



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

REGIONAL GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

For the Near East and North Africa

2017-2020



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I. Introduction

This Regional Gender Equality Strategy is designed to enable the Regional Office for the Near East of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO RNE) officers and country officers in the region, and development practitioners to respond to current regional priorities. As a complement to the FAO Gender Equality Policy, the regional gender strategy will promote coherence and improve the efficiency of gender-sensitive programming. The strategy supports developing easy and efficient approaches and methodologies to address the needs of the different stakeholders and specific groups, particularly the women, men and youth generally ignored or rendered invisible in project and programme planning, as well as to understand the different interactions or synergies. It is aligned with global FAO priorities and the mainstreaming of gender equality.

The biennial Regional Conferences also set priorities to reduce gender inequalities in agriculture and in the rural sector of the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region), which are reflected in the regional gender equality strategy. Strengthening rural institutions, developing female and youth human capital, disaggregating data by gender and promoting a holistic understanding of social dynamics in rural areas were all addressed and discussed with line ministers present at the 32nd and 33rd Regional Conferences.

Making progress towards gender equality is key to meeting global goals for eradicating hunger and reducing food insecurity and malnutrition. Women make important contributions to household livelihoods and rural economies, and play a vital role caring for their families and participating in their communities. However, for women to reach their full potential and to attain global food security, persistent gender gaps in access to and control over land, finance, decision making, training and information, and other productive inputs (SOFA 2011) must be closed. Just as importantly, the ways that social norms and institutions, governing frameworks and markets explicitly or implicitly constrain women must be understood and addressed.

In recent years, the United Nations (UN) and FAO have deepened their institutional commitment to gender equality. In 2006, the UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) endorsed the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) to ensure coherence and accountability for gender throughout the UN system. FAO formulated the FAO Gender Equality Policy (GEP)¹ - endorsed in 2012 - establishing institutional targets and objectives for gender equality in agriculture and rural development. Gender equality is one of seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and rural women are recognized by FAO as agents of change towards meeting the SDGs². This Regional Gender Equality Strategy for the FAO RNE builds on and supports these efforts. The RNE covers 19 countries from the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf States.

1 FAO. 2013. Policy on Gender Equality: Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome, FAO. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf>

2 FAO. 2015. FAO and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome, FAO. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4997e.pdf>

Objectives of the strategy: The strategy specifies FAO goal and objectives related to gender equality and outlines an accountability structure for ensuring policy oversight and achievement of results.

The regional gender equality strategy aims to: 1) respond to the most pressing and emerging priorities in the region as related to gender; 2) support the overall FAO GEP through specific efforts at the regional level that are aligned with headquarters' efforts, as well as those of other regions and country programmes; 3) provide a roadmap for FAO RNE to address gender in FAO programming in the Near East and North Africa region; and 4) improve the visibility of RNE's contribution to women's empowerment and gender equality by supporting knowledge-sharing on progress towards gender equality objectives. The strategy is set for four years (2017-20) and will be reviewed in the mid-term and adjusted as required.

Strategy development process: In 2013, FAO RNE commissioned a gender audit to assess its work on gender equality and to propose a plan of action to strengthen its activities, processes and outcomes in this area. This baseline assessment was carried out for the Regional Office and five Country Offices: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and the United Arab Emirates during 2013-2014. The main outcome of this work was a plan of action that will contribute to the cross-cutting theme on gender equality, which is being monitored at the RNE level.

This strategy was developed through a consultation process with technical officers and Regional Initiatives' Delivery Managers, using feedback and inputs from regional staff and headquarters, and was approved by the Assistant Director General-Regional Representative (ADG). The initial draft was prepared by the RNE Regional Gender Officer drawing on the results of the regional gender meetings and consultation with RNE staff, the gender audits conducted in selected countries of the region, and a review of the FAO Gender Equality Policy and other global FAO documents on gender.

Intended users/readers: The Gender Equality Strategy will guide the work of the RNE regional and country office technical, management, and programme staff, providing a pathway on how gender can be mainstreamed in their work to ensure better results. The strategy will provide regional partners with a clear understanding of FAO strategic priorities in the medium term for gender and the work FAO plans to do on gender in the region.

