

# APEC Compendium of Best Practices

Women in Agriculture  
and Fisheries



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Economic Cooperation

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# Executive Summary

The Asia-Pacific Region is a vibrant region that continues to experience robust economic growth. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) recognizes the importance of harnessing this growth in a period of rapid economic transformation and the emergence of the digital era.

Food security is an important contributor to sustained growth in the APEC region. APEC has economies that are both highly dependent on international markets for food supply and economies that are major food exporters. Therefore, APEC member economies' contribution to food security is important as it promotes regional as well as global food security<sup>1</sup>.

Women play a pivotal role in food security. Women are also instrumental in achieving nutrition security, generating income, improving productivity and reducing poverty along food value chains. Advancing women's economic empowerment in agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries can fuel dynamic local, regional and global economies.

Women, however, continue to face challenges limiting their advancement and constraining their access to the resources, finance, skills and knowledge, which will enable their full participation in economic development. To harness this potential, APEC Leaders encourage economies and the private sector to implement initiatives that promote women's economic empowerment and inclusion through APEC's five pillars<sup>2</sup>:

	Access to capital and assets
	Access to markets
	Skills, capacity building, and health
	Leadership, voice, and agency
	Innovation and technology

Gender inclusion is mandated in APEC. APEC Economic Leaders are committed to *'strengthen our efforts to support the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment across APEC's work'*<sup>3</sup>. APEC Ministers have directed the *'Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy to collaborate with other APEC fora to incorporate a gender perspective into APEC's work'*<sup>4</sup>.

1 [APEC, 'Statement for the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security', 2014](#)

2 [APEC, Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy, 'Strategic Plan 2019 – 2020', 2019](#)

3 [APEC Economic Leaders Meeting, 2016](#)

4 [APEC Ministers Meeting, 2014](#)

This Compendium of Best Practice prepared by the Women in Agriculture and Fisheries (WiAF) initiative<sup>5</sup> focuses on economic opportunities and challenges affecting women’s participation in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors within the APEC region. Its structure is based on APEC’s five pillars to promote women’s economic empowerment and inclusion, taken together with four key priorities of APEC Chile 2019:



	<b>Digital Society:</b> The digital age is now a reality in both developed and developing economies – making sure new technology helps create new jobs and contributes to society
	<b>Integration 4.0:</b> Globalization in a digitized world. Connectivity as means to an end – integration
	<b>Women, SMEs and Inclusive Growth:</b> Focusing on increasing the participation of women and small business in regional trade – inclusive growth
	<b>Sustainable Growth:</b> Ensuring a sustainable platform for future growth

In doing so, it will identify:

- ✓ Best practice examples and innovative policies which economies can employ to grow the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors through more effective involvement by women and girls; and
- ✓ Gaps in policies that should be addressed to give significant focus to women’s economic empowerment in these sectors.

To encourage behaviour change that in turn results in:

- ✓ A much greater focus on women and girls’ contribution in the food and agriculture supply and value chain
- ✓ An improvement in food and nutrition security through women and girls’ participation
- ✓ A contribution to the achievement of improved, sustainable livelihoods in APEC
- ✓ A recognition of the important role women and girls play in nutrition security
- ✓ The promotion of gender inclusivity in sustainable resources management.

Promoting women’s economic empowerment and inclusion	
Five Pillars	Summary
 <b>Access to Capital and Assets</b>	Through equal access to land and personal property, participation in the workforce, and financial services.  Examples of barriers include: regulatory laws and discriminatory practices; a lack of information and knowledge about lending requirements; lack of financial literacy and financial knowledge; lack of access to financial services; loan and risk rating inflexibility; same standards applying to small and large businesses and lack of access to technology.
 <b>Access to Markets</b>	Markets for labor, and for goods and services produced by women-owned enterprises.  Examples of barriers include: additional risks of theft and violence when traveling to markets; inability to travel without a male companion; inability to obtain an identity card; increased vulnerability to corruption or bribery in obtaining permits or crossing borders; broader branding and local purchase arrangements; and lack of access to information on international standards, certification requirements, or processes for opportunities in public and private-sector procurement.
 <b>Skills, Capacity Building, and Health</b>	Educationally and technically prepared for success in the workforce, in business and in entrepreneurship.  Examples of barriers include: knowledge of processes and procedures; social and cultural norms; limited access to technology; discrimination, lack of safe access or gender-based violence; poor labor conditions; time constraints; incorporation of different cultural visions; participation of both genders in decision-making processes; and biases.
 <b>Leadership, Voice, and Agency</b>	Valued as contributors, professionals, and leaders in the private, not-for-profit, and public sectors.  Examples of barriers include: access to training, complex certification rating systems; lower value of productive labour conducted by women; low participation of women in high positions; and low level of formal associativity.
 <b>Innovation and Technology</b>	Benefitting from and participating in development and implementation of scientific advances and new technologies.  Examples of barriers include: mobility and safety in accessing ICT services; cost of accessing resources; lack of awareness that ICT services could be beneficial; legal and discriminatory regulations and environments; cultural and social norms; and lack of education, skills, and capacity.

