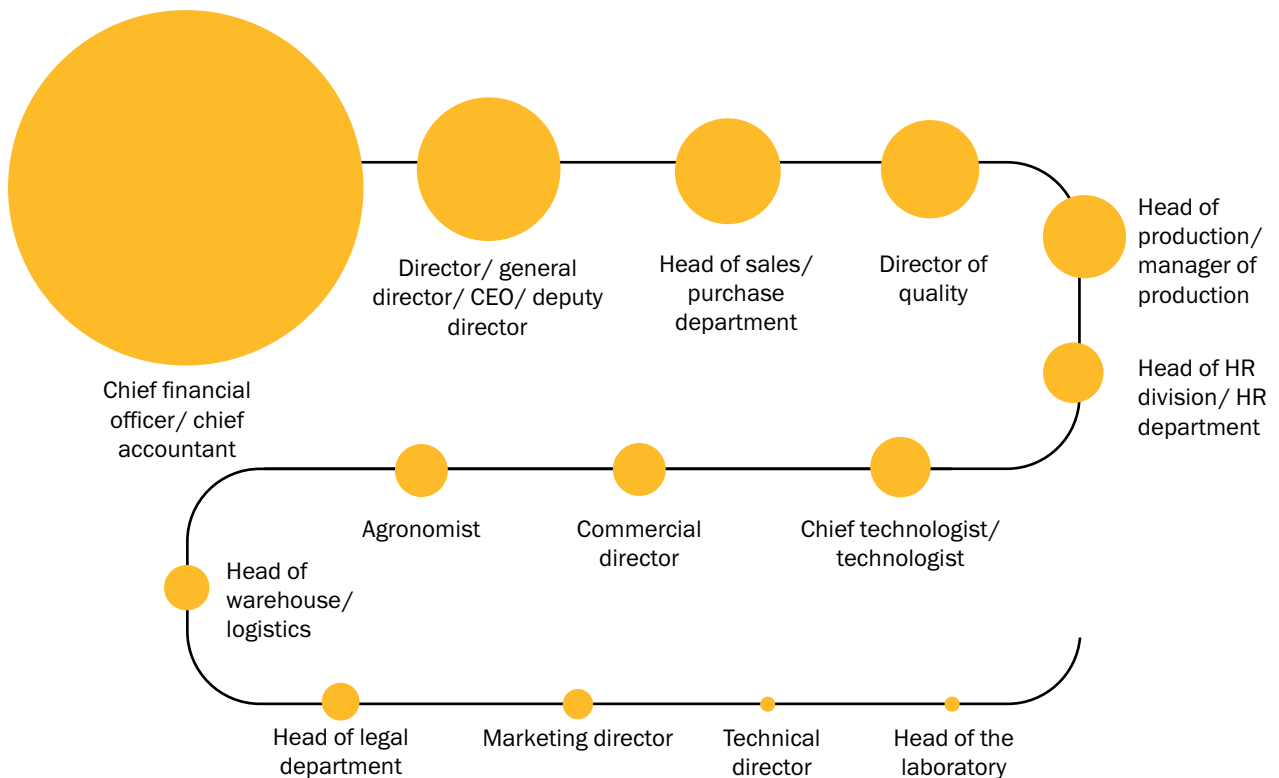


Chart 6: Positions of senior managers, women



At the top level, we saw that men are much more likely to hold the position of director or production manager (supported by the in-depth expert interviews), while women are more likely to head the accounting department and ensure the overall functioning of the enterprise (HR, marketing, sales, quality, legal issues). Thus, the stereotypes about men being more successful are actually widespread and entrenched in the sector.

2.3. Men and women at the level of department heads

At the level of department heads (according to the examples given by representatives of organic operators), there is also an uneven representation of men and women in the same areas of work. Men are more likely to be responsible for production, agronomy, and machinery, while women are more likely to be responsible for administrative functions at the enterprise (finance, marketing, and sales).