II. Main foundations of the strategy

FAO gender equality policy at the corporate level

FAO approved a Gender Equality Policy in 2012. Its purpose is to provide FAO with a framework to guide organizational efforts toward achieving gender equality in all its technical work and to monitor results; it calls on the whole Organization to contribute to these efforts. It was developed in alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in response to the performance and reporting standards for UN entities required by the UN System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) for the implementation of the United Nations CEB Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The policy specifies the FAO gender equality goal and objectives, and defines an accountability structure for ensuring policy oversight and achievement of results.

Regional conference recommendations

NERC 32 (2014) recommendations

Addressing the Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa, the Near East Regional Conference:

- a. recognized the importance of gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policies by strengthening rural institutions, developing the human capital of women and youth, and promoting the economic empowerment of vulnerable men and women;
- b. underlined the importance of addressing the needs of women and men through gender mainstreaming;
- c. welcomed FAO's approach in mainstreaming gender in its programme of work and related activities in the region and;
- d. called upon Member Nations to collect, analyse and disseminate statistics that allowed accurate assessments of the situation of women in the agriculture and rural sector, and requested FAO to provide technical support for Member Nations of the Region in these areas.

NERC 33 (2016) recommendations

The Ministerial Declaration on Food Security, Stability and Peace at the NERC33, "Reiterate(s) the importance of inclusive and sustainable development, that fully encompasses the agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and livestock and gives equal employment and development to the vulnerable people including youth and women, in the framework of promoting peace and stability in the region."

Regional initiatives

There are three RNE regional initiatives that focus on thematic areas of importance to the region and where gender is a cross-cutting component. The initiatives serve as the main delivery or implementation mechanism for FAO strategic objectives and related gender outcomes. These are:

Near East and North Africa's Water Scarcity Initiative

This Initiative aims to identify and streamline policies and best practices that can significantly improve agricultural productivity and food security. It promotes a regional collaborative strategy that focuses on the main priority areas, such as the strategic planning of water resources, governance, efficient water management, increasing water supply, climate change adaptation and drought management, ground water sustainability, benchmarking, and monitoring of and reporting on water use efficiency and productivity in the region.

Small-Scale Family Farming in the Near East and North Africa

This Initiative covers three main components: a) evidence-based policy and strategies to improve and enhance the small-scale agricultural sector and the livelihoods of those involved; b) sustainable improvement of small-scale agriculture productivity, aiming at including youth in the agricultural sector; and c) institutional strengthening and empowerment of smallholders, through support for enabling environments for economically viable and sustainable small-scale agriculture.

Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition in the Near East and North Africa

The main goal of this Initiative is to strengthen the resilience of countries, communities and households to shocks and crises affecting food security and nutrition in the Near East and North Africa. It focuses on developing efficient evidence-based food security information and knowledge exchange for effective decision support systems; promoting the development of efficient, sustainable and resilient food systems; promoting sustainable access of households to safe, nutritious and diversified food; and building resilience to anticipate, absorb and recover from the negative impacts of human-induced and natural shocks

Regional context and facts

Major trends in the Near East and North Africa to be considered in gender-related work

There are a wide range of important trends that are closely linked within the region and deserve due attention from a gender perspective. The following are significant:

1. Conflicts and protracted crises

Conflicts and protracted crises in the NENA affect women and men differently. Sometimes women are victims of violence and displacement, and are reluctant to travel to distant markets because of threats to their safety, and in other cases, they are left on the farm when the men die or migrate. These differences require different responses to protect lives and rebuild productive capacity. A better understanding of these differences and the opportunities and risks they present can improve responses to protracted crises by the societies affected as well as by providers of humanitarian assistance and the international community as a whole. Countries in conflict, protracted conflicts or post-conflict are left with a skewed population of women and children, who find it difficult to access resources and employment due to existing gender inequalities. Women make essential contributions to agriculture in the region; however, on-going conflicts and crises, which remove men from the agricultural production labour force, add to their workload and stress.

2. Extreme weather and climate change

A key challenge for policy and decision makers and development partners is to understand the strategies adopted by rural women and men to address climate change impacts on agriculture and rural communities. In the Near East and North Africa region, both women and men work in agriculture doing different activities and with different responsibilities and workloads, which are likely to increase with climate change. Women's productive and reproductive roles are not

sufficiently recognized or accounted for in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, or in the context of natural disasters influenced or exacerbated by climate change both at the national and regional levels. Women generally face higher risks and more problems due to the impacts of climate change on existing poverty, and the majority of the region's poor are women. Their unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets compound inequalities and often prevent women from contributing fully to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation.

