

III. REGIONAL PRIORITIES

16. The FAO is committed to addressing gender inequalities throughout its work. In 2015, nearly 44 percent of all approved FAO Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs) in the region addressed gender concerns to some extent. Almost 35 percent of these TCPs explicitly addressed gender equality concerns in the process of their implementation.⁵ However, there is a need to ensure more effective gender mainstreaming within the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) approved in the region, and to guarantee that the appraisal process for both TCPs and GCPs integrates a Gender Marker.
17. Significantly, the Regional gender strategy can serve as a tool for reinforcing the FAO's commitment to addressing gender equality concerns across all of its areas of technical expertise and within its mandate in the region, as well as for maximizing FAO's efforts in this area. The overall objective of this strategy for FAO is to contribute to (i) the achievement of gender equality, (ii) the empowerment of rural women for poverty reduction and (iii) improved food security and nutrition.
18. This can be achieved by: involving both policy and grass-roots approaches; providing policy recommendations and support; enhancing capacity development; strengthening partnerships in FAO countries in the region; assisting local rural communities; and empowering rural women.
19. The agreed main priorities for FAO's work in promoting gender equality in Europe and Central Asia are as follows⁶:
 1. Empowerment of rural women through income diversification and increased participation in decision-making processes – by initiating and implementing specific projects that meet strategic and practical needs of rural women, improve rural livelihoods and empower rural women economically.
 2. Support to the generation of gender statistics for formulation and implementation of evidence-based agricultural policies and strategies – (i) by strengthening the capacities of Member Countries to develop, analyze and use sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data for evidence-based policy analysis, planning and evaluation; and (ii) by providing technical support to in-country data collection activities, such as agricultural censuses and surveys, in order to promote the mainstreaming of gender issues in statistics.
 3. Gender-sensitive FAO technical assistance – (i) by fostering an enabling environment for the empowerment of rural women to attain food security and poverty reduction goals in agriculture and rural development in Europe and Central Asia; (ii) by raising key stakeholders' awareness of the need for mainstreaming gender concerns into respective policies; and (iii) by promoting policy instruments, such as "gender budgeting", to develop inclusive and gender-sensitive policies, organizational structures that are favourable and conducive to gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture, food security and the rural sector.

⁵ Both figures as of March 2015.

⁶ These priorities have been discussed and agreed at the ESP/REU organized Regional meeting of GFs, 26-27 March 2015, Budapest.

IV. MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

20. Based on the three major priorities for gender-related work in the region, FAO's main areas of action, in line with the FAO's Strategic Framework and FAO Policy on Gender Equality and its minimum standards, are as follows:
- **Capacity development and awareness raising** of FAO technical staff, and also national partners, clients and stakeholders, especially at decision-making level in the ministries of agriculture, agricultural extension services, rural communities and other related institutions, to enhance their skills and engagement in gender-sensitive planning.
 - **Knowledge generation, advocacy and communication** by identifying good practice ("know-how") in FAO's work in the region for enhanced and effective communication with key partners and stakeholders from civil society organizations, UN counterparts and other international and national agencies; by enhancing communication with national institutions from rural areas on the importance of addressing gender inequalities; and by producing and disseminating Country Gender Assessments (CGA), learning materials and country case studies to improve the visibility of women's roles in all sub-sectors of agriculture and rural development, as well as in food security and nutrition.
 - **Projects targeting rural women's economic empowerment** through income generation, diversification of activities and improving access to markets.
 - **Mainstreaming gender equality** within agricultural strategies and action plans. Gender mainstreaming will be ensured in the CPFs, TCPs and other programmes and projects (including, GEF, UNJPs and trust fund projects (OSRO, GCPs)). Furthermore, all TCPs and trust fund projects will incorporate the financial and operational requirements of gender mainstreaming.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING WILL BE ACHIEVED WHEN:

