



Government of Sierra Leone

# **Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP)**

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**Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)**

July 2020

## Foreword by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forestry

I am heartened by the Gender in Agriculture and Nutrition (GIAN) Unit's drive to initiate action on this policy and carry it through to the necessary consultations that ultimately led to the development of this Policy. I congratulate the Unit, in particular, and the Agriculture Extension Division, in general. But I also acknowledge the unity the Ministry, as a whole, and partners all – male and female – demonstrated in this GiAP endeavour. All of this shows that gender, contrary to popular belief, is not about a small set of women or girls coming together for their causes. Gender, on the contrary, is a universal concern. I urge that we all exemplify that same level of commitment and unity in completing the implementation plan, carrying out the implementation itself, and engaging in the multiple engagements necessary for turning the Policy into a bill then, later, and act: the GiAP Law.

Now to highlight the fertile ground for cultivation that the Ministry offers. As you noted in the Policy, the National Agriculture Transformation (NAT) 2023 acknowledges the role women currently play in agriculture and can play in the transformation of the sector, hence our characterizing them and the youths as enablers for the achievement the Ministry's Priorities. This bifocal attention to women and youth, most importantly, is a reflection of HE Brig (Rtd) and the New Direction's focus in those two vulnerable groups, as given prominence in the National Development Plan (2019-2023) and targeted actions to support women and youth cross-sectorally.

I would also like to draw to your attention the fact that, as a Ministry, we propose to set up a machine ring and farm services centres nationwide, which will provide machinery and farm services for women in agriculture and enable them to transition from subsistence farmers to commercial-grade farmers. We have also encouraged agriculture projects to provide women-friendly machinery for women to wield easily on their farms to tend their crops and livestock.

Once again, I appreciate what we have all done and we all can't wait to take the next steps together, as the COVID-19 epidemic incrementally decreases in our country, We look forward to gender issues guiding the agriculture sector's transformation to bring about rice self-sufficiency, food self-sufficiency and, food and nutrition security nationwide, taking Sierra Leone to the stage of being a food exporting country once again . Thank you.

**Denis K. Vandi**

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry

Youyi Building,

Freetown

## Acknowledgements

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With the continued support of MAF leadership and staff, line Ministries, and partners we hope that the GiAP will be implemented to contribute to achieving sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security in Sierra Leone.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Agricultural Business Centre	ABC
Block Extension Supervisor	BES
Boosting Agriculture and Food Security project	BAFS
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women	CEDAW
Cooperazione Internazionale	COOPI
Digital Financial Services	DFS
District Agriculture Officer	DAO
European Union	EU
Farmer-Based Organisation	FBO
Farmer Field School	FFS
Frontline Extension Worker	FEW
Gender-Based Violence	GBV
Gender Desk Officer	GDO
Gender in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit, Extension Division	GIAN
Gender in Agriculture Policy	GiAP
Gender Inequality Index	GII
Gender Working Group	GWG
Government of Sierra Leone	GoSL
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
Implementing Partner	IP
Information Communication Technologies	ICT
Inland Valley Swamp	IVS
International Finance Commission	IFC
Microfinance Institutions	MFI
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	MAF
Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs	MSWGCA
Monitoring and Evaluation	M&E
Sierra Leone Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy	GEWE
Sierra Leone National Action Plan	SiLNAP
Sierra Leone Women Farmers' Forum	SLeWoFF
Subject Matter Specialist	SMS
Sustainable Development Goals	SDG
United Nations	UN
United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
Village Savings and Loans Associations	VSLA
Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure	VGGT
Welthungerhilfe	WHH

## Glossary of Terms

This glossary draws on definitions drawn from several key resources on gender integration in gender and agricultural work.<sup>1</sup>

**Gender:** The social category associated with being a man or a woman; in some countries, additional categories are identified. It encompasses economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities, as well as roles and responsibilities. The constellation of characteristics often changes over time and place. Distinguished **from sex, which refers to the biological categories of males and females and does not change across cultures or over time**, the concept of gender includes the recognition that the social categories of man and woman are defined in relationship to each other. We use the words “man/men” and “woman/women” to talk about gender and the words “male/female” to talk about sex.

**Gender accommodating:** refers to projects or approaches that acknowledge inequalities in gender relations and seek to develop actions that adjust to and often compensate for gender differences and inequities without addressing the underlying structures that perpetuate gender inequalities. While this approach considers the different roles and identities of women and men in the design of programs, **it does not deliberately challenge unequal relations of power**. In the process of achieving desired development objects, projects following this approach may miss opportunities for improving gender equality.

**Gender analysis:** Socio-economic methodologies that identify and interpret the consequences of gender differences and relations for achieving development objectives, as well as the implications of development interventions for changing relations of power between women and men. It describes the process of collecting sex-disaggregated data and other qualitative and quantitative information on gender issues, including access to and control over assets (tangible and intangible), as well as beliefs, practices, and legal frameworks, and analysing that data. An examination of gender disparities, differences, and relationships cannot be isolated from the broader social context. There are many methodologies available for conducting gender analyses.

**Gender aware:** deliberately or intentionally considering gender issues and anticipated gender-related outcomes during both design and implementation of policies, legislations, plans, projects and programmes.

**Gender balance:** the equal and active **participation** of women and men in all areas of **decision-making**, and in access to and control over resources and services. It is not simply about having the same number of men and women in a room, on a committee, or in the market.

**Gender blind:** refers to the absence of any proactive consideration of the larger gender environment and specific gender roles affecting program/policy beneficiaries or how objectives impact on gender.

**Gender-based constraint:** Limitations or restrictions on men’s or women’s access to resources or opportunities that are based on their gender roles or responsibilities. The term encompasses **both** the measurable inequalities that are revealed by sex-disaggregated data

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., <http://ips.illinois.edu/wggp/INGENAES%20Gender%20Glossary.pdf>; <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/192862/introductorymaterials/Glossary.html>

collection and gender analysis and the processes, norms, or practices that contribute to a specific condition of gender inequality. For example, in crop production a group of farmers, both men and women, may be limited by their small size plots and being cash poor. This is a **general constraint**. Women in this area, however, face greater difficulties in obtaining additional land because they do not inherit family land equally to their brothers and as women they are legally restricted from signing for a loan. These are **gender-based constraints** because they are linked to laws or practices that are different for men and women.

**Gender-based violence (GBV):** GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between female and male. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence – sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honour killings, and widow inheritance (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women).

**Gender disparity (or inequality):** Measurable differences in the relative conditions between men and women, especially (but not only) as they relate to the ability to engage in economic or political opportunities, e.g., illiteracy rates, levels of land ownership, or access to finance (see also gender equality).

**Gender equality:** This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men and women alike. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development. (UN Women)

**Gender equality outcomes:** This refers to results that reflect a reduction in gender disparities, due to strengthened, gender-responsive systems.

**Gender equity:** Gender equity involves fairness in representation, participation, and benefits afforded to men and women. The goal is that both groups have a fair chance of having their needs met and each has equal access to opportunities for realizing their full potential as human beings.