Chart 7: Positions of middle management, men

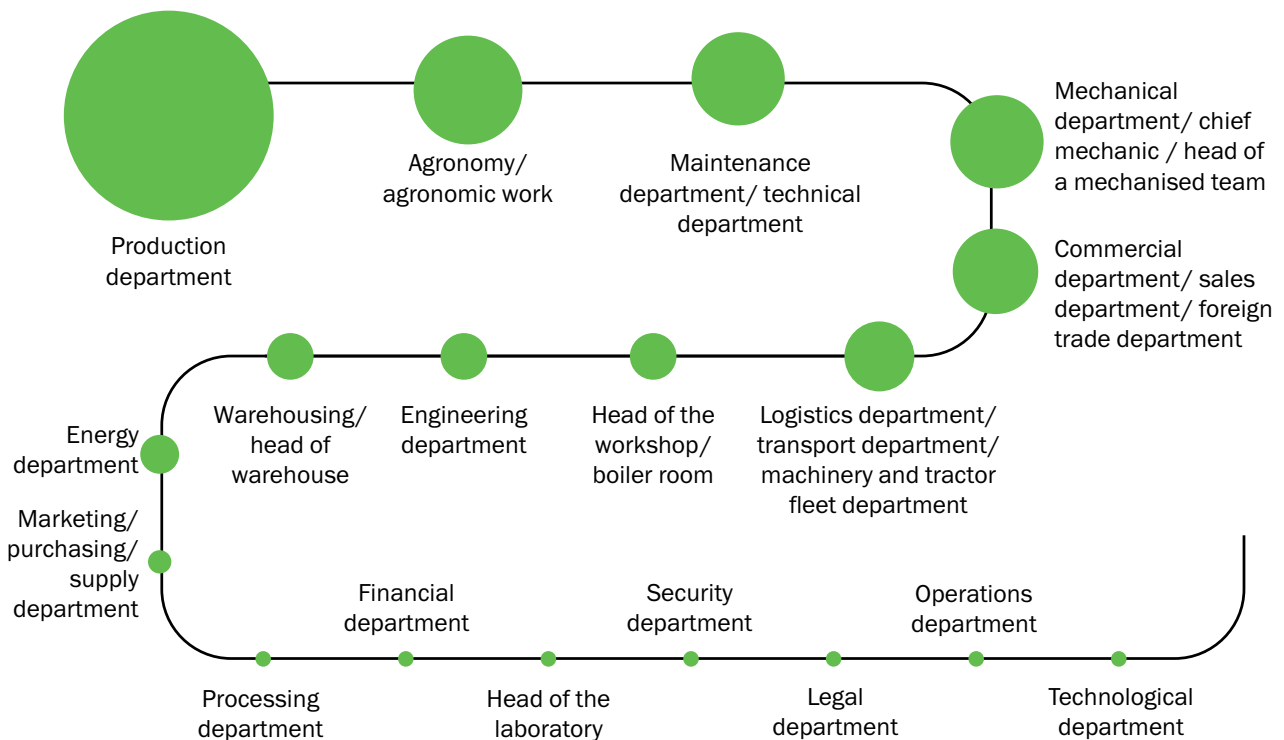
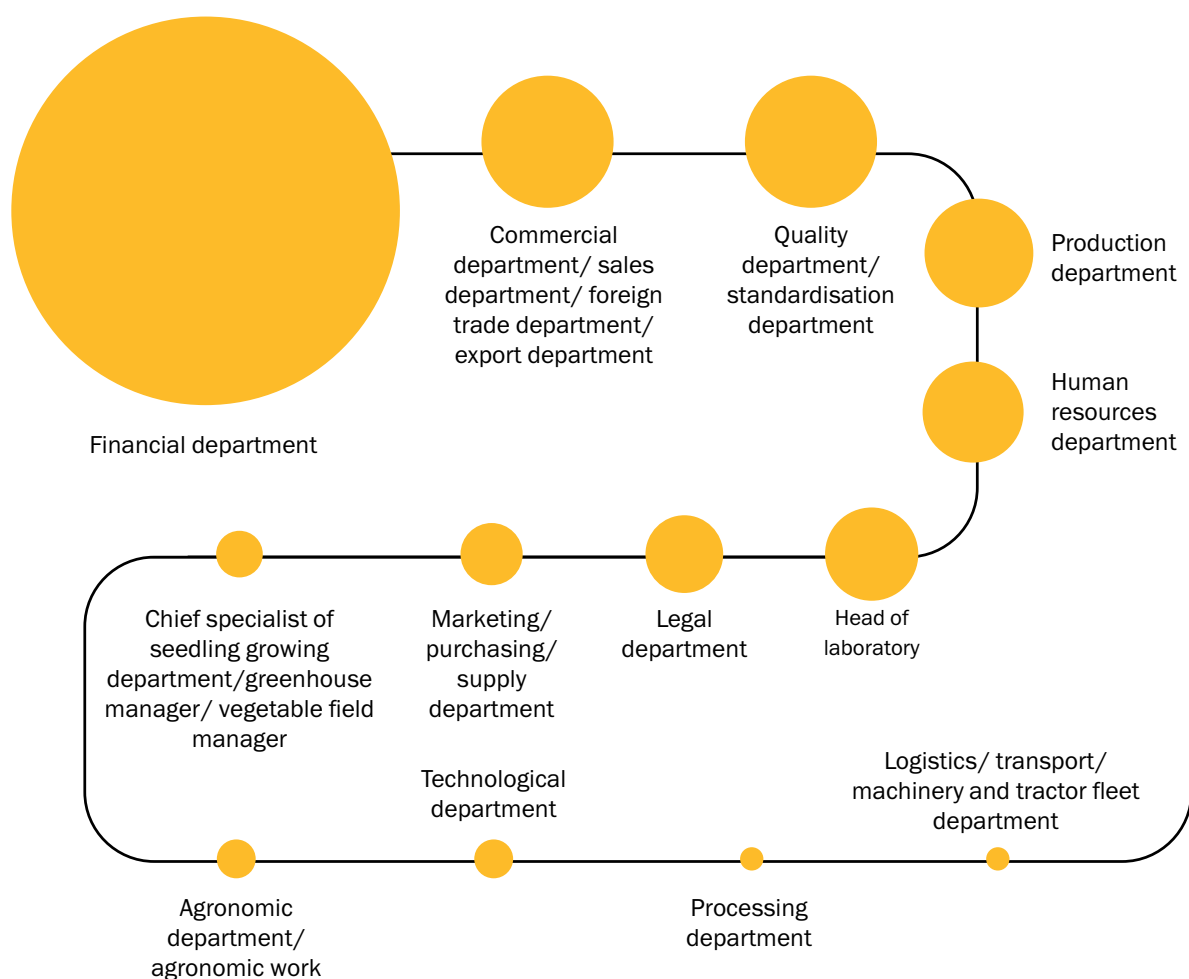


Chart 8: Positions of middle management, women



Summarising the findings, it can be concluded that administrative and office functions are more likely to be performed by women, while managerial and field (production) functions are performed by men.

According to the experts in the in-depth interviews, the prevalence of women in office positions is related to a number of their advantages:

- women are more accurate in fulfilling the tasks set by their superiors,
- women are more systematic, more reliable and responsible,
- women are better at solving problems that require attention, thoroughness and patience, so the likelihood of hiring a woman to perform financial or legal tasks is higher.

It is better to choose a woman for such work in terms of the price/quality ratio.

The experts explain the high share of men in the field as heads of production areas in a similarly rational way.

The vast majority of agronomists are men. This is especially typical for enterprises that grow

annual crops on large areas. Women are also found among agronomists, but mostly at large enterprises, mainly in greenhouse production and horticulture, i.e., on smaller areas where it is necessary to ensure maximum yields.

Machinery and technical departments, which constantly have to deal with maintenance and adjustment of machinery, are most often managed by men as such professions are stereotypically male.

Sociocultural peculiarities are among the reasons that influence the greater likelihood of choosing a man for the position of an agronomist.

1. Traditionally, female students are in the minority or absent from agronomy and mechanical engineering faculties, meaning that women are less likely to pursue education in these areas.
2. High physical activity: the working day lasts more than 10-12 hours, requires constant movement over large areas (“Women usually do not run around in the fields”), constant monitoring of the state of machinery and the need to respond to breakdowns or readjustment at any time of the day.
3. The established perception that such areas, especially in large enterprises, are associated with the management of male technical staff, which, accordingly, requires an aggressive style of communication with subordinates. According to the male experts, this style of communication is not expected or accepted from women, but is considered natural and expected from male agricultural managers. In turn, female experts tend to believe that these are isolated cases, not a systemic problem that could be a real barrier. Today’s Ukrainian realities clearly break this stereotype, as companies report a shortage of men, and women are forced to do work that was traditionally considered a man’s job.

2.4. Specialists/ ordinary workers

At the level of specialists/ordinary workers, the gaps in the specialisation of men and women become even more pronounced. Men perform physically demanding tasks and are most often responsible for operating machinery, while women are engaged in manual labour in harvesting or handling plants (weeding, hoeing, etc.) and operational tasks.