3. Limited opportunities for decent rural employment especially for young women

Despite the increase in numbers of women being employed in agriculture in the region, rural women still struggle to obtain decent employment, become integrated into value chains and other development initiatives, and access social protection measures including insurance to decrease risks. Young women in rural areas are especially vulnerable. Closing the gender gap in agriculture and rural areas is a key objective currently being addressed by FAO. Female and male producers in the region still face unequal access to productive resources, economic opportunities, inadequate infrastructure and services, and a policy environment that requires additional efforts to address gender inequality adequately. This situation remains the same in many NENA countries despite some institutional arrangements and legislative changes introduced and adopted by a number of governments in the region.

4. Persistent cultural and social norms in the NENA Region

Social norms limiting women to reproductive tasks, along with the prevailing gender dynamics between men and women, may hinder women's ability to participate in development because of restrictions on their time, mobility and decision-making. Women's limited access to land and productive assets is a direct outcome of these customs.

Patriarchal societies where women and men have different roles, rights and responsibilities exist in other regions of the world but are prevalent in the NENA region. These norms are changing with increasing rates of education, more involvement of women in agriculture in general and in agricultural labour in particular, more awareness among women about the danger of alienation and the stereotypes of housewives, and important trends of male migration from rural areas and agriculture.

5. Social protection

The coverage of social protection programmes in the region is constrained by low administrative capacity, inadequate coordination among responsible agencies and high fragmentation. Social protection includes both direct assistance and formal protection, usually in the form of insurance and unemployment benefits. Social security is generally afforded to those working in the public sector but not to temporary or casual workers, agricultural workers or those working in small enterprises, especially poor rural women. As a result, rural women are especially vulnerable to economic and other shocks. A number of cash transfer programmes for women have been introduced in several NENA countries and, despite being limited, some are a response to the reduction of subsidies and are producing positive results.

III. Baseline and background

Progress implementing the gender policy in the region through the end of 2016 and lessons learned

Gender Focal Points at the country level. RNE has deployed a number of efforts to mainstream gender in its programmes and projects. As a complement to the gender audits indicated earlier, a network of 16 FAO Country Gender Focal Points (GFPs) and some Government Gender Focal Points (GGFPs) has been established, as well as a regional gender officer appointed in RNE in 2014. As part of our efforts to accelerate the effective implementation of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality, the FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE), the Social Protection Division (ESP) and the Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD) jointly organized a Regional Training Workshop for the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in the Near East Region in 2014 in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop provided FAO Gender Focal Points with the knowledge and tools for gender mainstreaming to enable them to execute their role effectively. The participants also discussed the need for a regional gender equality strategy for the Near East Region, and the GFPs took the opportunity to share experiences and ideas and to lay the foundation for a collaborative regional GFP network.

Gender mainstreaming in the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs). At the country level, the CPF is the guiding document for mainstreaming gender issues, and guidelines and tools already exist to ensure mainstreaming. The Regional Gender Officer and the GFPs, in close collaboration with the Regional CPF Focal Point, will support the development of gender-sensitive CPF during the period of this strategy.

All the CPFs to be developed during the current biennium in the NENA Region will aim to mainstream gender from the early stages of their formulation in order to raise gender awareness from the initial consultation process with government and relevant stakeholders. This will allow coming up with agreed priorities and subsequent results that duly encompass the gender dimension according to the national context. In this regard, carrying out a country gender assessment is a key first step.

For instance, Algeria already has a country-based gender assessment in place, which will be used as a basis for mainstreaming gender in the CPF. The countries and GFPs have expressed their need for further support to mainstream gender in their CPFs, to better reflect what is being implemented at the country level.