**Gender exploitative** refers to the practice of projects that intentionally manipulate or misuse knowledge of existing gender inequalities and stereotypes in pursuit of economic outcomes. The approach reinforces unequal power in the relations between women and men and potentially deepens existing inequalities.

**Gender-focused research:** It has the primary goal of expanding knowledge about both men's and women's behaviours, values, constraints, and opportunities. It seeks to document, for example, the different types of work men and women do; areas of knowledge; patterns of time allocation; use of, control over, and ownership of diverse productive assets; and levels of participation in the community or in agricultural value chains, among other aspects of social life.

**Gender-informed research:** It uses information such as that generated by gender-focused research on gender relations, roles, and responsibilities in investigating other questions. In agricultural research, a gender-informed research question might be, ‘How can women’s access to land be expanded to increase their opportunities to grow new varieties of potatoes?’

**Gender integration (or mainstreaming):** It is the process of carefully assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s and men’s concerns and experiences integral dimensions of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender integration goes hand-in-hand with the promotion and protection of women’s human rights and the elimination of discrimination against women. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

**Gender-just/gender justice:** Gender justice entails ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the market and the state. Being gender-just requires that mainstream institutions — from justice to economic policymaking — are accountable for tackling the injustice and discrimination that keep many women poor and excluded (UNIFEM 2010).<sup>2</sup>

**Gender neutral:** No perceived need to pay attention to gender issues in design and implementation.

**Gender perspective:** Refers to a way of seeing or analysing which looks at the impact of gender on people’s opportunities, social roles, interactions and responsibilities taking. This way of seeing enables one to carry out gender analysis and subsequently to mainstream a gender perspective into any proposed programme, policy or organization (UN Women).<sup>3</sup>

**Gender-responsive:** Being aware of how gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men and women in society and designing activities and policies that are structured and operate to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality. This mean ensuring that women are among the participants and beneficiaries, whether as the extension agents hired, the farmers reached, or the scientists trained. It also means ensuring that both men and women have the appropriate training and skills to be commercial-grade women farmers, agriculture machinery operators and managers, extension agents, employees and entrepreneurs, and to support other women to do accordingly.

**Gender-responsive budgeting:** Gender-responsive budgeting does not mean creating separate budgets for women, or solely increasing spending on women’s programmes. Rather, gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**Gender-responsive research:** It means using social science methods and tools to document and analyse the different needs, priorities, and constraints of both men and women. “Research

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2010/1/gender-justice-key-to-achieving-the-millennium-development-goals>

<sup>3</sup><https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=0&page=1>



conducted under the umbrella of “gender-responsive research” is understood to yield data and analyses to assist in designing agricultural interventions that are able to meet the needs of men and women and to reduce rather than exacerbate existing gender disparities” (Rubin 2016).

**Gender-sensitivity:** Refers to the aim of understanding and taking account of the societal and cultural factors involved in gender-based exclusion and discrimination in the most diverse spheres of public and private life. It focuses mainly on instances of structural disadvantage in the positions and roles of women (Based on Šribar 2015).<sup>4</sup>

**Gender statistics:** Refers to sex-disaggregated data that reflect observed gender relations (FAO 2005: vi).

**Gender-transformative:** Where both men and women are helped while gender roles are transformed and more gender-equitable relationships are promoted. A gender-transformative approach explicitly engages both women and men to examine, question, and change those institutions and norms that reinforce gender inequalities and, through that process, achieve both economic growth and gender equality objectives.

**Sex:** Biological characteristics that distinguish **males** and **females**.

**Sex-disaggregated data:** The collection of data according to physical attributes of the individual. Disaggregating data by sex (i.e., in categories of male and female) permits valid cross-country comparison.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1218>

## Section 1: Purpose for a Gender in Agriculture Policy

### 1.1. Purpose

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL)'s leadership has prioritized agriculture as the engine of socio-economic growth. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has demonstrated that commitment in its five-year strategic plan: The National Agricultural Transformation (NAT) 2023 Programme. The Programme's vision is that

“... by 2023, agricultural production is increased by attracting and retaining large investments, and supporting smallholders to exit subsistence farming”

The NAT has four priority value chains and three cross-cutting enablers to achieve this goal:

Priority value chains:

- Rice self-sufficiency;
- Livestock development;
- Crop diversification; and
- Sustainable forestry and bio-diversity management.

The enablers to transform those value chains are to:

- - Improve the policy environment;
- - Promote women and youths in agriculture;
- - Step up private sector-led mechanisation

To achieve MAF's goal, it is necessary to ensure that all agricultural actors' needs and interests are met to enable them contribute to strengthening food and nutrition security and benefit through their participation in the sector. This requires an understanding of the different constraints and opportunities women and men, from different age groups and geographic areas, experience in the agriculture sector and then designing, implementing, and monitoring approaches that address those differential needs.

The *Sierra Leone Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP)* is a guiding document with a strategic framework for action to influence and support the integration of gender issues in agriculture policies, strategies, projects and programmes. It aligns with relevant policies and strategic priority areas while filling a gap by providing clear gender-responsive objectives, guidance on the principles of gender-responsive implementation, and accountability mechanisms to support the achievement of MAF's goals and priority action areas.

The Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP):

- Demonstrates a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment through agriculture;
- Contributes to strengthening sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security;
- Is informed by contextual evidence on the limitations or restrictions on women's and men's access to resources or opportunities, based on their gender roles or responsibilities; and
- Importantly, it forms the framework on which the twin document, the Implementation Plan, rests. Thus, both instruments should be read alongside each other.

**Vision:** All women and men in Sierra Leone have fair opportunities to thrive through their participation in agriculture, contributing to the 2023 vision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) to increase agricultural production by attracting and retaining large investments, and supporting smallholders to exit subsistence farming.

**Mission:** MAF will design, deliver and monitor approaches that ensure women and men have equitable opportunities for fulfilling their capacity and to benefit from their participation in agriculture and become empowered to make strategic choices and improve their well-being, thus contributing to sustainable and diversified production of food (crops and livestock) to ensure food sufficiency, gainful employment, and preservation of the environment.

## 1.2 Stakeholder and Partners

The Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP) serves as a guide for the Ministry and Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), and was shaped through multi-stakeholder consultation at different levels and with different types of institutions. As a Ministry document, the GiAP aims to function as as reference for all sub-sectors and all cadres within the Ministry at HQ, districts and at field level. Since MAF is charged to coordinate the agricultural sector, the document is further intended to bring a broad spectrum of partners who will similarly be guided it.

The successful implementation of the policy and the achievement of meaningful results can only be accomplished through the interplay and cooperation of key actors who were consulted in the development of the policy. They include the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs (MSWGCA), UN Women, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Non-Governmental Organizations, Farmer Representatives, among others and their support will be key in the implementation of the bill unto its enactment as law. Close collaboration will also be sought with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS), Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment (MLHE), GoSL agencies (SLeCAD, SLIEPA, SLPAC), District Authorities and Traditional Leaders, the private sector and the international development community in the process.