This Compendium is intended to help guide APEC decision-makers in the private, public, and development sectors as they work to: grow the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors through more effective involvement by women and girls; and address gaps in policies that should be addressed to give significant focus to women's economic empowerment in these sectors. To this end, specific actions are presented to enable key stakeholders, including policy makers, agri/aqua/fisheries businesses, and donors to deliver these solutions.



## Snapshot

- Women represent 12.8 per cent of agricultural land-holders: their plots are generally smaller and of lower quality than men's, and their rights to the land are less secure<sup>6</sup>.
- Women make up 41 per cent of the world's agricultural labour force, a ratio that rises to 49 per cent for low income economies<sup>7</sup>.
- In rural areas the gender pay gap is as high as 40 per cent. Women, when working as they often do as contributing family members and subsistence farmers, receive no income for their labour. When they are in paid employment, the tasks they undertake are often undervalued. Women are paid less than men even for the same tasks. Many rural women also do not have the same opportunity as men to obtain work that attracts higher levels of pay<sup>8</sup>.
- Across the APEC region, women's participation in rural workers' and employers' organizations remains low, leading to lack of voice and representation. By way of example, in Australia, women comprise 18 per cent of agricultural management roles and 2.3 per cent of CEO positions<sup>9</sup>.
- Women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors are at high risk of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. The increased risk is due to factors such as gender power imbalances, a lack of oversight, and working alone in relative isolation or in remote locations.
- Women are disproportionately affected by economic and financial crises. This is particularly the case where there have been decreases of expenditures on education, health care and social services.
- Women-owned or founded agri/aqua business represent only 4 per cent of investments in technology investment platforms<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> [Forbes, 'The Challenging Life of Female Farmers and why a Gender Mainstreaming is Necessary in Agriculture', by Ana Garcia Valdivia, 18 March 2019](#)

<sup>7</sup> [International Labour Organisation, 'Rural Women Need Equality Now', 15th March 2018](#)

<sup>8</sup> [International Labour Organisation, 'Rural Women at Work: Bridging the Gaps', 8th March 2018](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Diversity in Agriculture Leadership program](#)

<sup>10</sup> According to Louisa Burwood-Taylor, head of media & research at AgFunder in 2018

Women's ability to embrace technology adaptation is further constrained or cut short by lack of access to inputs such as fertiliser, and services such as credit and information. Even if women have equal access to technology, a lack of complementary knowledge or necessary inputs will restrict their ability to take full advantage of introduced technologies or techniques. The services available to women and their ability to use them are affected by social norms, cultural practices, lack of education, and lack of recognition of their triple role<sup>11</sup>.

- Women are disproportionately affected by climate change. Climate change threatens to exacerbate rural women's vulnerability to discrimination, exclusion and exploitation. Women in rural areas are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood. With climate change, women's already unequal access to productive assets is further impacted.

**Figure 1: Gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals**



## Key Findings

### Women need increased access to capital

Women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors' need improved access to finance and land. Initiatives designed to promote women's increased access to finance and land should incorporate quantified and documented impacts as an important feature. These may include: government funding of businesses, on-site [practical training to up-skill women in their chosen careers](#), and 'placed employment' after training. The provision of child support while women are undertaking education programs is an important contributing factor in the success of any initiative. Other initiatives that would contribute to women's improved access to capital include government guarantee and insurance programs (in partnership with private enterprise) and quotas for women in decision-making roles in the financial sector.