1. *All FAO interventions address gender concerns which are reflected through the assignment of a gender marker;*
 2. *There are specific projects and activities that directly support women's economic empowerment in agriculture and rural development across all FAO technical areas;*
 3. *Situation analyses of CPFs, regional and country level initiatives and projects integrate analysis of gender issues in rural development;*
 4. *Needs assessments of FAO interventions consult with both women and men stakeholders and target beneficiaries;*
 5. *All staff and consultants in programmatic work are familiar with gender-sensitive project implementation approaches and are equipped with the relevant skills via capacity development;*
 6. *Project implementers, partners and task forces are trained on gender-sensitive project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;*
 7. *All data collected through monitoring are sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators are used wherever possible (in for example, the monitoring of changes in time use before and after the intervention and the identification of changes in women's access to extension services before and after the intervention);*
 8. *All mobilization processes of farmers and stakeholders integrate proactive measures to ensure that both women and men are actively involved in FAO activities, and have access to decision-making, information, knowledge and opportunities within FAO projects;*
 9. *All project reporting includes sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data and makes specific reference to gender concerns, including key issues, actions and recommendations;*
 10. *Gender specialists and experts are consulted throughout project implementation and programmatic work to support gender mainstreaming;*
 11. *Budgeting on gender-mainstreaming is forecast in every project and FAO activity, in accordance with the FAO Policy on Gender Equality.*
21. In relation to the ongoing FAO Regional Initiatives in Europe and Central Asia, the Regional strategy will consider how to address gender equality in a more strategic and coherent way. Continuing dialogue with technical officers will highlight the opportunities for, and benefits of, addressing gender inequalities and women's empowerment, and will encourage the further collection of evidence and knowledge building on value chains, food loss and cross-border trade with a gender lens, and capacity development activities. More specifically, in the Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms, there is a clear need for better coordination with Technical officers to ensure gender mainstreaming. This requires a special focus on policy formulation (macroeconomic and agricultural policies), in order to promote gender equality and improve each country's compliance with EU standards on social and gender equality issues and non-discrimination and CEDAW requirements.
22. In implementing the above areas of action, FAO will enhance its coordination with UN agencies and other key national and international stakeholders. Improved coordination and communication between the FAO Headquarters, the ESP, the regional, sub-regional and country offices will also be established.

V. TARGETS

23. The FAO aims to achieve the following targets in the Region set by the FAO corporate Gender Equality Policy:

1. **Mandatory gender equality screening** established in organizational processes for all work, programmes and knowledge products⁷. This entails the involvement of GFPs and gender expertise in the preparation of policy and program documents at an early stage of the process;
2. **Gender assessments** as a mandatory part of the project identification phase (using the concise sector- and region-specific gender mainstreaming guidelines and thematic checklists, produced by the FAO and made available in the region, to facilitate this task);
3. **Reporting, monitoring and evaluation** that is gender-sensitive and incorporates indicators developed and adopted for this purpose;
4. **Gender-sensitivity and minimum competencies** in gender analysis met by all managers and professional staff; an assessment of personal contribution towards achieving FAO's gender equality objectives included in the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) for all professional staff;
5. **Systematic tracking and reporting to FAO governing bodies** and the UN system of human and financial resources, and of normative and operational gender equality results at regional and country level;⁸
6. **Share of TCP projects** that mainstream gender concerns increased to 60 percent;
7. **Share of budgetary resources** allocated to specific interventions that target rural women increased to 30 percent, in compliance with the FAO Policy on Gender Equality.

⁷ A minimum standard of FAO' Policy on Gender Equality

⁸ A minimum standard of FAO' Policy on Gender Equality

VI. PROCESS

24. The Regional gender strategy is based on a review of the current work plans and consolidates and integrates the ongoing and future regional and country level activities to be implemented over the next biennium, 2016-2017.
25. The Regional gender strategy is formulated through a consultative process, open to GFPs, technical officers and consultants from regional, sub-regional and country offices to provide their input, views and opinions on the strategy's contents, expected outcomes, outputs and actions, alongside indicators of success.
26. The Assistant-Director General's strong support and commitment to gender mainstreaming ensured that the Regional strategy was finalized, approved at the highest level in the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and was subsequently shared with FAO staff in the Region for its implementation.