## 1.3. Rationale for the Gender in Agriculture Policy

### **1.3.1. GoSL's Commitment to Gender Equality**

Gender equality, the ability of men and women to have equal opportunities and life chances, is a cornerstone of sustainable development enshrined in the United Nation's (UN) *Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG)* and Sierra Leone's *National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (2010-2030)*. This goal of gender equality is also supported by non-discrimination clauses in *The Constitution of Sierra Leone*, including Arts. 6 (2) and Arts. 8 (3), which ensure citizens' freedom of discrimination regardless of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, or sex. Furthermore, in Art. 10 of the *Constitution of Sierra Leone* requires the respect for international laws and obligations. Among these are the GoSL's 1988 ratification of the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)*. The forthcoming *Sierra Leone Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Policy*, spearheaded by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA), in collaboration with UNFPA and UN Women, also champions the ideals of

gender equality. The forthcoming second generation of the *Sierra Leone National Action Plan* (SiLNAP) on women, peace and security also support principles of gender equality. Gender equality and women’s empowerment were major features in the *Agenda for Prosperity* as they are in the *New Direction* Strategy.

### **1.3.2. GoSL’s Commitment to Agriculture**

*The Constitution of Sierra Leone*, under Art. 7 (1) calls for “proper and adequate emphasis on agriculture in all its aspects so as to ensure self-sufficiency in food production.” The GoSL is committed to supporting the agriculture sector, which accounts for nearly 60 percent of GDP (World Bank 2016) to enable it become an engine for socio-economic growth. This work is supported through the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), which is mandated to support sustainable and diversified production of food (crops and livestock) to ensure food sufficiency, gainful employment, and preservation of the environment. Thus, the Ministry’s National Agriculture Transformation programme (NAT 2023) responds to this responsibility in its choice of priority value chains and enablers.

### **1.3.3. Addressing Gender Issues in Agriculture Supports Sustainable Economic Growth, Food and Nutrition Security, and Women’s Empowerment**

As outlined in *The Sierra Leone Gender Policy in Agriculture* (GiAP) strategic framework for action, gender-responsive agricultural policies, strategies, and programmes that support fairness in representation, participation, and benefits afforded to women and men contributes to the GoSL’s goal of agriculture being a driver of socio-economic growth. Gender-responsive policies, strategies, and programmes are aware of how gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men and women in society and are structured and operate to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality. As such, the GiAP supports MAF’s overall vision of achieving sustainable and diversified production of food (crops and livestock) to ensure food sufficiency, gainful employment, and preservation of the environment.

**Economic growth through agricultural development and gender equality are mutually supportive goals.** Evidence from across 61 countries shows a positive correlation between economic growth and women’s participation in the labour force (Tran-Nguyen 2004). In Sierra Leone, it is estimated that women contribute approximately 70 percent of the labour force in agriculture. However, practices and policies privilege men’s opportunities to acquire capital, perform certain tasks, while discriminating against women; they restrict women’s participation in commercial-grade agriculture, productivity, and benefits along value chains.

Increasing women’s access and control of productive resources and services will improve the quantity and quality of agricultural produce and products. At the production level, it is estimated that if women have equal access and control of agricultural inputs and financial services, yields would increase by 20 to 30 percent (FAO 2011). This is supported by evidence in sub-Saharan African countries that show disparities between women’s and men’s access to productive resources lead to lower returns on women’s investment in agricultural production compared to that of men’s (Doss and Morris 2000; O’Sullivan et al. 2014; UN Women et al. 2015). Disparities in women’s and men’s access to extension services also contribute to differences in the quantity and quality of agricultural products. With women making up estimated 70 percent of the agriculture labour force in Sierra Leone, partners addressing such disparities could mean significant increase in production and productivity.

Gaps in women's and men's access and control of benefits from agriculture must be narrowed to ensure the sustainability and growth of agricultural supply chains. The work of women in agriculture is often undervalued. At the household level, women contribute significantly to agriculture production and household work, but social norms often restrict their access and control over resources and income. Discriminatory practices also extend to enterprises, where women are not given equal pay, as men, for the same work. Qualified women are often overlooked for higher paying jobs or promotion, because such jobs are perceived as inappropriate for women. If women have greater control of benefits, if they are compensated fairly for their labour and have opportunities to earn more through higher paying jobs, that state of being would increase women's incentives to invest their own time, labour, and resources in agricultural activities. All of this will be more sustainable growth of agricultural supply chains.

Reducing disparities in women's and men's access to productive resources, services, and control of benefits in agriculture supports food and nutrition security can be achieved through two different pathways. Firstly, by increasing women's access to productive resources, including gender-responsive technologies, which will improve productivity and incentives for investing in agriculture. This can lead to improvements in self-sufficiency in food production. Secondly, increasing women's access and control of resources, including income, also will also strengthen household food and nutrition security, because a greater portion of income is spent on food (Quisumbing 2003; Doss 2006).

By increasing their decision-making power over resources, mobility, and income, women will be empowered to make strategic choices that can enhance their performance in agriculture and improve their well-being. This includes increasing productivity, quality of products, and investing in agri-business. If women have greater decision-making power over income and access to other assets (e.g., information, social networks), they would be enabled to invest meaningfully in agri-business. It can enable them to make decisions to purchase or rent higher quality inputs, agricultural technologies, workspace, and hire labour. Women producers may also choose to diversify their incomes through investment in additional agri-business at different nodes of the value chains by becoming producers and input suppliers, processors, and traders. This will, in turn, make women catalysts for agribusiness development and growth.

#### 1.4. Situational Analysis

##### **Overview of Gender Issues in the Agriculture in Sierra Leone**

The agriculture sector in Sierra Leone is primarily small-scale and contributes to nearly 60 percent of GDP (World Bank 2016). Households typically produce two cereals, one or two legumes, and five to six vegetable varieties. Usually these crops include rice, cassava, peppers, okra, cassava leaves, potato leaves, crain crain, and bananas. Crop sales account for the majority of income for rural households in most districts.

As discussed earlier, the agriculture sector employs the majority of the population, with women making up a large portion of that labour force. This includes participating as producers, often managing land owned by someone else, labourers on household and group plots, wage workers, micro-entrepreneurs, small-scale traders, processors, and input suppliers. A greater percentage of older women and men between ages 35 and 49 are employed in agriculture than those between 15 and 29 (ISL and ICF 2014). Women's and men's roles and responsibilities within the agriculture sector vary across different agricultural value chains. These roles and

responsibilities are mediated by social norms about the appropriateness of women or men to do certain tasks.

Disparities in women's and men's access to and control of productive resources and access to services also affect their opportunities and incentives to participate in different facets of the agriculture sector. Many contributors to these gaps are linked to social norms about appropriate roles and responsibilities for women and men in their households and communities.

Recent gender assessments in Sierra Leone identify key limitations or restrictions on men's or women's access to resources or opportunities that are based on their gender role or responsibility that must be addressed to enable the agriculture sector to become an engine for socio-economic growth (Nordehn and Turay 2018, EU 2016). Designing and implementing strategies, policies, and programs responsive to these challenges support the mission of MAF and its four (4) key value chain priorities and three (3) enablers in the National Agricultural Transformation Plan.