Chart 9: Types of work performed by male specialists

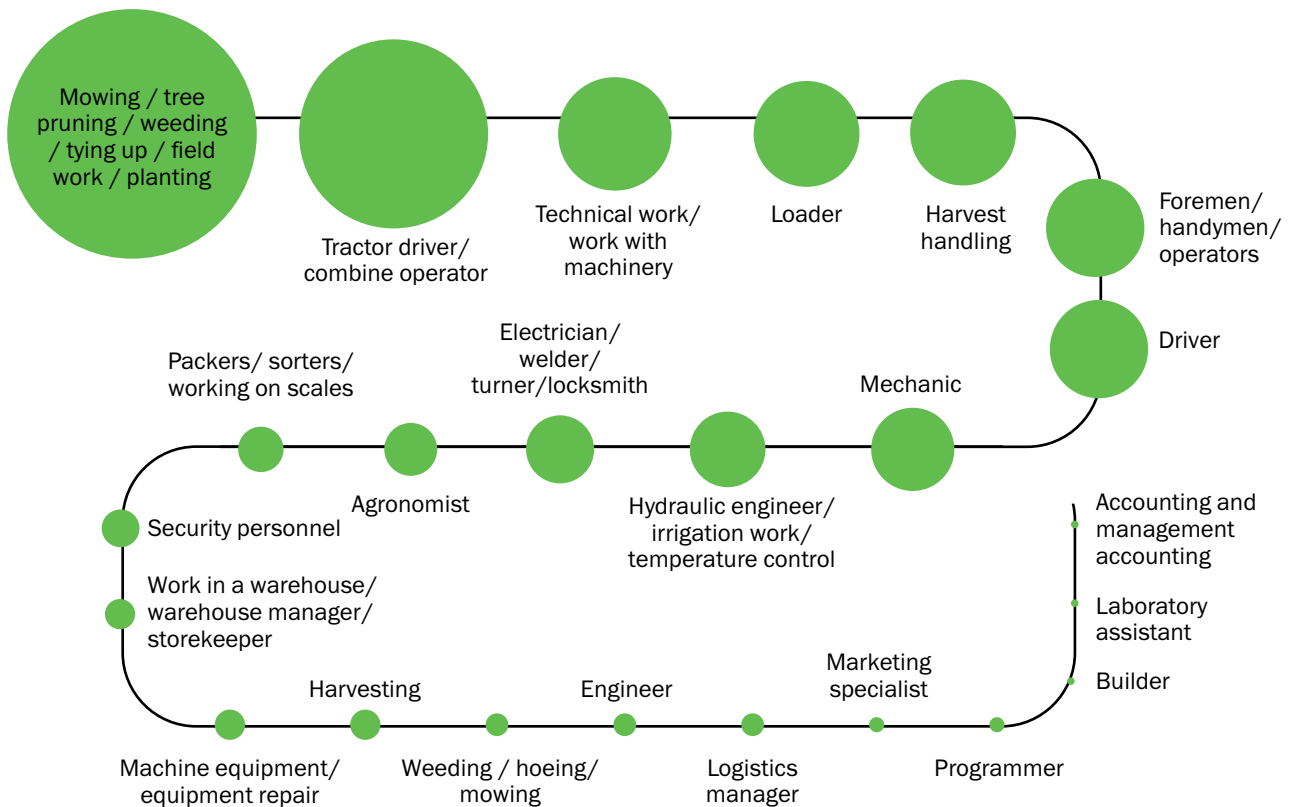
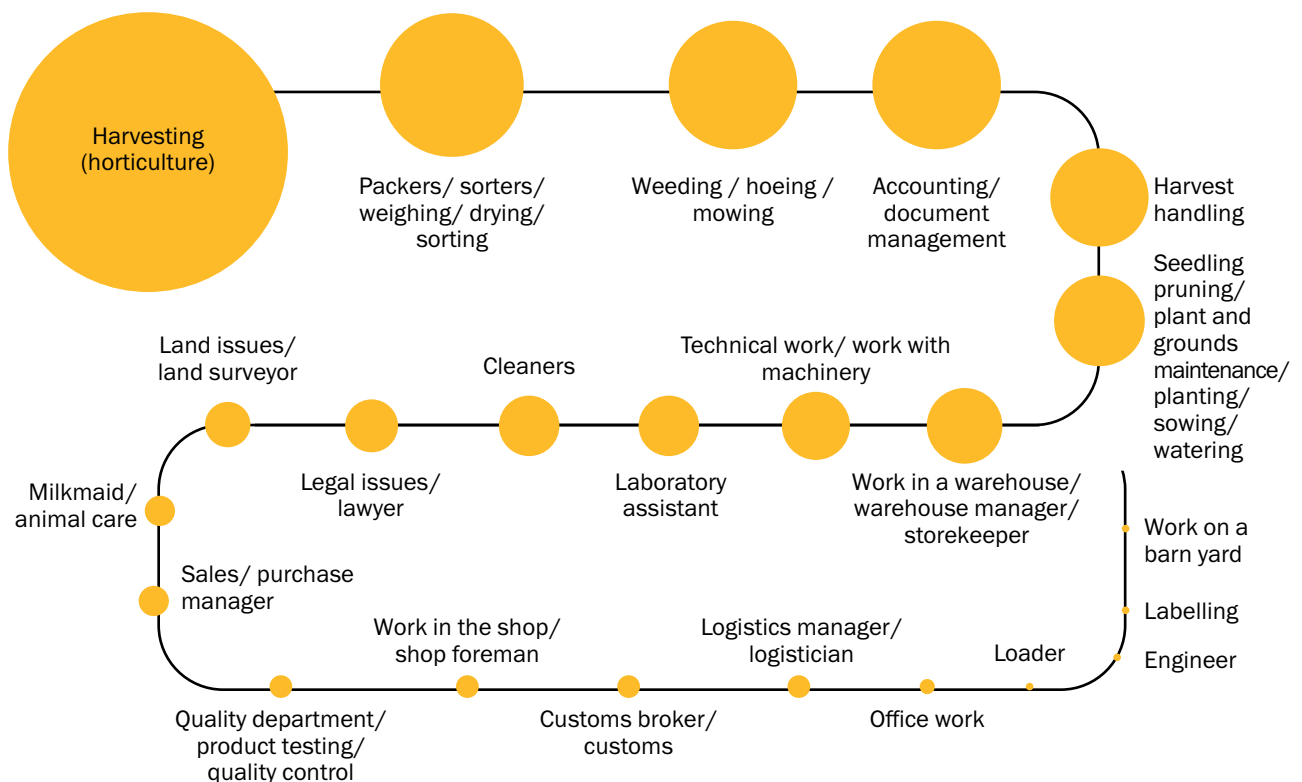


Chart 10: Types of works performed by female specialists



Let us take a closer look at the reasons for this situation.