Gender audits in the region. The main recommendations made by the gender audit conducted in the FAO regional office and the country offices in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and the United Arab Emirates confirmed the NERC32 recommendation to produce sex-disaggregated data and do a subsequent gender analysis to ensure better rural development targeting. In addition, the recommendations highlighted the need to: a) foster gender awareness and technical capacity among FAO staff particularly in conducting and using gender analysis; b) ensure gender dimensions are considered and budgeted for in all activities, initiatives and projects, and monitored through measurable indicators; c) provide greater support to government counterparts in understanding gender issues in rural areas and prioritizing gender equity in national policies

and programmes and; d) establish partnerships with other institutions and women's groups to bolster FAO's efforts to promote gender inclusiveness for sustainable agriculture growth, rural development and food security.

Country gender assessment and data

A number of country gender assessments (Algeria, Lebanon, and Sudan) have been completed and are being used to mainstream gender in the respective CPFs. Two social protection studies with a gender perspective were conducted in Egypt and Lebanon. A gendered value chain analysis study on medicinal and aromatic plants was conducted in Egypt. In addition, an exercise to map sex-disaggregated data in Iraq, Lebanon and Sudan was completed in 2015 and 2016 (in addition to one conducted in 2014 in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia), and more recently in Egypt and Jordan at the end of 2016. These will form the basis for capacity building at the country level and for policy formulation. Additionally, an assessment of Small-Scale Fishery and Aquaculture Livelihoods along the Nile River in Sudan was carried out; gender disaggregated data was collected, and strong, practical gendered-focused recommendations based on efficiently developing the value chain, capacity development, decent employment opportunities, secure sustainable livelihoods and household food security were obtained and included in the Sudan Fisheries Work Programme.



IV. Regional gender equality strategy and implementation

Rationale and criteria for selecting strategy areas of focus

Based on a short consultation process with FAORs and technical officers, as well as managers of the Regional Initiatives, this strategy provides a framework, a rationale and a point of reference to ensure that gender dimensions are adequately highlighted in programme development and implementation. The need for evidence to support gender mainstreaming is the driving force behind this initiative, which is an undisputable priority in the NENA region. For example, a gender-sensitive assessment of reconstruction priorities for agriculture is essential if future interventions are to be successful. The main focus areas are:

Focus area 1: **Gender and resilience to conflict and crisis**

Ensure that gender dimensions are included and integrated into the needs assessment and response plans for crisis-affected countries in the region. This is critical because women, men, girls and boys are affected differently by conflict-related crises and so it follows that their respective needs and priorities are different. Understanding how gender roles, power relations between women and men, and the positioning of women and girls determine women and men's experiences of conflict, their coping methods, and needs is essential when designing responsive programmes. Mainstreaming gender from the outset will: a) allow for a more accurate understanding of the situation; b) enable project staff to meet the needs and priorities of the population in a more targeted manner, based on how women, girls, boys and men have been affected by the crisis; c) ensure that all people affected by a crisis are acknowledged and that all their needs and vulnerabilities are taken into account; and d) facilitate the design of more appropriate and effective responses.

Intended results

Countries affected by conflict will consider conducting different types of assessments of the impacts of conflicts and reconstruction, and on agriculture and rural development as deemed necessary. The assessments will identify interventions that will lead to the development of active measures related, among others, to value chain development and entrepreneurship among women. As many women may be supporting their households, efforts will focus on food processing, cottage industry or artisanal and other traditional products produced and sold by women, and improving access to markets.

Implementation roles and responsibilities

This work will be led/coordinated by the FAOR in conflict countries or countries affected by conflicts with support from SP5 and coordinated by RNE through the managers of the relevant Regional Initiatives and with technical support from the Regional Gender Officer in RNE. Technical officers as well as the country gender focal points will play a key role in coordinating the country efforts with the regional office.

Expected outputs

1. governments in crisis-affected countries receive technical and policy support to formulate gender-sensitive food security and agriculture programmes in the context of conflict, including rural economic diversification and decent rural employment, creating better opportunities for female and male adults and youth;
2. a gendered analysis of the impact of conflict on rural livelihoods completed for all conflict-affected countries in the region;
3. gender-sensitive projects developed to support livelihoods, food security and nutrition in conflict-affected areas.