*The Gender Agriculture Policy's* (GIAP) Strategic Framework for Action identifies pathways to address the key gender-based constraints are highlighted below:

### **Restrictions on women's rights to land limit opportunities for supporting and expanding sustainable agricultural livelihoods**

Fewer women than men have right to land, thus affecting their opportunities to participate and benefit from agriculture. Rights to these lands are multi-faceted. This "bundle of rights" (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2017, citing Schlarger and Ostrom 1992) includes access, management, exclusion, right to transfer, and legal authority documented by a governing body. Despite existing GoSL policies, like the Devolution of Estates Act, No. 21 of 2007 and National Land Policy (2015) which aligns with the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), that support women's right to inherit land with the right to transfer land, women's "right to ownership" is low. The prevalence of customary rules of succession based on the patrilineal system in Sierra Leone limits women's land inheritance. These customary inheritance practices, while not promoted by the *National Land Policy*, are allowed under the current *The Sierra Leone Constitution*, Section 27 (4).

Importantly, inheritance practices severely limit equitable opportunities for women to participate in agriculture, especially commercialized agriculture. While women can negotiate access to land through Paramount Chiefs, the terms of use are temporary. This negates women's opportunities and incentives to invest in more permanent crops, such as tree crops. Their rights to products on rented land may also be at risk, no matter the duration of agreement. Furthermore, the terms of agreement do not give them the right to transfer land. This prevents women's use of leased land as collateral to access loans from formal financial institutions to support and expand their agricultural enterprises.

Women's limited participation in the governing bodies that determine rights to inherit and use land dulls their voice in land-use decisions. Contracts made between land custodians and foreign investors exacerbate women's already weak land-use rights in Sierra Leone. Land leased to foreign investors can restrict women's access to natural resources, such as firewood, water, and medicine which women are often responsible for collecting (Yengoh et al. 2015). Since only a few of them are part of the governing bodies managing land, women have a

reduced role and are less aware of the purpose, potential benefits, or risks these contracts have to access natural resources on which households and communities depend.

### **Few viable financing options limits both women's and men's ability to participate in and expand their agricultural livelihoods**

Both women and men find it challenging to access financial services to support their micro- and small-scale farming businesses. Loans are sought to pay for labour, inputs, land and technology, etc. Men and women tend to access loans from different types of providers, often at high interest rates. Yet, men have greater access to credit and loans from formal banks because men have greater rates of property ownership registered with local councils than women required as collateral (IFC 2014). Contracts between buyers and women-only and mixed-sex Farmer-Based Organizations (FBO) are also leveraged to secure loans from community banks and other financial institutions. However, community banks are often reluctant to give loans to men and women smallholders because such commitment determined to be too risky. Men, who tend to be responsible for marketing cash crops, are also more likely than women to take loans from buyers. Higher rates of literacy and numeracy among men also facilitate their increased access to more formal financial institutions; however, financial literacy among men is also a challenge.

Often unable to access loans through community banks and formal financial institutions, women tend to rely on informal financial options through their social networks to access loans. A 2014 International Finance Corporation (IFC) study holds that in Sierra Leone the majority of women entrepreneurs access finance for their micro- and small businesses from informal loan systems including gifts, personal savings, and 12 percent from village savings and loans associations (VSLA) (IFC 2014). In some cases, savings from VSLAs have been used as collateral by women-only FBOs to open accounts at formal financial institutions and access loans.

### **Women's limited access to affordable labour negatively affects women's productivity and options for expanding their agribusinesses.**

Labour constraints are more severe among married and single women than men producing on individual, household, and group plots. Women take on the bulk of the responsibilities in the household such as cooking, cleaning, child and elder care, and collecting fuel and water. These household responsibilities affect the amount of time and energy women can invest in agriculture both on and off the farm. Furthermore, married and single women earn and control less income than men to pay for labour to support their agricultural enterprises. Even women working in groups in which labour is exchanged among group members and individuals contribute to group savings, face challenges accessing enough cash to pay labourers. Discouraged from doing certain tasks or lacking the technical know-how, women rely on hired labour. These tasks vary across value chains, but include brushing under the trees, clearing the land, constructing heaps, etc.

Married men have greater control and decision-making over income than women. This makes it easier for men to access labour. One pathway is accessing labour is by hiring; another commonly cited among men land owners, is marriage. One of the top motivations for men to marry additional wives is to access labour to support their agricultural livelihoods (Newbury 2017). This practice reflects customary norms that view wives as husbands' property.

**Women and, to a lesser degree, men have limited access to gender-responsive technologies to overcome time and labour constraints, add value to products, and increase access to income.**

Women and men currently use labour- and time-intensive methods for producing and/or processing crops and raising livestock in both upland and lowland farming systems, including Inland Valley Swamps (IVSs). These tasks are typically performed with manual tools at different points during production and value addition. Some of these tasks including tilling, weeding, collecting water, irrigating crops, harvesting, transporting, and processing, many of which women are exclusively or jointly responsible for with men. To reduce drudgery and increase efficiency, both women and men need access to agricultural technology designed to meet specific needs. The availability and affordability of agricultural technology that reduce time and labour improve the quality, quantity, and safety of food, and ultimately increase benefits for women and men are limited. Investments have been made to increase rural communities' access to agricultural technologies, serviced to producers through Agricultural Business Centres (ABC); however, challenges with governance have limited women and men's access to operational technologies. Furthermore, women and men who rely on technology, e.g., rice milling machine, should be given equal training opportunities to operate and maintenance these technologies. There is also limited availability and provision of gender-responsive technologies such as machines or other types of equipment.

Furthermore, there is limited access to quality seed for women and men. Seed is typically accessed by women and men who are in FBOs, through the MAF. Some women and men also purchase seeds through agro-dealers. Experiencing challenges with climate variability, women and men are interested in accessing varieties with characteristics that can thrive in drought-prone environments. Differences in preferences for seeds are also commonly linked to gender roles e.g., with women preferring varieties for their taste and texture for cooking. There may also be preferences among women for varieties with better nutritional quality.

Decisions to purchase and deliver new agricultural technology (mechanical, biophysical, or methods) have not been informed by the examination of trade-offs investments in technologies that can have on different implications for groups of women and men. These trade-offs include changes in women's and men's time and labour input; impact on food availability, quality, quantity, and safety; and who benefits (income, food access) from the new technology. For example, a tractor may be provided to a community to reduce the time required to prepare the land, potentially increasing the area of land for production. Therefore, while the tractor decreases the time and labour input in land preparation, it may increase labour input for planting and harvesting. This will have different implications for women and men, depending on their roles and responsibilities.