Some successful initiatives across the APEC region include: loan and risk rating flexibility (refer to Australia, where some car loans for women are at lower rates reflecting their lower level of risk); improving access to simple, interactive financial information (refer to the United States, and their United States Department of Agriculture website); and legislative change in support of gender neutral land title (refer to New Zealand's Maori Land Act 1993 that provides for gender equality in the control and use of land and resources<sup>12</sup>).

### Women need increased access to markets

Women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors need practical and feasible interventions to improve their access to markets. These interventions need to cover [all stages of engagement](#) with the marketplace including start-up, establishment and growth, and need to address both commercial and personal needs.

Simple actions such as facilitating access to local trade fairs and assisting with safe pathways to markets would have an immediate, positive impact. Other initiatives could include the application of different criteria for small versus large businesses (for example, certification), involving local governments in branding regionally produced products, and government targets for sourcing goods from locally produced products.

<sup>11</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 'Running out of time: The reduction of women's work burden in agricultural production', 2015

<sup>12</sup> Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993, s 1(1)(b)

### Skills, capacity and health of women need to be strengthened to prepare them for success in the workforce and in business

Capacity and skills building need to be considered as critical elements in the advancement of women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors. This should start at a very early age through gender-neutral children's books and access to primary and later education. [Improved financial and business literacy](#) (eg book-keeping and risk management) might be facilitated through business advisors to assist with filling out applications and developing business plans, and to [provide mentoring](#). [Linking literacy to technology](#) would generate multiple outcomes since evidence suggests this boosts economic growth and regional cooperation.

### Women must be increasingly represented in leadership roles across both public and private sectors

Women need to be visible, recognised and empowered. APEC member economies can achieve this through: supporting the increased participation of women in agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries industry organisations, the provision of [credible role models](#), through the promotion of education and networks, and by encouraging women to [acknowledge the role they play](#) is important.

### Technology and Innovation advances economic growth and could be increased through women's business enterprises and women entrepreneurs

For women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors to succeed in the modern world, equal and universal access to, and the ability to use, technology (internet, mobile phones) is essential. APEC economies should [foster innovation](#) (connecting entrepreneurial women) and encourage better business outcomes, education and information sharing. While this would revitalise the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors, it will require an increased investment in telecommunications and power infrastructure (such as broadband/communication towers) to extend coverage particularly in rural areas.

### Disaggregated and gender sensitive data collection and evaluation is needed

Sex-disaggregated data collection and gender sensitive analysis is fundamental to the provision of the [evidence for policy change and innovation](#). It could contribute greatly to recognising the value of women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) data is an important resource but it is not a substitute for the collection by economies of their own targeted data reflecting disaggregated indicators.

Any increase in costs could be addressed through sector-by-sector or by regional data collection over time thus spreading the cost burden. Incentivising Government agencies to embark on or expand data collection is also worthy of consideration.

## Key Barriers

APEC recognizes the full potential and contributions of women, but the reality is that women continue to face many barriers to full participation in various areas. These barriers include<sup>13</sup>:

- 1 **Multiple commitments.** Working women must balance paid work with family and childcare responsibilities, as well as household chores. This multiple burden means financial incentives are not enough to retain women in the workforce.
- 2 **Gender-based expectations.** What is expected of women, and what is considered inappropriate, is often narrowly defined. These expectations shape women's self-perceptions and aspirations. Women, especially in low-income communities (such as women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors), are often primarily seen as caregivers and homemakers, rather than successful employees, entrepreneurs, producers, suppliers, or distributors.
- 3 **Lack of rights and agency.** In some economies, women are not allowed to make decisions for themselves. There are cases where women are expected to relocate to their husbands' home and limit their activities to household chores. Even women who earn a significant portion of their household's total income often don't have the power to decide how to use it.
- 4 **Education and skills.** Lack of skills due to high levels of illiteracy is an issue that needs to be addressed, as well as financial illiteracy and technological illiteracy.