Focus area 2: Gender-sensitive value chain development

Value chain analysis and development will be a main tool for addressing gender inequities in access to resources and markets. Access to resources such as different types of assets, gendered education differentials and economic activities, as well as local customs affect the way men and women participate in and benefit from value chains. The aim will be to look at ways of tackling gender inequities while opening opportunities for upgrading along value chains. This will be translated through improving actors' bargaining power and management skills leading to women's empowerment and reducing household poverty. The benefits of women's participation in agricultural value chains are determined by the extent to which they control productive resources and take part in household-level decision making, their income and opportunities for employment in value chain activities. Sound gender analysis has the capacity to contribute to how interventions are targeted and their eventual impact. Interventions should be applied on a case-by-case basis and only after a thorough and robust analysis of causal factors is done. Policy options will be developed using the value chain analysis and development approach to promote gender equity on the one hand and poverty reduction on the other.

Intended results

The intended results of the gender-sensitive value chain analysis for specific products will be the basis for identifying the different roles, opportunities and constraints for men and women. These results will be used to design value chain interventions i.e. selecting the most appropriate value chain or target group, to guide project implementation and feed into monitoring and evaluation systems.

The gender-sensitive value chain analysis will increase the visibility of men's and women's roles along the various nodes of the chain, and will identify each gender's specific barriers to accessing opportunities for growth, as well as measures to reduce barriers and increase opportunities. Barriers for women include, for example, restricted access to markets due to seclusion, reduced control of their income despite increased commercialization, and less access to technology; all of which reduce women's ability to enter various nodes/value chains as well as their capacity to compete with other actors

Implementation roles and responsibilities

This task will be the responsibility of the different country offices coordinated by the managers of the Regional Initiatives with technical support from the Regional Gender Officer. The country gender focal points will play a key role in coordinating the country efforts with the regional office.

FAORs will be supported by RNE and HQ-ESP to link up with knowledge generated by SP4 projects, perhaps including an RNE country in those projects.

Expected outputs

1. agri-food value chains in the region identified for support, relevant interventions developed, gender-sensitive agri-food value chain assessments carried out for countries that identify this as a priority;
2. improved understanding of the major constraints, barriers and opportunities for women, men and youth in agriculture value chains to be communicated to decision makers and donors from different ministries and agencies;
3. NENA governments supported through awareness and capacity building to establish an institutional and policy environment that promotes decent work for rural and migrant women and men, addressing gender discrimination, occupational health and safety, and minimum wages in particular;
4. recommendations made on country-specific legal and policy reforms to ensure equitable land laws and guarantee women's right to land.

Focus area 3: Social protection

Social protection programmes are instrumental in poverty alleviation and improving rural women's access to basic services. Therefore, understanding the role that gender plays in agricultural production is critical for designing agricultural policies to increase productivity and enhance economic growth, and to reduce poverty. A better understanding of the role of gender in the agricultural sector could greatly increase productivity, reduce poverty and improve food security. Although women are the pillars of subsistence economies and pivotal to food security, their activities tend to be omitted from economic accounts. In fact, there is a lack of accurate, detailed and up-to-date statistical data on the involvement of women in the agricultural sector, such as their participation in the labour market and how much of the work they shoulder on the family farms. In addition, there is no statistical information on women's resources, particularly regarding land ownership.

A wide range of interventions and approaches have been used to improve the lives of rural women including cash transfers, subsidized goods and services, insurance schemes and temporary employment. The most appropriate and effective modality will vary according to the local context. Social protection is a growing part of the FAO mandate as a critical component of rural development and food security; however, progress in this area requires strengthened partnerships among government, civil society and international organizations.

Intended results

The aim of this area of work is to extend the coverage of social protection and social safety nets to strengthen the resilience of rural men and women to economic and other shocks. Improved knowledge sharing through South-South cooperation on successful gender-sensitive social protection is an important outcome, along with closer collaboration with regional stakeholders including international development organizations such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, UN-WOMEN, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and regional development banks. Governments will receive support to improve existing social protection programmes to ensure greater coverage for rural men and women, as well as to design and develop new interventions that employ a gendered approach to rural poverty alleviation and food security.

Implementation roles and responsibilities

This work will be the responsibility of the different country offices with coordination from RNE through the managers of the Regional Initiatives with technical support from the Regional Gender Officer and the regional social protection focal point. FAORs will be supported to link up with social protection experts in the core SP3 team for knowledge sharing and technical guidance.

Expected outputs

1. facilitated South-South cooperation to exchange experiences with countries implementing similar successful programmes;
2. increased awareness and understanding of key social security benefits, including coverage for maternity and unemployment and health-care benefits for rural women and men;
3. design of country-specific social protection interventions that promote human capital development and the economic empowerment of poor rural women.