VII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

27. The roles and responsibilities for gender mainstreaming, as defined in this document, have been informed by the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and women's empowerment. This is an accountability framework for accelerating the incorporation of mainstream gender perspectives into all institutional functions of the entities of the United Nations system.⁹
28. Each technical officer (TO) and FAO Representative (FAOR) will ensure that gender issues are adequately addressed in the provision of technical assistance and when formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating agriculture and rural development policies, strategies and programmes, through existing coordination mechanisms (e.g. UN Sub-working groups), and with the support of the REU and SEC Gender teams and ESP gender experts.
29. This will require specific efforts by REU, SEC and the FAORs to mainstream gender concerns in the formulation of new CPFs and the revision of the existing ones (for example, by mandating country gender assessments, and involving civil society groups and other stakeholders representing interests of rural women in the CPF review process), as well as those of projects and programmes.
30. REU and SEC Gender teams will continue to offer their expertise in gender mainstreaming. The Gender team will also engage in gender specific projects, and the generation of knowledge and advocacy, by identifying and disseminating region-specific good practice and lessons learned for future impact assessment and scaling-up, and supporting the formulation of new gender-responsive projects and programs.
31. The implementation of the Regional gender strategy will be monitored by the REU ADG, with the assistance of the REU Gender Team and the REU M&E officer.

⁹ UNSWAP constitutes a response to ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2, which called upon the UN system to mainstream a gender perspective throughout its work. The UN-SWAP was endorsed by the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination in April 2012 and set 2017 as the target for the UN system to meet all its Performance Indicators.

ANNEX 1: ACTION PLAN FOR THE REGIONAL GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA 2016-2017

SO	Output	Milestones	Results	Responsibility	Remarks	
1	3	30105.02	Policy support and knowledge building through the Gender, Social Protection and Rural Development Network	National policies integrate gender and social protection concerns and are more sensitive to the needs of rural women; Number of policy decisions at national level that integrate gender, social protection and rural women concerns.	REU Gender team Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs)	REI1 - Empowering small holders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs)
2	3	30105.02	Improved capacities to produce and use gender statistics	Improved capability of MoA staff to identify and address gender inequalities, subsequently translated into gender-sensitive actions; Increased capacity of national statistical offices to produce gender sensitive data.	REU Gender Team SEC Gender Team Gender Focal Points (GFPs)	REI1 - Empowering small holders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs)
3	3	30105.02	Capacities built to support the development of social protection systems by producing country-based studies and by sharing best practice and building knowledge	Improved knowledge amongst key stakeholders on the links between social protection, rural development and food security; Gender-sensitive social protection policies and programs that respond to the needs of rural populations.	REU Social Protection Officer or focal point FAORs/AFAORs	REI1 - Empowering small holders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs)
4	4	40203	Fostering an enabling environment for rural women and men to attain food security and poverty reduction goals in agriculture and rural development; promoting rural entrepreneurship and exploring opportunities for off-farm activities in Central Asia (Taj, KGZ, UZB)	Recommendations on market strategies provided to national stakeholders; Fully-fledged project designed and resources mobilized that results in improved skills and products of rural women and men to engage in off-farm activities.	FAO REU/SEC Respective FAOR GFPs	RIE2 - Agri-food trade and market integration Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs)
5	6	60302.03	FAO capacities are strengthened to support more effective implementation of the CPFs	Organizational normative and operational procedures meeting the requirements of FAO corporate GE Policy are put in place; FAO programmes and interventions inclusive and effective by reflecting the needs of rural women and other disadvantaged groups.	REU Gender team SEC gender team FAO Gender Focal Points (GFPs) FAORs/AFAORs REU ADG REU and SEC monitoring officers REU and SEC Field and programming team	FAO Strategy Framework