Barriers to promoting women's economic empowerment and inclusion in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors	
Five Pillars	Barriers
 <b>Access to Capital and Assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial literacy</li> <li>Loan and risk rating inflexibility</li> <li>Certification standards applied across small and large businesses</li> </ul>
 <b>Access to Markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to local trade fairs</li> <li>Safe routes to markets</li> <li>Branding and local purchase arrangements</li> </ul>
 <b>Skills, Capacity Building, and Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unequal rate of participation of men and women across all sectors including the private and public sectors</li> <li>Lack of strategies with gender affirmative action plans</li> <li>Inequality gaps</li> <li>Unequal rate of participation of men and women in decision-making processes</li> <li>Complex certification rating systems</li> <li>Predetermined targets (for example, fishery improvement projects)</li> <li>Lower value of productive labour undertaken by women</li> <li>Access to child care and support</li> <li>Different cultural visions</li> </ul>
 <b>Leadership, Voice, and Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to training</li> <li>Cost of participation</li> <li>Low representation of women in high positions</li> <li>Low level of formal associativity that would provide access to information</li> <li>Low acknowledgement of women themselves as industry leaders</li> </ul>
 <b>Innovation and Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to technology (mobile phones, computers and the internet)</li> <li>Access to technology infrastructure</li> </ul>

### Disaggregated and gender sensitive data collection and evaluation

The economic and social impact of women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors is a critical gap in knowledge to which APEC economies can make a considerable contribution.

Key to gaining an understanding of the economic and social impact of women is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data. Sex-disaggregated data is an essential component of gender analysis as the disaggregation of data by sex makes gender differences visible. Although the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data is often viewed as a more costly approach, this issue could be addressed through sector by sector or by regional data collection over time thus spreading the cost burden. Improvements in technology are also reducing the cost burden of the collection and analysis of survey and census data.

Another barrier in understanding the economic and social impact of women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors is in framing indicators and organising their sequence. Gender sensitive indicators that are shaped without a gender bias including: unpaid contributions; the impact of the care economy; and land ownership and use, are an important component in improving an understanding of women's impact in these sectors.

Access to gender sensitively framed, sex-disaggregated data to inform decision-making will deepen APEC economies ability to generate gender-responsive outcomes.



## Recommended Actions

### Women have increased access to capital

APEC economies could generate a significant impact for women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors by:

- Improving **access** to simple, interactive financial information, and [improving financial literacy](#) supported by [advisors and training](#), linked to technology.
- Supporting legislative changes for gender-neutral **land title** and other asset ownership.
- Increasing the number of women in **decision-making** roles in the financial sector, facilitated through schemes including: government funded, on-site, practical training to up-skill women in their chosen careers; 'placed employment' after training; quotas; and the provision of child care.
- [Creating independence](#) from government subsidies for women starting or in business.
- [Sharing and leveraging](#) the **lessons learnt** of others through networks in the same field and across APEC.

### Women have increased access to markets

APEC economies could improve women's access to markets through:

- Facilitating **safe** passage to markets and local trade fairs.
- Fostering and encouraging businesses to **start small** in domestic markets and only to build-up to larger scale and export markets when well established.
- Encouraging businesses to [produce for a market's needs](#).
- Engaging with local governments to brand regionally produced products, through encouraging the application of government targets for sourcing goods from **locally produced products**.
- Applying different standards to small versus large businesses, (for example, certification standards and criteria).
- Providing technical assistance, business advisory services, and advice or support on [branding and product development](#).

### Skills, capacity and health of women are strengthened to prepare them for success in the workforce and in business

To strengthen the skills, capacity and health of women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors, APEC economies should [invest](#) in an increase to [women's accessibility to education](#) (including the provision of **child care** linked to training) so they can better contribute to their economy in turn.

Further recommendations relating to this theme are covered across the other themes.

### Women are given opportunities to be increasingly represented in leadership roles across both public and private sectors

To support women leaders in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors, APEC economies should be encouraged to:

- Identify and acknowledge [conscious and unconscious bias](#) in management, positions of influence and senior appointments to boards and governance roles.
- Encourage education and networking to support women's aspirations in the agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- Collect [sex-disaggregated](#) data and evaluate the contribution of women and the effectiveness of gender-based interventions.