Focus area 4: **Strengthening rural institutions**

More focused and concerted efforts are needed in the NENA region to ensure that rural institutions serve both women and men. Strong and inclusive rural institutions such as producer organizations, labour unions, trade groups and other membership-based organizations are essential for poverty reduction and economic development that benefits small-scale and subsistence farmers. Both public and private service providers operating in rural areas, including those offering extension, animal health or finance services must consider the specific needs of women to ensure gender-aware interventions.

Intended results

Governments will be supported to improve enabling conditions for more effective and equitable rural institutions. This includes revising membership conditions and reforming management structures to encourage more inclusive, participatory and gender equitable decision making and governance.

Implementation roles and responsibilities

This work will be the responsibility of the different country offices and coordinated by RNE through the manager of the Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming with technical support from the Regional Gender Officer. The country gender focal points will play a key role in coordinating the country efforts with the regional office.

Expected outputs

1. increased support for mechanisms that build social capital with female entrepreneurs such as cooperatives, self-help groups and rural women's business associations to access wider markets and increase the value of their products;
2. technical assistance provided to promote gender-sensitive agricultural extension services, including selecting and training female extension agents;
3. strengthened collaboration with rural organizations conducting research on agriculture practices and labour-saving technologies that can benefit female farmers;
4. capacity development and awareness building for rural institutions and farmers on participatory and gender-balanced decision making.

Focus area 5: **Gender and statistics**

Although women are pivotal to food security, their activities tend to be excluded from economic accounts. In fact, there is limited accurate, detailed and up-to-date statistical data about the involvement of women in the agricultural sector. In addition, statistical information about women's resources, particularly regarding land ownership, is scarce.

Agricultural statistics therefore tend to under-represent, or even omit variables that are essential to a clear understanding of rural sector activities and rural development mainly because this work is unpaid and not considered productive. This severely limits planners' grasp of the real situation in rural economies that, in turn, limits their potential to strengthen those economies. The demand for specific data and indicators incorporating a gender perspective has risen in the NENA region in recent years. The general awareness of the need for a gender perspective in development policy formulation, and of the corresponding need for pertinent statistics, is now well established, and the demand from member states to work on this has come from the highest levels.

Intended results

Closing the information gap on gender and agriculture will increase the ability of governments and development partners to design and scale up agricultural innovations that reduce gender inequality on the ground and contribute more effectively to poverty reduction, improved food security, nutrition and environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

During the period of this plan, FAO will support NENA countries to take stock of their current capacity for generating and analysing sex-disaggregated data and related indicators, and will support two workshops on the use of sex-disaggregated data for capacity building and policy formulation.

Implementation roles and responsibilities

The Regional Gender Officer and the Regional Statistician in RNE will coordinate this work, and then the country offices and the national institutions will take the responsibility for continuing. The country gender focal points will play a key role in coordinating each country's efforts with the regional office.

Expected outputs

1. countries in the region have mapped gender-differentiated statistical indicators used at country level and available sex-disaggregated data on agriculture and rural development;
2. a regional roadmap on improving national agriculture and food statistics, with particular emphasis on sex-disaggregated data, for NENA countries;
3. technical support provided to national statistics organizations and agriculture ministries to produce gender-disaggregated statistics and incorporate gender indicators in national surveys and censuses, including the national agriculture census;
4. improved capacity of regional and national stakeholders to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data for policy formulation, and support coordination among institutions producing data at country levels, through a regional workshop.

Focus area 6: **Gender and water governance**

Over half of the region's rural poor population live in water-scarce countries and do not have access to safe and reliable supplies of water for productive and domestic use. Women are significantly affected by water scarcity due to their role in managing both domestic and productive water use. There is a need for legal and regulatory frameworks as well as institutional arrangements that enable the integration of gender-sensitive approaches to water resource management and decision making at different levels: national, local and regional governments. Basin, river, marine and aquifer organizations all need to enable participatory decision-making and water resources management processes across sectors using gender analysis. An intersectoral analysis of transboundary water governance that includes gender mainstreaming and adaptation strategies has the potential to be truly transformative. Across the

region, awareness raising and advocacy is needed to ensure that gender equality is considered as a key issue in the water governance debate. There is a pressing need to identify women's roles and constraints in irrigation and agricultural development and management in the context of climate change, to analyse their priority needs, and raise awareness of the major challenges facing women and men as regards water resource management and climate change adaptation and mitigation. The aim is to generate realistic recommendations for reducing or eliminating barriers to women's engagement in sustainable water resource management, environmental protection and climate change resilience.