As in the case of agronomists and mechanics, these were almost 100% men who were trained as combine operators, tractor drivers, repairmen, and other specialists in mechanised departments, and women, if any, were the exception that proved the rule. So, there are almost no women with similar qualifications.

Working with machinery means not so much driving around in the field as fixing equipment that often breaks down. Traditionally, technical and engineering work is considered a man's job. To perform it, you need to understand machinery, have physical strength (*“tractor drivers have black hands because they spend hours digging around in machinery”*), and be able to replace heavy attachments, which is done manually today.

Men often say that it is too hard, complicated, long, far from home, and not a job for mothers or beautiful women. Men don't want women to have *“machine operators' hands — elbows covered in oil, soil, cracked, black and frostbitten fingers — because they work hard every day, repairing machinery.”* *“I have not come across a woman who would run around the fields until night and reprimand workers.”* *“We understand that women can do it, but we don't want them to!”*

The work of male specialists is physically demanding, with great physical effort required to set up and repair machinery, long working hours (up to 24 hours during the harvest season) and absence from home for weeks. They deliberately try not to involve women in such work, “protecting” them.

Consequently, women traditionally did not plan to engage in such activities. However, after the full-scale invasion, when men were mobilised into the army, women who remained were forced to take on these roles and learn the necessary skills in a very short time and under limited conditions. In addition, the involvement of women in such work will require greater automation of machinery to compensate for the lack of physical strength, which will incur additional costs.

2.5. Men and women in temporary jobs

With temporary workers, the imbalance of positions is even more critical, but generally similar to the previous level of positions. Women are most often engaged in harvesting, while men are engaged in technical and physically demanding jobs that require lifting, carrying, and loading. The level of automation in production is low on average, meaning that if automation were better, women could work in these positions, but currently, the physical labour is too hard.

Chart 11: Types of work performed by temporarily employed men

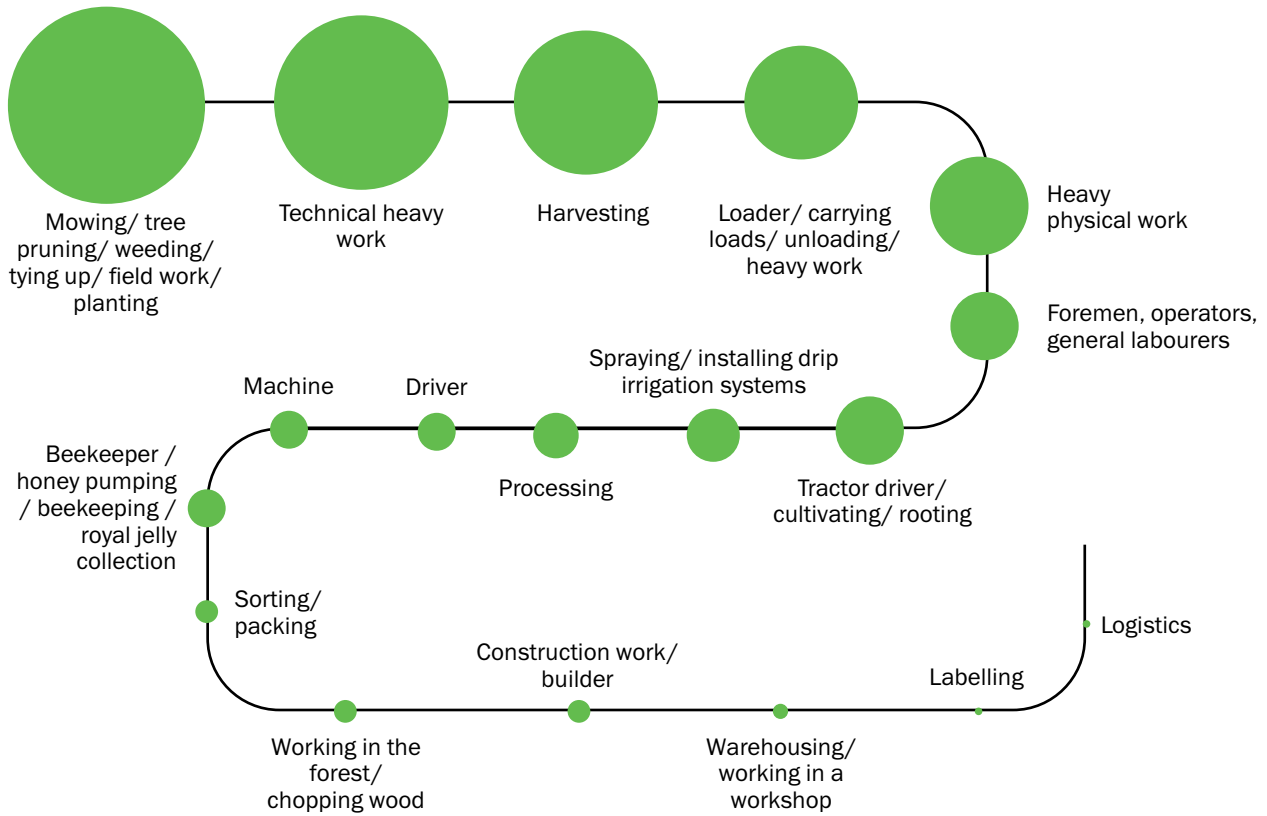
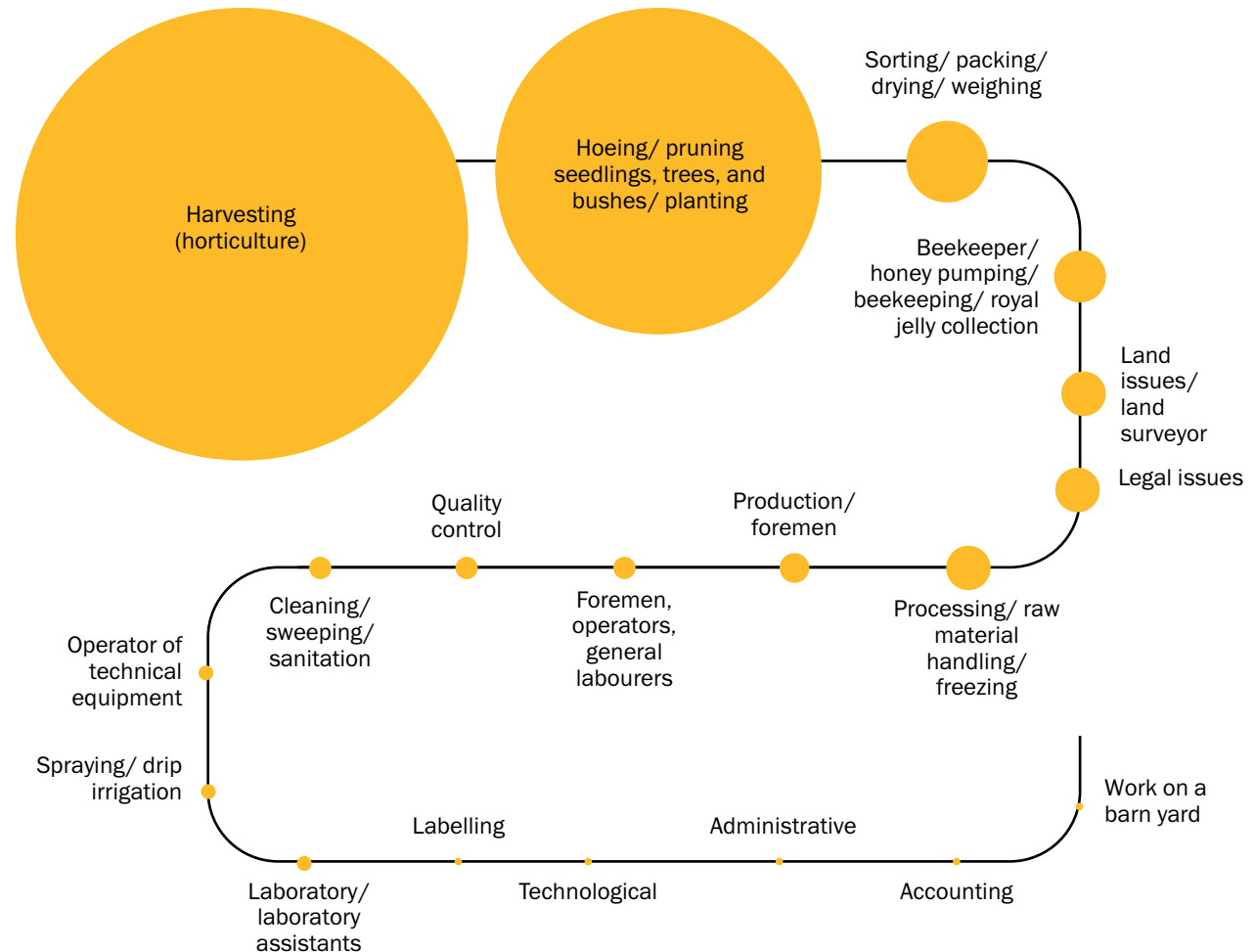