**Extension services are not equitably reaching and benefiting women and men to improve the quantity and quality of agricultural products.**

Women have lower rates of participation in agricultural training than men. Women's time and mobility constraints, lack of awareness of activities, and discouragement from men in their households to attend Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) contribute to lower participation rates. The effectiveness of women's participation in training may also be limited, because of lower levels of education, literacy, and numeracy. Limited technical capacity among government extension



providers to address these constraints reduces women's opportunities to gain technical information and skills to increase the quantity and quality of their products.

Furthermore, often women are overlooked as clients by Block Extension Supervisors (BESs) and Frontline Extension Workers (FEWs) because they are not perceived to be main producers of certain crops. This is common among women who participate in the production and processing of cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, and cashew. Women participate actively at the production level in these value chains, often on plantations owned and managed by men. While women share responsibility for many of the tasks working alongside men, the Extension Service providers should be encouraged to provide equal opportunity for both women and men attending trainings, receive inputs or technologies. Women and men require direct access to gender-responsive extension services to boost the quality and quantity of these agricultural products.

### **Women and men are prone to different physical and psycho-social risks through participation in agricultural livelihoods.**

There are health hazards and risks that both women and men face participating in agricultural livelihoods. Operators of agricultural technologies, such as heavy and bladed machines or labourers handling chemicals are put at risk. Transporters, particularly on motorbikes, are also prone to accidents leading to injury and even death. In Sierra Leone, motor traffic accidents account for 2.25% of total deaths annually (WHO 2017). Often men are primarily responsible for these tasks, including operating large machines, applying chemicals, and transportation agricultural products. Proper equipment and training is required to minimize negative health effects. Men may also be more susceptible to violence caused by disputes over theft or damage of agricultural products.

While there is limited reported evidence of gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual harassment and assault associated with women's participation in agribusiness in Sierra Leone, it was identified as a challenge by stakeholders engaged in the agriculture sector. Evidence from other sub-Saharan African countries shows that women experience challenges with GBV through participation in agriculture, particularly as casual laborers without contracts (Henry and Adams 2018). Women across geographic contexts have reported that men abuse positions of power, such as supervisors, and coerce women into sexual relations in exchange for time off, a promotion, or reduced workloads. If women refuse their supervisors' advances they could be burdened with increased workload, wage reduction or dismissal. This experience of GBV leads to negative psychological, social consequences, and health-related consequences such as sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Women may experience similar challenges interacting with men in positions of power in agriculture value chains, including but not limited to input suppliers, extension officers, transporters, etc. Evidence from other countries shows that some men may also be at risk of GBV associated with their participation in agribusiness.

### **Human and Institutional Capacity to Address Gender-based Constraints**

Over recent years, MAF has increased its attention to gender issues, however, gender is not yet fully mainstreamed within MAF's internal policies, strategies, and approaches. The human and institutional capacity should be strengthened to adequately address the key gender-based highlighted above. There are a several key related challenges that can be addressed. Addressing

these issues will support MAF's goals including improving producers' productivity and strengthening food security.

**There are structural challenges that need to be addressed to ensure adequate budget is allocated to support gender mainstreaming in MAF.**

The Gender in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit (GIAN), created in 1997 as the Women in Agriculture and Nutrition Unit, is under the Agricultural Extension Division. The staff include a Head of Unit and Nutrition Officer at Headquarters and one Gender Desk Officer (GDO) in each of the District offices. The GIAN Unit is mandated to "increase the participation of women and youth and the integration and coordination of gender equality and nutrition issues into policies, programs, and structures of the Ministry. Thus, increasing the sector capacities to integrate gender and nutrition into policy analysis and development planning." The mandate of Extension Service Division is cross-cutting which support multiple divisions in the Ministry and, as such, GIAN is the Unit that falls under the Extension Division. Leadership at MAF Headquarters in Freetown and District offices experience challenges advocating for and acquiring sufficient resources to achieve this mandate.

**MAF staff members require additional capacity development to carry out gender-responsive approaches to improve program quality to strengthen economic and food and nutrition security outcomes.** There are currently no requirements for gender training for MAF staff, including District Agriculture Officers (DAOs), Subject Matter Specialists (SMSs), Gender Desk Officers (GDOs), SLARI researchers, Block Extension Supervisors (BESs), and Frontline Extension Workers (FEWs). This includes training on integrating gender-responsive approaches that would enable staff to support gender integration efforts.

**There are gaps in MAF's accountability mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming within MAF.** While attention to gender issues are included in some existing MAF operational plans and policies e.g., Agricultural Extension Policy, there is no MAF accountability mechanism to clarify purpose, responsibility, and accountability of staff to support gender-responsive approaches. There is also lack of attention to monitoring and reporting on gender issues e.g., consistent collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, use of gender-sensitive indicators.

**Fewer women than men hold technical, leadership, and field-based positions in MAF.** There is no quota for the percentage of MAF positions that should be held by women and men. Most of the technical leadership positions within MAF are headed by men at headquarters and at district level. Different factors contribute to these disparities in women's and men's employment in different positions within MAF. They include perception that there is not a sufficient number of qualified women for certain positions because women are less-interested in studying agriculture than men. Women and men should be giving equal opportunities to work in districts away from their families.

## Section 2: Gender in Agriculture Policy Framework

### 2.1. Vision and Mission

#### **Vision**

Ensure that all women and men in Sierra Leone have fair opportunities to thrive through their participation in agriculture, contributing to the 2023 vision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) to increase agricultural production and productivity by attracting and retaining large investments, and supporting smallholders to exit subsistence farming.

#### **Mission**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will design, deliver and monitor approaches that ensure women and men have equitable opportunities to be reached and benefit from their participation in agriculture, as well as become empowered to make strategic choices to enhance their performance in agriculture and improve their well-being, which contributes to sustainable and diversified production of food (crops and livestock) to ensure food sufficiency, gainful employment, and preservation of the environment.

### 2.2. Goals

The GiAP ultimately aims to contribute to MAF's mission to triple food production through attracting and retaining large agro-investments and supporting farming households to exit subsistence by 2023. It also aims to contribute to the four key value chain priorities and three cross-cutting enablers, in particular: "Promote women and youths in agriculture" and the three (3) overarching Gender Equality in Agriculture Goals geared towards supporting the achievement of MAF's goals and strategic priority action areas.

#### **Gender Equality in Agriculture Goal 1:**

Increased opportunities for women's and men's participation in the agriculture sector that do not reinforce existing gender inequalities

#### **Gender Equality in Agriculture Goal 2:**

Increased benefits and incentives for women's and men's participation in the agriculture sector

#### **Gender Equality in Agriculture Goal 3:**

Increased empowerment of women to make strategic choices to enhance their performance in agriculture and improve their well-being

These goals can be achieved through the following gender-responsive and gender-transformative objectives, further elaborated in Section 2.3.