Intended results

In addressing water scarcity, practitioners must on the one hand, succeed in empowering women and mainstreaming gender within water management, agriculture and climate change adaptation, and on the other, succeed in improving water productivity. The lack of suitable capacity, skills and experience, and limited opportunities and time for working on these sectors remain among the most important challenges for women's participation in water and agriculture development, and climate change adaptation. The most critical points to consider for the Near East and North Africa are: 1) women's challenges in water, agriculture and climate change adaptation; 2) water governance, irrigation system expansion and extension services; 3) gender mainstreaming in water governance and adaptation; and 4) women's participation and empowerment in water governance and climate change adaptation.

Implementation roles and responsibilities

This work will be the responsibility of the different country offices coordinated by RNE through the manager of the Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity with technical support from the Regional Gender Officer. The country gender focal points will play a key role in coordinating the country efforts with the regional office.

Expected outputs

1. complete country assessments on Gender and Water Governance, Management and Use in North Africa and the Middle East;
2. assist countries in developing national water accounting systems with sex-disaggregated indicators;
3. work with water user associations in selected countries to identify and address constraints to women's participation and leadership, and boost women's capacities to enable them to participate effectively in governance mechanisms;
4. build the capacities of partners and governments to conduct gender analyses in water interventions, take into account gender dimensions in the adoption of on-farm practices and technologies, and promote gender equitable water governance and decision making;
5. promote the uptake of water-saving techniques and technologies among female farmers through training;
6. establish a regional professional network inclusive of men and women.

Focus area 7: **Gender mainstreaming**

In line with FAO Gender Equality Policy and within agricultural strategies and action plans, gender mainstreaming will be guaranteed in the CPFs, TCPs and other programmes and projects using available tools and methods. Moreover, TCPs and trust fund projects will incorporate the financial and operational requirements of gender mainstreaming for countries where it has been identified as a priority.

Expected outputs

1. country Gender Assessments as a basis for the production of CPFs;
2. gender is mainstreamed in the CPFs;
3. gender capacity building of GFPs and technical staff at the country level.

Implementation roles and responsibilities

The Regional Gender Officer will provide the support necessary for producing the CGAs. The CPF Officer will track gender mainstreaming in CPFs in consultation with the Regional Gender Officer.



V. Monitoring and evaluation

Work on developing a detailed M&E plan for the Near East Regional Gender Equality Strategy is essential to ensure that the Strategy for the period 2017-2020 is implemented smoothly. This important step will serve to: 1) make gender-specific data available to be used when formulating projects, programmes and strategies; 2) monitor gender-related requirements in programming in the region and ensure they will be fully met; 3) contribute to the effectiveness of programme implementation in terms of ensuring gender mainstreaming and equality; 4) provide some experience and lessons learned from the Near East context; and 5) evaluate how gender mainstreaming has been integrated in projects, programmes and strategies and its impact on the different groups. This will also contribute to addressing some gender challenges in the region and ensuring that women benefit - given the rapid changing geo-political and socio-economic contexts in the region - from development initiatives, which contribute to improving the wellbeing of whole communities.

The M&E process will be nested within the overall FAO M&E strategy and will also draw on and be consistent with the SPs indicators listed in their reporting requirements for the SP Annual Reports.

The aim will be to monitor the implementation of the strategy objectives in terms of:

1. supporting the consultation and participation of women, men, girls and boys proportionately in designing, implementing and benefitting from interventions, and ensuring the absence of barriers to their participation.
2. monitoring women's empowerment indicators at the individual, household and community levels.
3. ensuring that gender relationships are properly analysed, and measuring the impact of intervention projects and programmes during the evaluation.
4. ensuring that there is an adequate number of women and men responsible for implementing and managing projects and programmes.