### Technology and Innovation advances economic growth through women's business enterprises and women entrepreneurs

To assist women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors in benefitting from technological and innovation advances that aid economic growth, APEC economies are encouraged to:

- Ensure female entrepreneurs have [access to Information and Communication Technologies](#) (ICT) especially community centric technology through mechanisms such as public-private partnership.
- Provide **education and training** for women such as in the use of ICT, [business management and finance](#).
- Provide financial support for female-led **ICT start-ups**.
- [Promote public platforms](#) and networks amongst female entrepreneurs in the same field/sector.
- Create public platforms to **share** women's experiences of success and failure, live demonstrations of ICT use and other information such as: crop rotation, diversification, and weather.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate **ICT infrastructure** in rural areas.

## Disaggregated and gender sensitive data collection and evaluation

APEC economies are encouraged to:

- [Collect sex-disaggregated data](#) to generate a meaningful **baseline** (on trade, industry, business, engagement) to apply to strategies that benefit women and men equally, increase the participation of women, design targeted initiatives, and/or demonstrate good practice, taking care to include under-represented groups of the population such as women in rural areas.
- Collect **sex-disaggregated impact data** (beyond attendance and participation) to help create the evidence-base needed to design [gender-responsive policies](#) and initiatives (For example by incentivising government agencies) to embark on or expand data collection.
- **Set targets** for women's participation based on sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis that reflect the unique perspectives of women in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors.
- Generate and contribute **impact evaluation data** via new ICT-enabled data collection and evaluation tools in combination with conventional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods (qualitative research that informs quantitative indicators).





# Best Practice

## Access to Capital and Assets

### Women have knowledge

#### Farm Credit Canada Women Entrepreneur Program<sup>14</sup>

**Economy:** Canada

**Cost:** CAD 500 million (to establish a sustainable loan pool – will be recovered)

**Duration:** 2019 to present



#### Empowering women through finance

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) was established in 1959 and is a self-sustaining federal crown corporation. It works with credit unions and its sister crown corporations (Business Development Bank and Export Development Canada) to address market and policy issues of mutual interest and identify opportunities for partnership.



In Canada, the agriculture and agri-food industry contributes CAD 114 billion a year to the Canadian economy and employs 1 in 8 Canadians. Canada is one of the few economies in the world that produces more food than it consumes.



Nevertheless, only 16 per cent of Canadian businesses are owned or led by women and yet studies show that by advancing women's economic participation in the economy Canada could contribute up to CAD 150 billion in GDP.



In early 2019, Canada announced the *women entrepreneurship strategy* – a CAD 2 billion investment that seeks to double the number of women-owned businesses by 2025. Through this initiative, the Federal Government has partnered with FCC to dedicate CAD 150 million over three years **investing in women agricultural entrepreneurs** through increased access to capital, events and resources specifically for women to start or grow their business. This includes a suite of products tailored to women entrepreneurs to start or grow their business through:

- increased access to capital to start or grow their business
- access to business and competency skill development for themselves and their business
- access to tools, resources, and people to learn from and be inspired

Through access to financing, value-added offerings to expand their skill set, and connections to people and organizations across the industry, Canada is helping ensure a diverse, open and forward-thinking, agriculture industry for all Canadians.

<sup>14</sup> [FCC Women Entrepreneur Program](#)

## Rural Income Diversification Project in Tuyen Quang Province<sup>15</sup>

**Economy:** Viet Nam  
**Cost:** USD 30.9 million  
**Duration:** 2002 to 2010



### Boosting microenterprise through microfinance



Tuyen Quang Province is located in the Northern Uplands Region in Viet Nam. The province is predominantly mountainous, and ethnic minority groups account for almost 52 per cent of the total population, and more than 73 per cent of all poor.



The Rural Income Diversification Project was implemented with the aim to improve the socio-economic status of poor households living in upland areas, especially ethnic minorities and women. The project worked to achieve this through increasing women's capacity for, and role in, decision-making processes; enhanced food security; promoting the diversification of rural income opportunities; and encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources. The critical change the project intended to introduce was an enhanced link between small farms and markets, as well as support to crop and livestock production, building access roads to markets and providing vocational training for rural youth. The project also endeavoured to promote microenterprises with a view to moving local production up the value chain.