#### **Institutional Level**

Objective 1. To develop MAF's technical competencies to support gender-responsive policy, strategy program design, budgeting implementation, monitoring and reporting

Objective 2. To integrate attention to gender issues into the design, budgeting, and implementation of policies, strategies, and program activities, and in MAF's monitoring and reporting mechanisms

Objective 3. To support coordination among MAF and partner institutions to implement gender-responsive policies and programs

Objective 4. To increase opportunities for women's employment and career advancement within MAF

Objective 5. To develop and adhere to accountability mechanisms that mitigate and reduce incidence of GBV including sexual harassment in the workspace

### **Programmatic Level**

Objective 6. To promote women's and men's access to information, technical knowledge, and application of knowledge gained through gender-responsive extension services, including veterinary services, contributing to improvements in productivity and meeting quality standards

Objective 7. To promote women and men's equitable access and control of gender-responsive productive resources, enabling more people to contribute to economic growth through the agriculture sector and increase productivity

Objective 8. To boost women and men's decision-making over benefits from participating in agriculture, increasing incentives for gender investment in agri-businesses to support sustainable economic growth

Objective 9. To mitigate the incidence of GBV, including sexual harassment in the agriculture sector

## **2.3. Strategic Framework for Action**

### **Sierra Leone Gender in Agriculture Policy Objectives and Commitments**

The *Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP)* objectives in the strategic framework for action support the principles the goal of gender equality. The GiAP is two-pronged, with objectives at the *Institutional* and *Programmatic* levels. These two levels reinforce each other and must be given equal attention to achieve the GiAP objectives. The policy is informed by evidence of gender gaps in agriculture in Sierra Leone (See Section 1). These gaps must be narrowed and eventually closed to ensure agriculture is a sustainable driver of economic growth and to strengthen food and nutrition security. Achievement of this will level the field to ensure all women and men have a fair chance to thrive through their participation in the agriculture sector which will spur sustainable economic growth and benefit consumers through increased availability and accessibility of safe and nutritious foods.

To achieve these goals, the gender-responsive and gender-transformative objectives of the GiAP Policy must be implemented. Gender-responsive objectives are standards that MAF commits to achieve the vision, mission, and goals of this policy.

## Institutional Level Objectives

The institutional level objectives support gender-mainstreaming at the MAF. This involves taking account of gender implications in all programs, policies, and resource allocations and addressing inequalities in organizational procedures and administrative and financial operations.

Objective 1. To develop MAF's technical competencies to support gender-responsive policy, strategy, program design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and reporting

The capacity of MAF staff to integrate attention to gender issues in their work is uneven across all staff, because of differences in prior work experience, opportunities and interest to attend gender-focused trainings. Overall, MAF staff members' competencies on gender issues in agriculture are limited. Therefore, to achieve the objectives of this policy, investment in capacity development is necessary to strengthen their ability to integrate gender issues in the design, delivery, monitoring, and reporting on policies, strategies, and programme.

MAF commits to investing resources in capacity development, which can include, but are not limited to: short-term training, courses, and advisory or mentorship from external groups. It supports fair opportunities for women and men to receive access to these capacity development resources. These capacity development investments should:

- Developing a core set of gender competencies for all staff including gender concepts, gender analysis and gender-responsive design approaches, implementation, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation of activities. Trainings should be open to all staff to build those core gender competencies.
- Developing an additional set of competencies tailored to staff's specific job descriptions e.g., selecting or disseminating gender-responsive technologies. It is also necessary to identify and deliver trainings to develop those identified gender competencies.
- iterating such knowledge transfers to ensure that new staff or persons with new job responsibilities have the opportunity to develop their core set of gender competencies and additional gender competencies to effectively perform their new job responsibilities.

Objective 2. To integrate attention to gender issues into the design, budgeting, and implementation of the Ministry's and the agriculture sector's policies, strategies, projects and program activities and in monitoring and reporting mechanisms, which is not the case currently.

MAF has committed to developing protocols to ensure that gender issues are integrated accordingly, and to develop guides for gender-responsive policies, strategies and programme designs, including using gender analysis and implementation. To this end, it plans:

- To design gender-responsive policies, strategies, and programming. MAF staff must understand how gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men and women in society and design activities and policies that are structured, and operate to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality. This requires conducting a gender analysis to understand the gendered needs, preferences, and constraints to ensure that both women and men are reached through programme activities and have fair opportunity to participate, enhance performance of their crops, and benefit. Gender

analysis should be integrated into other assessments, including vulnerability assessments, value chain assessments, etc.

- To develop gender-responsive budgets policies, strategies, and programmes. Gender-responsive budgeting does not mean creating separate budgets for women or solely increasing spending on women’s programmes. Rather, gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- To implement gender-responsive programming – for which staff need the skills to understand and support women and men farmers, extension agents, employees, and entrepreneurs. This can be developed through Objective 1 of the Policy.

Currently, mechanisms are not in place to consistently ensure that gender is integrated into monitoring systems and reporting. Although some sex-disaggregated data are collected sometimes, it is not manly the case. There is also a lack of gender indicators, which measure changes in specific conditions of men and women or on the level of disparity between them. To ensure that targets are met to reach and benefit women and men and empower women, it is necessary to integrate attention to gender issues within MAF’s monitoring and reporting mechanisms. This can be used not only to evaluate existing programming but provide evidence to inform future policy and program design.

MAF commits to supporting gender-sensitive monitoring and reporting mechanisms, through:

- The development or revision of existing tools to enable staff to contribute to either the collection, monitoring, analysis, and reporting of evidence on changes linked to the policy’s Gender Equality Goals 1, 2, and 3. This should include a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Framework for the Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP). This framework should include:
  - ✓ Gender Equality Goals
  - ✓ Objectives
  - ✓ Outcomes
  - ✓ Outputs
  - ✓ Frequency of Monitoring
  - ✓ Source of Data
  - ✓ Responsible Agencies
  - ✓ Budget
- Development of gender-sensitive indicators used by all of MAF’s Divisions. These should be linked to the gender equality goals of the GiAP.
- Collection of sex-disaggregated data, which is the collection of data according to physical attributes of the individual. Disaggregating data by sex (i.e., in categories of males and females)
- Collection of age-related data to understand differences between youth (women and men) and older adults (women and men)
- Annual analysis of progress toward achieving goals in the GiAP monitoring and evaluation framework

Objective 3. To support coordination among MAF and partner institutions to implement gender-responsive policies, strategies, projects and programmes

MAF supports the development of a Gender Working Group (GWG), which is responsible for coordinating with partner institutions to promote the delivery of gender-responsive services in agriculture. This GWG is a voluntary group of stakeholders from MAF and outside organizations, including implementing partners. The initial aim of the GWG is to support the development and implementation of the policy. The GWG will communicate regularly among members on activities and progress. The head of the GIAN Unit will then report to the Director of Extension who then reports to the leadership on initiatives of the GWG. The GWG provides opportunities to support activities which could include, but are not limited to:

- Exchanging information and resources that support and promote the development and implementation of gender-responsive policies, strategies, projects and programs.
- Advocating for the revision of discriminatory policies or procedures which create barriers to women's or men's participation, ability to improve performance, or benefits in the agriculture sector. These policies and procedures are linked to:
  - Barriers to participation in agriculture such as discriminatory land/property rights policies, regulations for starting a business, discriminatory hiring practices;
  - Barriers to enhancing performance in agriculture such as discriminatory education or training practices or policies, association or cooperative member criteria that limit women's participation, practices or policies that limit women's access to financial services;
  - Barriers to access benefits such as, opportunities for capacity development, access to fair terms of employment, job protection, and access to equal pay for equal work.
- Advocating for infrastructure, such as rural electrification, water (for domestic and agriculture), phone service provision in rural areas, which can increase the opportunities of both women and men to participate in, enhance performance, and benefit from agriculture and become catalysts for agribusiness development and growth.