RNE will work in collaboration with the M&E focal point to improve the ability of both institutional M&E systems and programme M&E to support technical work in the focus areas and guide institutional strategizing. RNE will follow the reporting standards developed by headquarters and ensure adequate and quality reporting. The Country Offices will be responsible for reporting through the regional office where the gender officer will support the tracking of results.

The programme-level M&E system (M&E to monitor, track and evaluate how well programmes have served women and contributed to gender objectives) will aim to extend the percentage of programmes that conduct gender-sensitive M&E and to improve the quality of gender-sensitive M&E. This will be done primarily by programme staff and those involved in programme design, M&E and reporting, under the leadership of the FAOR and with the collaboration of the GFP. The FAORs will be responsible for ensuring that the relevant programmes include a gender assessment and discussion of gender in the design and implementation plan, that the TORs for evaluation teams include gender expertise, and that evaluations explicitly discuss gender results. The Regional Gender Officer will provide the technical backstopping for this work.

VI. Summary of the gender focus areas

Focus Area	Outputs	Responsibility	Date
Gender and Resilience to Conflict and Crisis	Support governments in crisis-affected countries to formulate gender-equitable food security and agriculture programmes and policies	RNE technical Officers / Country Offices / Gender Officer	2017-2020
	Gendered analysis of the impact of conflict on rural livelihoods		2017-2020
	Support food security and nutrition among men and women in conflict-affected areas		2017-2020
Gender-sensitive Value Chain Development	Gender-sensitive agri-food value chain assessments	RNE Country Offices / Gender Officer	2017-2018
	Capacities built at regional level and knowledge sharing on gender equitable value chain development		2017-2018
	Support for gender-equitable value chain development in select chains		2017-2020
	Support governments to establish an institutional and policy environment that promotes decent work for rural and migrant women, addressing gender discrimination, occupational health and safety, and minimum wages in particular		2018-2020
	Recommendation on country-specific legal and policy reforms to ensure equitable land laws and guarantee women's right to land		2018-2020
Social Protection	Facilitate South-South cooperation to exchange experiences with countries implementing successful social protection programmes for rural women	RNE Country Offices / Gender Officer / Social Protection Focal Point	2018-2020
	Increased awareness and understanding of essential social protection measures for rural women among policy makers and practitioners		2017-2018
	Design country-specific social protection interventions that promote human capital development and the economic empowerment of poor rural women		2019-2020

Focus Area	Outputs	Responsibility	Date
Strengthening Rural Institutions	Support mechanisms that build social capital among female entrepreneurs such as cooperatives, self-help groups and rural women's business associations	RNE Country Offices / Gender Officer / Small-Scale Family Farming Regional Initiative	2017-2020
	Technical assistance provided in promoting gender-sensitive agricultural extension services, including the selection and training female extension agents		2017-2020
	Strengthened collaboration with rural organizations conducting research on agriculture practices and labour saving technologies that can benefit female farmers		2017-2020
	Capacity development and awareness building for rural institutions and farmers on participatory and gender-balanced decision making		2018-2020
	Mapping availability of sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators at country level		2017-2018
Gender and Statistics	Regional roadmap on improving national agriculture and food statistics	RNE Country Offices / Gender Officer / Statistics Officer	2017-2018
	Technical support for governments to integrate gender into national surveys and censuses, including the use of AQUASTAT gender-sensitive data collection methods		2017-2018
	Capacity building of stakeholders in the use of sex-disaggregated data for rural policy formulation		2017-2020
Gender and Water Governance	Country assessments and gender analysis on water governance, management and use	RNE technical Officers / Gender Officer / Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity	2017-2018
	Assistance with developing national water accounting systems using sex-disaggregated indicators		2017-2018
	Increasing effective women's participation in water user associations		2018-2019
	Capacity building among partners and governments to conduct gender analysis and ensure gender-sensitive interventions for the sustainable management of water		2018-2019
	Training of male and female farmers on laboursaving techniques and technologies		2018-2019
Gender Mainstreaming	Establishment of a regional professional network inclusive of men and women	RNE Country Offices / CPF Officer / Gender Officer	2019-2020
	Country Gender Assessments as a basis for the production of CPFs		2017-2020
	Gender is mainstreamed into CPFs		2017-2020
	Gender capacity building of GFPs and technical staff at regional and country levels		2018-2019

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