As a result of the project's inputs, women's access to financial services was increased through the development of saving-credit groups, pro-poor microfinance institutions and services that increased women's income-earning capacity. The project also helped to establish institutions and build capacity for the villagers, including the decentralized commune and village development boards, savings and credit groups, and business connections with banks.

*'Poor families have actively participated as a result of the communication efforts of the project'* said Nguyen Thi Lan, head of the Women Saving and Credit Group, cum Vice Chair of the Village Development Board.

The microfinance component of the project not only **increased women's independent income-earning capacity**, but it was also a driver to boost the microenterprise component that was also successful.

A decisive factor in the success of RIDP was that the Tuyen Quang provincial government provided strong political and financial support.

## Access to Markets

### Women have technical capacity

#### Inclusive Creative Industries<sup>16</sup>

**Economy:** Peru  
**Cost:** USD 5 million  
**Duration:** 2009 to 2013



### Developing skills to increase capital

Peru has experienced sustained economic growth in the last decade, and is now considered a middle-income economy. However, Peru's growth has not generated enough jobs nor reduced poverty to the desired levels, especially in rural areas.



The *Inclusive, Creative Industries* program sought to address this gap by focussing on reducing poverty through the development of sustainable and inclusive markets for creative industries (organic agriculture, artisanship, rural community tourism and gastronomy). The strategies implemented included: working to improve the institutional environment; developing the capacity of small producers in sustainable businesses, and improving market access through the incubation of new creative industries.



The program provided a **good institutional environment for the promotion of creative industries and market access** for small producers, in particular women and indigenous communities, with strong support from the public and private sectors. Its main contribution was in developing skills and increasing access to capital generating higher incomes.

At the program's completion, counterparts and partners had products, tools, and tested methodologies for the promotion and sustainability of their creative industries.

The programs strategies have been widely adopted:

- The regional government of Cusco included the promotion of inclusive creative industries in its 2012-2021 Regional Competitiveness Plan by assigning a budget of two million Peruvian soles. Together with the provincial government of Puno, funds were provided to put together profiles of public investment projects in the creative industries.
- The Capachica (Puno) and Incahuasi (Ferreñafe) municipalities hired staff to follow the progress of the financed projects to ensure the flow of funding through the PROCOMPITE programs (Project to Strengthen Competitiveness of Rural Entrepreneurial Associations).
- Complementary funds were allocated through the Fund for Promotion of Protected Natural Areas of Peru (PROFONANPE), Rural Agricultural Production Development Program (AGRO RURAL), and TeleFood campaign.
- The Regional Government of Lambayeque committed to monitoring the 14 projects developed in the region, and the chambers of commerce of Lambayeque and Ayacucho opened a one-stop shop to formalize associations and microenterprises.

## Going Green – Urban Farming in Hanoi<sup>17</sup>

**Economy:** Viet Nam  
**Cost:** Asia Foundation and GSRD Foundation  
**Duration:** 2013 to present



### Building a community of support



In the past twenty years, Asia has experienced massive and unprecedented urban growth, and with it a host of new challenges, as swelling urban populations have increased pressure on resources such as land, food, and water. These changes have been particularly acute for Hanoi's farmers. As agricultural communes have fallen under urban administration and land has been allocated to developers, farmers have lost much or all of their land—often their only source of income. Fragmented and non-contiguous agricultural plots make collective farming more difficult, and farmers' cooperatives have dissolved or become inactive. With opportunities in nearby industrial zones limited by their age, education, and lack of transferable skills, these farmers are uniquely vulnerable to poverty and joblessness, and none more so than the middle-aged women, often supporting children and elderly parents, who make up the majority of this struggling population.

At the same time the city is expanding, there is growing concern about food security. Demand has been rising for locally available 'safe foods'—fruits and vegetables reliably free from pesticides and other toxic chemicals—but small-scale producers often don't have the means or the technical training to meet the safe food requirements or satisfy market demand.