Objective 4. To increase opportunities for women and men's employment and career advancement within MAF

Gender balance in leadership positions, technical positions including headquarters and field-based positions is linked to recruitment and hiring practices and supporting a workplace environment that ensures all staff feel safe, regardless of sex or age and are able to contribute meaningfully. Promoting equitable opportunities for professional development and career advancement also supports gender balance.

MAF commits to reviewing and standardizing recruitment, hiring and professional development opportunities to ensure women and men have equitable opportunities for hiring and advancement. Strategies can be taken, including:

- Identifying and setting targets for hiring of women and men at all levels of the organization.
- Developing an internal hiring monitoring system, which includes key demographic information including sex and age
- Requiring reporting on targets annually
- Ensuring standard rating criteria are used for rating and selecting applicants.

- Training persons responsible for hiring to use standard rating criteria

MAF has committed also promoting coordination with other stakeholder organizations to increase young women's and men's interests, enrolment, and completion of degrees in agriculture. This needs to begin at early stages of education. Incentives for enrolment, such as financial aid, constitute an effective strategy that can be taken. Women may also benefit from women role models in their fields of study, who can communicate the benefits of participating in agriculture and also serve as mentors for women once they have entered the field. This can reduce feelings of isolation women may experience, in fields were men dominate, like agriculture. Similar strategies can be used to attract young men to study agriculture.

Objective 5. To develop and adhere to accountability mechanisms that mitigate and reduce the incidence of GBV and sexual harassment in the workspace

Women in particular face challenges with sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual harassment in the workspace. (The workspace includes places where work is being conducted either in an office setting or not.). The development of an accountability mechanism, which includes options for safe reporting and enforcement of consequences for perpetrators of GBV including sexual harassment could reduce incidence if consequences are enforced and provide safe mechanism for reporting.

MAF commits to developing stand-alone accountability mechanism to mitigate the incidence of GBV and sexual harassment in the workspace for MAF staff and its beneficiaries/clients. To be most effective, this guidance will include:

- Procedural guidance on reporting with clear guidance on who to report incidents to;
- What constitutes appropriate action; and
- What measures are in place to protect the anonymity of the person reporting the incident.

### **Programmatic Level Objectives**

The programmatic level objectives support a gender mainstreaming approach in MAF. These objectives outline strategies and commitments for delivering gender-responsive or gender-transformative activities to increase productivity, opportunities for women and men to grow their agri-businesses, benefit from their participation in agriculture, and empower women. MAF commits to ensuring that activities designed to support these objectives will be implemented across all the Divisions of MAF, not exclusively through the Gender in Agriculture and Nutrition (GIAN) Unit, Extension Division.

Objective 6. To promote women's and men's access to information, technical knowledge, and application of knowledge gained through gender-responsive extension services, including veterinary services contributing to improvements in productivity and quality

Women and men have different needs, preferences, and constraints which limit their access to and application of information and knowledge delivered through extension and veterinary services. Woman and men can also demonstrate different vulnerabilities to external trends and shocks affecting their livelihood. MAF commits to designing and delivering gender-responsive extension and veterinary services to ensure that women and men have equitable access to information and technical knowledge that enables them to gain the skills and connections to



other service providers to participate in and add value to their agricultural products. To achieve this objective, MAF will implement strategies that are designed to ensure that women and men have equitable opportunities to be reached and benefit from extension and veterinary services. In addition, MAF will encourage strategies for social support systems to enable women and men to respond better to natural and man-made emergencies. By providing fair opportunities for both women and men to access information and technical knowledge, it can contribute to improving and maintaining productivity and quality as well as meet quality, environmental or certification standards.

MAF's delivery of gender-responsive extension services through staff, including BESs and FEWs, must address the following principles considering both the demand for and supply of services:

- Understanding who should benefit from extension services and for what purpose. The development and maintenance of databases of women's, men's and mixed-sex FBOs can be used to capture critical information about the farmers including percentages of men and women in the groups, crops produced, land tenure security, and criteria for becoming members of the groups. It can also be used to identify men and women producing targeted crops who are not currently in groups that would also benefit from training or are interested in developing an agri-business (e.g., women and men wage workers, young women and men);
- Understanding differences in men's and women's (youth and adult) needs and interests. Design and deliver technical knowledge that is responsive to those different needs and interests;
- Designing trainings that are responsive to women's and men's roles and responsibilities on and off the farm. This will require holding trainings at times and locations that enable women to participate without conflicting with other responsibilities (e.g., cooking, child care, etc.). Accommodations such as child care may need to be made to ensure women are able to attend;
- Encouraging women's and men's attendances in trainings on crops and livestock earmarked for international, regional, or local markets or for home consumption. Although women are often not the main marketers of cash crops, they participate production and post-harvest activities. To improve the quality and quantity products and meet certification standards, it is necessary for women to gain direct access to information and develop skills for producing, processing, and even marketing cash crops;
- Targeting both women and men to participate in trainings on agri-business management, marketing, and branding products;
- Engaging the community on the need to encourage women and men to participate in trainings by explaining the wider benefits of women's participation in training to the goals of the family such as health, nutrition, and education;
- Delivering messages that are appropriate to the skill level of the trainees, understanding that women tend to have lower education, literacy, and numeracy levels than men. This will ensure women are not just nominal participants but are empowered and active learners;
- Ensuring that women and men have equitable access to other services to improve their performance in various value chains. The services include:

- Technical assistance for group registration
- Technical assistance for contracting with buyers
- Technical assistance for accessing market price information, including through use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT)
- Facilitating connection with value chain actors (inputs suppliers, buyers, processors, financial service providers)
- Delivering of information about new technologies (e.g. appropriate small and large agricultural machinery) and how to use them and inputs (See additional guidance under Objective 8)
- Linking farmers to health facilities to increase productivity (e.g., farm-related accidents, illness) and supporting equitable access for women and men to farmer health services
- Coordination of farmer-to-farmer learning exchanges e.g., successful women's group growing potato with other women's groups interested in growing potato
- Building linkages between smallholder farmers, women and men, who constitute the bulk of the agriculture sector in the country, and large-scale investors and investment.
- Coordinating with other GoSL ministries to ensure that women and men have access to courses to improve literacy and numeracy key for developing sustainable agribusinesses

Objective 7. To promote women's and men's equitable access and control of gender-responsive productive resources, enabling more people to contribute to economic growth through the agriculture sector and increase productivity

Women's and men's abilities to participate in the agriculture sector, enhance their performance through value addition, and access benefits derived from their access to productive resources such as land, labour, inputs, technologies, and financial services. This determines opportunities to become agri-entrepreneurs (producers; traders, buyers, aggregators; processors, agro-input suppliers and dealers, transporters) or wage workers, with or without contracts.