Chart 12: Types of work performed by temporarily employed women



SECTION 3

GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF REMUNERATION

The issue of gender inequality has several dimensions: in addition to inequality of access to certain positions, there is inequality of remuneration for equivalent positions. To check the hypothesis of inequitable remuneration for men and women at organic enterprises, we found out how the level of salaries and other benefits (bonuses, social benefits, travel and overtime payments) correlate between men and women in positions of the same level.

The majority of surveyed enterprises declare equal salaries for employees, regardless of gender, or claim that different levels of remuneration for men and women are related to other circumstances independent of gender. In a few cases, companies admit that salaries are not equal, with men in nonmanagerial positions earning slightly more.

Most often, equality of remuneration between men and women is declared for temporary jobs, which may be related to fixed pay for a certain amount of work, for example, for 1 kg of harvested crop.

Table 2: Salary level

	Senior managers	Heads of departments	Specialists/ ordinary employees	Temporary employees
Men and women receive equal salaries	62%	56%	59%	67%
Men receive higher salaries	0%	2%	2%	3%
Women receive higher salaries	0%	2%	0%	0%
There are salary differences, but they do not depend on gender	38%	41%	37%	29%
Refusal to answer	0%	0%	3%	1%

In support of this situation, all experts — men and women, executives, owners and managers of organic enterprises — denied the existence of gender inequality in remuneration for men and women in the same positions during the in-depth interviews. There are two reasons why inequality in remuneration is impossible:

- Absence of such an approach and practice on the market in general; salaries are determined before the competition for a particular position in accordance with the expectations of a set of competences, experience, and expertise.
- This is technically impossible, as system companies have a job description for each position, which sets out the salary for specific positions, regardless of gender.

The situation is similar with bonuses and additional payments.

An analysis of the responses of enterprises regarding the equality of bonuses, social and overtime payments, as well as business trip expenses shows that in 94-95% of cases, regardless of the level of the position or type of payment, enterprises maintain equality of payments, or their difference is related to other factors and is not determined by gender.

The few cases where there is a gender-based inequality in additional payments (other than business trips) indicate an imbalance in favour of women (i.e., women are more likely to receive higher payments).

Table 3: Share of enterprises where the level of payments to men and women differs

	Senior managers are paid more		Department heads are paid more		Specialists/ordinary employees are paid more		Temporary employees are paid more	
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman
Salaries	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%
Bonuses	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Social benefits	1%	2%	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	2%
Overtime	0%	2%	0%	5%	0%	3%	0%	4%
Business trips	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%

Thus, it can be concluded that the imbalance in the level of remuneration for comparable positions is not specific to Ukrainian organic enterprises, as the rules for setting remuneration are not gender-specific. At the same time, there are isolated, non-systemic cases where men receive higher salaries and women receive higher additional payments.