Since July 2014, The Asia Foundation has partnered with the GSRD Foundation on *Sustainable Livelihoods*, to improve the lives of low-income farmers in Hanoi and increase food security for urbanizing areas through the cultivation and marketing of safe fruits and vegetables. The project combines training to **increase yields through sustainable methods with business development skills to build brand recognition, consumer relationships, and financial management skills.**

The Dong Tam Cooperative, in the district of Long Bien, began its transformation into a green cooperative in 2014 with support from Sustainable Livelihoods. *'We used to grow vegetables using traditional practices,'* says Mrs. Khoi, a Dong Tam farmer. *'Our yields were low, our crops were of low quality, and they were sometimes unsafe for customers due to improper use of pesticides.'* Farm incomes were low, and farm livelihoods were tenuous, as farmers mostly sold their surplus in baskets at sidewalk markets.

An impact assessment survey in May 2018 found that *Sustainable Livelihoods* had brought significant changes. Thirty-eight per cent of farm households were now cultivating at least three additional types of fruits and vegetables, and all the farmers trained in the program showed a commitment to green cultivation methods. Eighty-five per cent said their monthly income from fruits and vegetables had grown at least 30 per cent, and a Dong Tam business report showed that revenues per hectare increased by a factor of 2.6 from 2016 to 2017. The co-op had also developed a new, consumer-driven marketing strategy.

The project's work on improving market access has helped farmers develop a customer-producer trust network, essential to the long-term success of produce markets. *Sustainable Livelihoods* has also made public advocacy a priority, using workshops and local media to raise awareness of the positive social, economic, and environmental effects of safe food production within the urban boundaries of Hanoi. Most importantly, the project has supported urban farmers, the majority of whom are women, in building up a community of support and raising awareness of the need for green urban farming.



# Capacity and Skills Building

## Women are confident

### Agri-women's Development Trust (AWDT)<sup>18</sup>

**Economy:** New Zealand  
**Cost:** Self funded  
**Duration:** 2009 to present



*Helping women become confident leaders in the agriculture sector*



Men and women each make up half of the population. The problem is that 50 per cent of people in New Zealand's agriculture and fishing sectors – women – have little involvement in decision-making, from farms to the boardroom. The AWDT was founded with the aim to grow primary industries by unlocking the talent of rural women, and build on the skills they had gained in managing their businesses, careers, communities and families. To meet this need, the AWDT, with support from industry partners (including some great men) designs and delivers 'fit for purpose' and quality programs that give women the tools, confidence and know-how to lead and contribute in new ways.



Wahine Māori (Māori women) face similar challenges and could see the unique value that women bring. With the support of Māori leaders, facilitators and graduates, AWDT has connected more closely with wahine Māori to support them in their agribusiness roles. These programs are overseen by a Māori Advisory Group to guide engagement with wahine Māori and **ensure that programs are culturally relevant and meaningful.**

AWDT provides a number of programs that support and uplift women from the farm to the boardroom. For example: the 'Escalator' program aims to equip women with the tools, confidence and support to create positive change in the primary sector and rural communities; and 'It's all about YOU', helping women to discover the true value of their strengths and experiences and assist women onto a path to new possibilities and opportunities; understanding you family business. Other initiative include: workshops on understanding Māori trusts, incorporations and agribusinesses; a future focus; and research. Many of the programs are fully funded thanks to support from strategic partners. The programs are delivered primarily in rural communities throughout New Zealand.

With the right skills and support, these incredible women are helping transform farming businesses, industry organisations, Māori agribusiness and communities.

Ms Lisa Te Heu Heu, Graduate and Facilitator said: *'when I reflected, I felt there was no help, no-one who understood my situation. I have learned to say what I need to say – I have the confidence to ask the questions I needed to ask.'*

### Family Farm Team

**Economy:** Papua New Guinea  
**Cost:** USD 3 million  
**Duration:** 2015 to present



*Farms are the families business*



Poverty, food and nutrition security are domestic challenges in PNG. The majority of PNG's population live in rural areas and work as smallholder, semi-subsistence farmers producing food for their families, as well as growing the key export crops of coffee, cocoa and copra. However, most farming families do not have sustainable livelihoods. Within these families, women carry a triple burden as they provide most of the farm and family labour, care for their families, and make significant contributions to the wellbeing of their community.



The Family Farm Team research project explored these challenges and has developed and trialed a program to support smallholder families to move to a more effective and equitable planned approach to farming. Key to this approach is the concept of a gender balanced family team with agreed farm and family goals; this enables both women and men in a family to plan and work together for improved farm futures and family food and income security.