MAF commits to designing activities that consider disparities in women's and men's access to assets which enable their participation in different facets of the agricultural economy. MAF will design activities to promote women's and men's equitable access to productive resources to better enable them to secure gainful employment in the agriculture sector, including opportunities for additional or alternative income generating opportunities in the agriculture sector. For example, enabling women wage workers to access additional productive resources to start their own agri-enterprises. MAF through its activities will design activities that consider women's and men's constraints accessing and controlling resources using strategies including, but not limited to:

- a) **Financial Services:** Financial Services are critical to be able to afford productive resources. Both women and men face constraints accessing these services. Addressing women's and men's access and control of financial services requires a multi-pronged approach. To increase women's and men's access and control of financial services MAF can design activities that offer targeted financial literacy training and management for agri-entrepreneurs and wage workers; connect women and men with viable micro-finance institutions (MFIs), community banks, or establish VSLAs, and

facilitate learning exchanges between successful women and men entrepreneurs who could provide mentorship on accessing finance. There should also be continued exploration of the promise of and support for digital financial services (DFS) as an option for increasing both women's and men's access to finance. Support for women's and mixed groups to apply for grants for agri-business development can also be encouraged, ensuring both women and men in mixed groups are engaged in the business planning process and decisions.

- b) **Land Tenure Security:** To achieve the sustainable economic growth it is necessary to address gender inequalities in land tenure security. Some practical strategies for increasing women's land rights, including designing and implementing activities that:  
1. Integrate land awareness messaging into trainings with women and men on their land tenure rights; 2. Facilitate support for handling land claim disputes engaging both private and public partners such as women's solidarity groups, local NGOs, civil society organizations with legal skills; 3. Advocate for fair land registration practices to ensure women's right to land is secure and not easily disputed; 4. Monitor changes in women's access to land and act as witness for land agreements; 5. Encourage women's participation in land governance decisions; 6. Even if women who do not have ownership rights to land are not excluded from training on good agricultural practices for cash crops like coffee, cocoa, and cashew.
  
- c) **Labour and Gender-responsive Agriculture Technologies:** Women, in particular, face constraints accessing affordable labour during production, post-harvest, and marketing activities. The selection, dissemination, and training on the use of gender-responsive agriculture technologies, such as appropriate small and large agricultural machinery, can address some of the labour-based constraints women, and men, face. Criteria for selection of technologies should be based upon an assessment of technologies through qualitative research to understand the benefits and trade-offs of specific technologies for women and men along agricultural value chains, including:  
1. The potential consequences of certain technologies on women's and men's time and labour including displacing work for wage workers or increasing workloads further up the value chain; 2. The impact of technologies on food availability, access, quality, and safety and the resulting consequences or opportunities for men and women; and 3. the extent to which the technologies alters the amount or the control of the income and assets by men and/or women. After dissemination, women and men must be trained on operating and maintaining machines and other complementary equipment. This ensures safe use and sustainability of the technologies.
  
- d) **Affordable and Quality Inputs:** Increase women's and men's access to affordable and quality inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery services, etc.), including integrating gender concerns in the proposed electronic-based e-Wallet inputs system. One option is to support the dissemination of smaller packages of fertilizer, for example, with lower price points. This more affordable option would enable women with limited income to purchase the needed inputs. Seeds are typically accessed by women and men in FBOs, through MAF or agro-dealers. The selection and promotion of seeds should take into consideration women's and men's different needs and

preferences considering factors such as nutritional quality, taste preferences, soil quality and susceptibility to climate variability.

Objective 8. To boost women and men's decision making over benefits from participating in agriculture, increasing incentives for women and men's investment in agri-businesses to support sustainable economic growth

MAF will design and implement gender-transformative activities that address structural inequalities in men's and women's access to and control of benefits in agriculture. The added benefits for increasing women's access to income are clear based on existing evidence: when women have greater control of benefits like income, it increases their opportunities to enhance their performance in agriculture and improves food and nutrition security. It also creates greater incentives for women to participate and invest in agriculture, enabling them to become catalysts for agri-business development and growth. This also contributes to the sustainability of supply chains.

MAF commits to implementing activities such as engaging women and men in the same household to encourage equitable decision making within the household. This type of activity aims to: 1. Improve women's livelihoods, including increasing women's access to and control over assets; 2. Increase women's income generation opportunities and control over that income; 3. Challenge gender norms about decision making in the household; and 4. Increase awareness of gender inequalities

Objective 9. To mitigate the incidence of GBV including sexual harassment in the agriculture sector

Women are at particular risk of experiencing GBV including sexual harassment through their participation in agriculture. This challenge affects women agri-entrepreneurs and wage workers. As women's agri-business becomes more profitable, it increases their access and control of income. When this happens, women may become vulnerable to GBV from men in their households or communities, because men may perceive this as a threat to their power over women and resources. Women may also be threatened by men demanding sexual favours in exchange for goods or information. Women engaged in wage work, particularly those without formal contracts, can be coerced by male supervisors to engage in sexual activity or risk losing wages or work.

MAF commits to contributing to the mitigation and reduction of incidence of GBV, including sexual harassment in the agriculture sector. MAF will support strategies that:

- Invest in sensitizing extension staff on GBV in agriculture and providing training on monitoring incidence;
- Support the development of skills among women and men wage workers, upgrading their skills to be promoted positions where they are less vulnerable to GBV from supervisors;
- Support women's and men's access to job protection rights;
- Train communities with the goal of reducing the acceptability of GBV at home and in the workspace; and
- Improve women's and men's knowledge of and access to safe reporting procedures.

### Section 3: Implementation Framework

The implementation of the *Gender in Agriculture Policy* (GiAP) will be coordinated by the Director of Extension and monitored by the Head of GIAN Unit, with support from MAF leadership and the GWG. At District level, at least two staff members, including one Divisional Head and the Gender Desk Officer, will be responsible for implementing the policy. Implementation will not be the sole responsibility of the GDOs. MAF, with support from the Gender Working Group, will develop an Implementation Action Plan which defines roles and responsibilities among key stakeholders like the MAF leadership at headquarters and district-level, partners (implementing partners, donors), civil society and service provider organizations, private sector, finance sector, and Farmer-Based Organizations. The development of the Implementation Action Plan will be monitored by the Director of Extension, in collaboration with the Head of GIAN and with support from other actors. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Framework for the Gender in Agriculture Policy (GiAP) will be developed as outlined under Objective 2.

To ensure that activities are properly budgeted for during implementation, MAF commits to ensuring that all activity budgets are reviewed to assess whether they meet criteria for gender-sensitive budgeting. Gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of resources are carried out effectively and contribute to advancing gender equality. Staff will also be trained on developing gender-sensitive budgets as one of the core gender competencies under Objective 1 of the Policy.

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