SECTION 4

PECULIARITIES OF LIFE OF ORGANIC ENTERPRISES, GENDER ASPECT

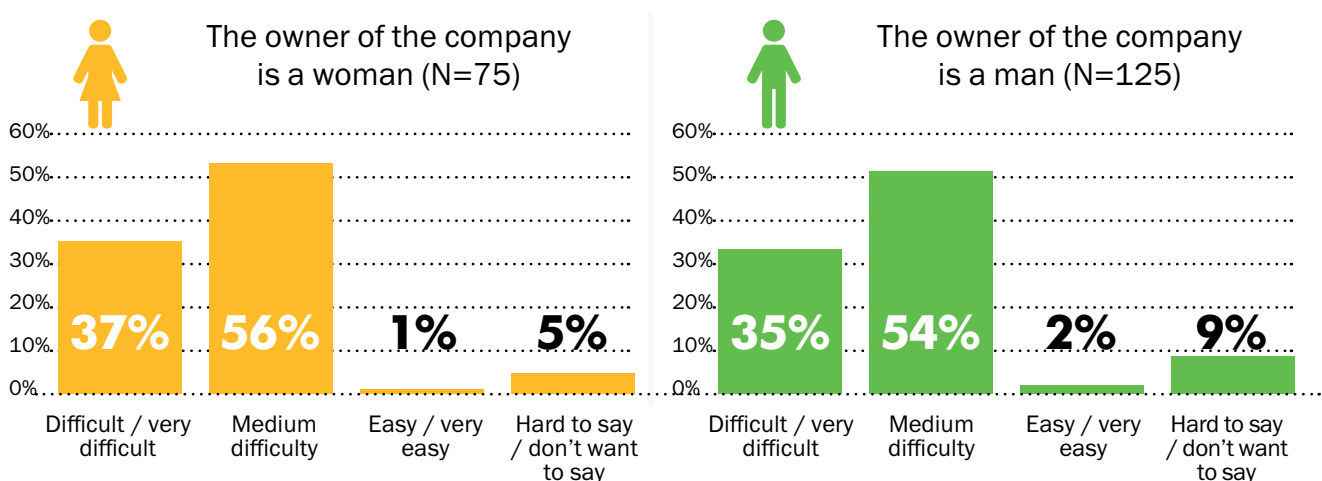
4.1. Current situation

Another area of analysis of gender equality in the organic sector was to compare the life of enterprises owned by men and women to find out whether they have the same opportunities, achievements, problems, and challenges.

First, we asked respondents to rate on a seven-point scale (where 1 is very difficult and 7 is very easy) the degree of difficulty in doing business in the organic sector compared to other areas of business to test the hypothesis that women-owned businesses are more difficult to run.

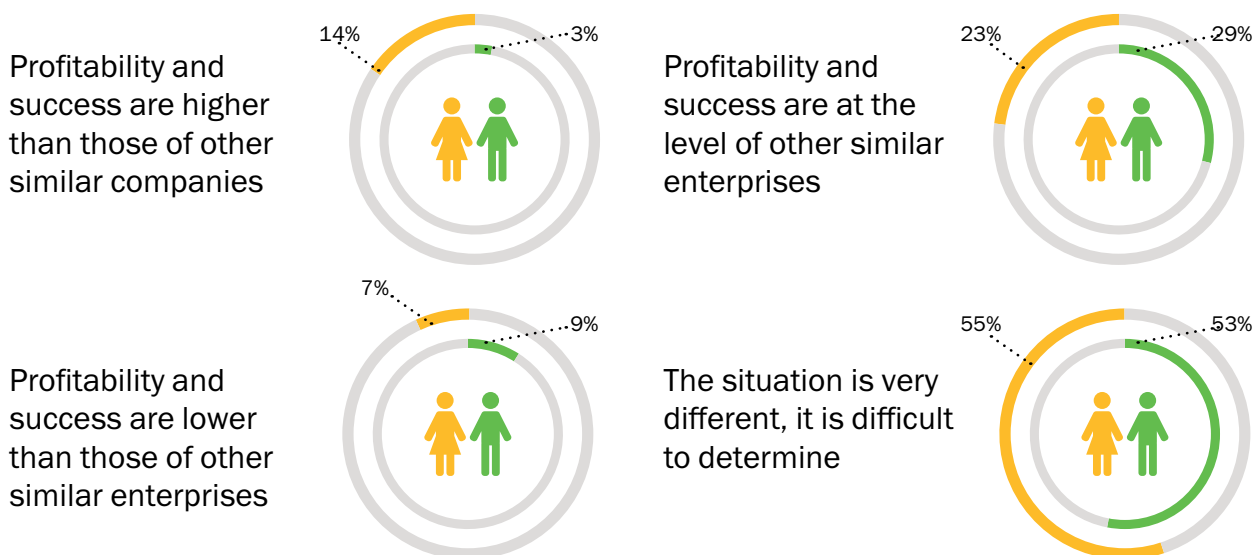
Overall, just over a third of enterprises (37%) described the situation with doing business as difficult or very difficult, and only 2% as easy or very easy, half (53%) chose the median scores, and 9% could not choose any answer. At the same time, women business owners are somewhat more likely, but not dramatically so, to rate the complexity of doing business as high or medium compared to men business owners. Thus, male and female organic business owners are currently experiencing approximately the same pressure and difficulty.

Chart 13: Self-assessment of complexity of doing business in the organic sector



Although the majority of enterprises (54%) try not to compare their success with other enterprises on the market, and one in four (26%) believes that their profitability and success are on the average level, women-owned enterprises consider themselves more successful than man-owned ones (14% and 3%, respectively).

Chart 14: Self-assessment of business success



Women-owned enterprises also tend to evaluate the business skills of their management slightly higher than those of men-owned enterprises (45% and 42% respectively).

When assessing who would be more successful in managing an enterprise similar to the one represented by the respondent, the majority (69% overall, 64% among representatives of women’s enterprises and 74% among men’s enterprises) tend to believe that both men and women can manage enterprises in the sector equally well. At the same time, representatives of enterprises owned exclusively by men are less likely to consider women to be successful entrepreneurs. When women-owned businesses are represented, they are equally likely to recognise the success of both women’s and men’s management skills.

Table 4: Who would be more successful in managing an enterprise similar to yours

	The owner of the company is a woman (N=75)	The owner of the company is a man (N=125)
Man	15%	15%
Woman	17%	6%
It doesn't matter	64%	74%
I don't want to answer	4%	5%

Male experts stated in the in-depth interviews that women can be successful business owners or managers, and there are cases to prove it, but they have more experience of working with male owners, and therefore have more confidence in the success of men. This opinion is based on the following beliefs:

- being a manager means a very heavy workload, a very difficult position, working in very difficult conditions, men are better suited for such hard work, such tension;
- women are more effective in other positions (for example, in maintaining stable business operations).

Thus, there is a rather controversial situation: in general, organic operators of both genders are in the same conditions; however, there is a tendency for women to find it somewhat more difficult to run a business and at the same time they believe that they are better at achieving their business goals; representatives of “male” enterprises find it difficult to recognise women as equals among owners and managers.

This is probably related to the stereotype that men are more successful in leadership positions (ambitious, able to devote more time to work, aggressive in doing business, etc.).

4.2. Challenges and problems of organic enterprises

Regardless of who owns the organic enterprise, the most significant problems that hinder business development for all are the lack of qualified personnel (67%), lack of equipment (54%), and the prevalence of costs over income (43%), with male enterprises complaining about this more often than female enterprises (49% vs. 37%).

The group of less sensitive problems (mentioned by every third respondent) includes difficulties with lending, finding new customers, lack of information about industry trends and insufficient demand (more common for women’s enterprises than men’s – 32% and 25% respectively).

Less common problems include unfair treatment by big business (20%), difficulties with taxation and legal regulation (15%), lack of knowledge to optimise costs and develop their business (13% each); the least common (8%) is not feeling like an equal member of the professional community.

Microenterprises (which as we know are more likely to be owned by women) face the most difficulties: in addition to a lack of qualified staff, they are also much more likely to lack equipment (67%), customers (43%), and information about market trends (42%).

Table 5: Challenges and obstacles to business development

	Microbusinesses (N=79)	Small businesses (N=70)	Medium and large businesses (N=51)
I find it difficult to find qualified workers/ personnel	59%	66%	86%
I do not have enough equipment for further business development	67%	54%	41%
Over the last year, business expenses have exceeded income	48%	46%	37%
I find it difficult to obtain loans or credits for business development	39%	29%	25%
I cannot find new customers and/or I am losing customers	43%	24%	18%
I lack information about trends in my industry, demand, and market	42%	24%	14%
Big businesses (suppliers and/or customers) do not perceive as an equal partner, and they oppress/dictate their terms of cooperation	25%	21%	10%
It is difficult to understand the intricacies of the taxation system or legal issues of doing business	15%	13%	18%
I don't know how to optimise and cut costs	14%	16%	10%
I lack knowledge for further business development	16%	16%	6%
I do not feel like an equal member of the professional community	10%	4%	8%
None of the above	8%	13%	4%

4.3. How Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine affected the distribution and roles of men and women in your company

A common wartime challenge for the sector is the shortage of men and the related lack of technical specialists (who were traditionally men) — 76% and 62% of surveyed enterprises respectively declare such problems.

The problem is complex:

- Many male specialists have been mobilised, but there are no qualified women to fill these positions.
- Men do not want to be officially employed in order to avoid being “on the radar” of military enlistment offices.
- Men are not willing to risk business trips that involve crossing regional borders to minimise the risk of receiving a drafting notice at a checkpoint.
- The shortage of male technical specialists is most noticeable in villages and small towns, where the number of working-age people is generally limited.

Women-owned enterprises are more likely to have women take on “male” activities, promote women and appoint them to senior positions. The experts state, in particular, the following:

- Women are more willing to take on new types of work;
- There are now more women in jobs where only men used to work, and they have replaced men in some “traditionally male” jobs, for example, as heads of production departments, agronomists, etc;
- Perception of women in business has improved against the background of general social trends;
- Women take over the management of businesses established by men if the latter join the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Automation of production has a positive impact on these processes, allowing women to work in areas that previously required physically stronger men.

At the same time, women-owned businesses are more likely to have to increase their men’s remuneration in order to retain or attract them to work for them (28% vs. 16% for men-owned businesses).

Table 6: Challenges related to wartime

	Company owner – woman (N=75)	Company owner – man (N=125)
Shortage of male labour force	72%	80%
Shortage of technical specialists	63%	63%
Remuneration for men and women in the same positions has become less different or equal	50%	52%
Women began to perform parts of the work/ tasks that were previously purely “male”	37%	32%
Shortage of female labour force due to women leaving the settlement or country	29%	33%
Women are more likely to hold senior positions	38%	19%
The level of pay for men has increased significantly	28%	16%
A woman heads an enterprise instead of a man	15%	8%

Another challenge of wartime is the need to retrain internally displaced women who have never worked in the agricultural sector before but were forced to move to small towns and villages where agriculture or agricultural production is almost the only potential job opportunity.

Additional negative consequences of the war include the closure or loss of the status of a certified organic company, because the certification or agricultural technology were the responsibilities of a particular man who went to the front and the company is no longer able to operate.

4.4. Main reasons for gender inequality in organic production, according to experts

Summing up the data, we can identify 3 groups of reasons (which in turn overlap and influence each other).

1. Gender stereotypes:

- Inequality between the genders is objective and must be maintained, with women perceived as “perfect performers” and men as better strategists and able to aggressively conquer the market.
- Women are responsible for their families and children and should not spend time working overtime.
- A rather small share of women have ambitions (or their ambitions are visible) to be considered for management positions in production/ businesses.

2. Socioeconomic circumstances:

- Women do not go to study at faculties with “male” specialities, so the likelihood of hiring a woman for such a position is extremely low.
- Unwillingness of customers and partners to take women professionals seriously: they have to prove their expertise, make a lot of effort, and “grow their teeth”.
- A small share of successful examples of female executives.

3. Situation in the sector:

- Objectively, work in the agricultural sector is very physically and intellectually demanding. People (and women themselves) try to limit the amount of workload and stress for women, including emotional stress.
- Outdated machinery and poor automation make work in the field and in production physically demanding and beyond the physical capabilities of women.
- The patriarchal and archaic nature of the agricultural sector is particularly pronounced in the countryside away from Kyiv and large cities.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender balance in the agricultural sector

Gender issues are of particular importance for Ukraine at the moment, not only in the context of the full-scale war, but also for the subsequent recovery, which must take into account many aspects, including the implementation of the European Green Deal.

The results of the study show that Ukraine slightly lags behind the European Union when comparing the number of women who run farms. In the EU, this figure was 32% in 2020, while in Ukraine, as of the beginning of 2021, women managed 20.8% of farms.

At the same time, the organic sector demonstrates a better gender balance in farm management. In terms of organic production in the EU, the share of organic farms run by women was 26% in 2020. In Ukraine, according to this study, about 27% of organic farm managers are women.

This contrast with nonorganic agriculture is explained, in particular, by the fact that organic agriculture is often started by people who do not have inherited traditional stereotypes and instead learn modern farming and business methods.

Gender balance in the Ukrainian organic sector

There is a gender inequality in the Ukrainian organic sectors, with significantly fewer female managers (27%) and fewer women than men on average in the sector (56% of men and 44% of women). Gender inequality is also manifested in the fact that most women are ordinary (47%) and temporary (48%) employees, while there are twice as many male business owners (66%) as female owners (34%). However, the situation tends to level out.

The data show that there is no systemic gender inequality or negative trends for its development. This trend is stronger in medium and large businesses in big cities, where women generally have better opportunities and more choices. According to the interviewed experts of both genders, conscious rejection of women in leadership positions or deliberate gender inequality is a relic and is more common among older men or in “remote villages”.

There are more and more successful cases of women owners or managers which contributes to a positive image of women as leaders, and this is gradually removing the barrier for women to obtain high positions.

There is almost no systemic inequality of remuneration between men and women in the same positions due to clear rules for determining salaries in accordance with the job description.

Gender division of responsibilities in the Ukrainian organic sector

Gender pay inequality exists because of the distribution of positions in companies. Women generally occupy less important positions in companies, mostly administrative positions that are not related to management or profit generation, and therefore are not highly paid. Although in the sector as a whole, men and women receive almost the same salaries, bonuses, social and other benefits for the same position and there are no different job descriptions for employees of different genders, the result is still pay inequality. Overall, men have higher income than women in the organic sector.

There are widespread stereotypes among sector representatives of both genders (about 70% of respondents of both genders) that there are positions for which it is better to hire either men or women. Such stereotypes can be considered one of the main reasons for gender inequality between men and women. The assumption that a person of a certain gender will achieve better results in a certain position contradicts the very essence of the principle of gender equality, according to which men and women should have equal opportunities.

Although there is no systemic sexism or restrictions in general, the experts' opinions still show trends in stereotyping positions that are better suited to men or women depending on the type of activity:



Office

Control and support

Execution

Consistency and perseverance

Sustainable work in one place

Management in predictable conditions

Standard working hours and workloads that allow maintaining a work-life balance



Field

Development and improvement

Management

Aggressiveness and risk taking

Lots of business trips, mobility, frequent absence from home

Chaos, manual control when "it's a mess like ours"

Irregular schedule, overtime

Only 19% of companies name such top positions of women as director, general director, CEO, deputy director, etc. Representatives of 48% of companies consider these positions to be male.

Men lead the way in the key departments of companies, including production, agronomy and technical, mechanical, commercial, and logistics. Women have a clear role in such departments as financial (chief accountant is the most common managerial position in organic companies that can be held by a woman), commercial, quality, HR, and laboratory management.

Stereotypes clearly distinguish between jobs for men and women in companies: most women's positions are in the office, and most men's positions are in production, in particular, "in the field".

Stereotypes are also manifested in the description of the differences between men and women and their abilities for different types of work. A significant number of interviewed experts of both genders describe women as weaker, less capable of hard overtime work, of bearing the responsibility of a chief executive, and of hard intensive work in the production department "in the field". In the organic sector, there is a tendency: manager = man.

Stereotyping of the roles of women and men in companies from the point of view of respondents of both genders reaches its peak when it comes to the question of whether a woman could run a company. Only 6% of male managers answered in the affirmative. However, female respondents also show stereotypical thinking about female managers: only 17% of women believe that a woman can successfully run a company (but more than 70% of male and more than 60% of female respondents answered "It does not matter").

Wartime challenges

The shortage of male labour due to men joining the army in large numbers (76% of companies mentioned this problem) and the shortage of technical specialists (62%) became a serious challenge for businesses.

The in-depth interviews give the understanding that in some cases the lack of qualified men who have to leave their jobs because of military service means that they cannot be replaced by women professionals. Until now, women in our country have not studied for this specialisation because of gender stereotypes. For example, it is not accepted in society for a girl to enter an agricultural university or college to study to become a mechanic, and it is very rare for a girl to enter an agronomy programme. Thus, we can say that in our country gender stereotypes have contributed to the fact that there are no female specialists in a number of technical and technological specialities, and they have to be trained from scratch.

In today's reality, with men being mobilised to the army, women have to take over traditionally male activities, but this requires automation of production processes to replace hard physical labour.

The war has demonstrated that for stability of personnel in all positions in the sector no profession should be purely “male”. Women should be qualified to do jobs that were traditionally considered the domain of men. Girls should be encouraged to enter universities and colleges to study mechanical and agricultural engineering. Women should take mechanic courses, and companies and organisations in the sector should take care of opportunities to train and retrain women, as the situation with the shortage of men will be exacerbated by a significant increase in the number of men mobilised and a prolonged war.

Positive examples of women working in “men’s jobs” are becoming more and more common; myths are being destroyed, and successful examples are being created that should be supported and disseminated.

To stimulate positive trends in the sector, it is necessary to promote the formation of an infrastructure in the sector to unite, share experiences, mutually assist and support women — potential managers and entrepreneurs.

In order to increase the share of qualified female professionals in previously traditionally “male” specialities, such specialities and faculties of universities and colleges should be promoted among the parents of girls and the girls themselves — future agricultural professionals.

It is important to contribute to development of women’s entrepreneurship in the organic sector and, in general, to strengthen the role of women in society.

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SWISS-UKRAINIAN PROGRAM “HIGHER VALUE ADDED TRADE FROM THE ORGANIC AND DAIRY SECTOR IN UKRAINE”

Short name	Quality FOOD Trade Program (QFTP)
Development partner	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
Executing agency	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL, Switzerland) in partnership with SAFOSO AG (Switzerland)
Beneficiaries	Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection
Target groups	Private SMEs (producers, processors), NGOs and service providers in organic and dairy sectors, as well as relevant governmental institutions
Implementation period	01.07.2023 – 30.06.2026

The overall goal is to promote sustainable trade and create more and better jobs by strengthening the business competitiveness and capacities of SMEs in the organic and dairy sectors by pursuing two outcomes:

► Outcome 1: Regulatory framework is improved and aligned with EU regulation and the business environment is enhanced


Activities related to Outcome 1 will contribute to capacity development at the government level, in particular through support on implementation and alignment of regulatory framework with the EU legislation in the organic and dairy sectors (Output 1.1). At the institutional and sectoral levels, the focus will be on strengthening the capacities and networks of public institutions and private value chain actors for effective enforcement and compliance with the legislation (Output 1.2).

► Outcome 2: Trade capacity is increased in the domestic and export markets with higher value-added products in the organic and dairy sectors

Activities related to Outcome 2 will increase SMEs’ trade capacities in the domestic and export markets (Output 2.1) driven by systemic capacity development involving both public and private service providers and networks to promote the application of good practices, value addition and trade development (Output 2.2).



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PUBLIC ASSOCIATION

ORGANIC INITIATIVE

is a platform of key Ukrainian organic stakeholders

ORGANIC INITIATIVE

Organic Initiative Public Association has been established to promote organic agriculture and production development

Mission

development of organic agriculture

and market for certified organic products in Ukraine

facilitating the transition to a green economy in Ukraine

development of organic trade and increasing demand for certified organic products produced in Ukraine

implementation of sustainable agricultural practices

Members:

Organic Business LLC

Institute of Organic Agriculture SPU LLC

International Charitable Organization "Information Centre "Green Dossier"

Lviv City Public Organization "Ecoterra"

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