There are two complementary components in the Family Farm Team model:

- The 'family farm team' development training workshops that focus on reorienting women and men towards a gender equitable and more effective planned approach to farming as a small family business. This helps families look at the work done by women, men and youth and to work towards a more equitable and effective distribution of agricultural and household work. It assists farming families to plan and make decisions together. It encourages opportunities for women to have access to their own income and promotes the wider benefits of women having a voice within the family and community. These workshops are delivered by 'village community educators' who are trained by the program as peer educators in their own village and communities.
- The 'business of farming' activities introduce farming families to a livelihoods approach, better practice agriculture, foundational business practices and financial literacy. The activities are delivered by local PNG agencies to ensure that communities are connected to the resources available in their own region.

To promote women's empowerment, the program focuses on building women's leadership skills and roles. A program participant, Rose Koyea, from the Western Highlands said:

*'I used to be a very shy person—I never had the courage to make a speech. Today, I am leading six communities. When I call them to come, they all come. I visit everyone in the community, and I have seen changes in some families.'*

*'The seasonal calendar has really helped me. In the past I would plant different crops on my plot, and would not plant another garden until I'd harvested the first one. I now plan what to plant, and when to plant it. We always have enough food these days.'*

*'In the past my husband and I never talked about the budget, but today we are planning our budget together. The training truly changed my family to be united and happy.'*

The Family Farm Teams model has been trialed in seven diverse areas of PNG and has been shown to be a culturally appropriate and scalable approach in PNG. It has two main impact areas: gender equity changes (working as a family team) and agriculture and food security changes (practising planned farming).

## Fundación Capital - Mujer Joven Rural<sup>19</sup>

**Economy:** Colombia, Mexico and Paraguay  
**Cost:** Costs met through recurrent budget  
**Duration:** 2009 to present



### Partnering with the private sector

Fundación Capital is a social enterprise that works through alliances with governments and the private sector to develop solutions based on digital technologies that allow users train in their own time and space, and make better use of their economic opportunities.



In Latin America, even though young, rural women tend to have higher levels of education, more access to information, and are better connected and open to new technologies than their parents, they still face difficulties in accessing professional education – for example training in financial literacy. Young, rural women with the knowledge to more safely administer their financial assets, would have more profitable business activities, reduced dependence on their families, and an increased role in family decision-making processes.



The MuJeR project set out strategies to implement activities: aimed at empowerment; strengthening financial capabilities, encouraging goal setting and savings plans to reach these goals and introducing the young women to the financial system; and to promote the use of digital technologies and social media to build financial capabilities. Partnerships were also established with local financial institutions that offered products catering to the needs of young rural women, and who were invested in reaching young rural women more effectively. The goal of the project was for these financial institutions to learn the interests, needs and potential of the women in their client base and to use this knowledge to adapt their products, channels and services in order to reach them more effectively.

In Mexico, the project was originally implemented in partnership with ACREIMEX, a savings and credit cooperative interested in furthering the financial inclusion of young rural women as a way to replace its aging clientele. The objective of this partnership was to take advantage of the institution's interest in this population segment to jointly develop a strategy that could be adopted by the institution in order to ensure the sustainability and scalability of the initiative.

To date, 700 young Mexican women (ACREIMEX clients and students) have been trained. As of December 2018, ACREIMEX had granted 182 group loans to groups including young women members. All ACREIMEX clients that participated in the training began to use their previously inactive accounts and one woman who was not a client joined the cooperative. More than 80 per cent of student participants began to save as a result of the training they received and more than 11 per cent acquired a savings product as a result of the workshop. Close to 68 per cent of participants already had a savings account prior to the workshop, mainly because they received scholarships. They began using these accounts more as a result of the workshop.

## Leadership and Agency

### Women are visible, recognised and empowered

#### Women in Fisheries

**Economy:** Australia  
**Cost:** Informal  
**Duration:** 1996 to present



#### Ensuring women are visible



Approximately half of the fishing industry is composed of women, yet they earn 64 per cent of men's wages for performing the same role. Women make up 38 per cent of ocean scientists and researchers, and this figure becomes smaller for higher levels of recognition within academia<sup>20</sup>. Yet women are the worst affected by unsustainable fishing practices and are more vulnerable to coastal natural disasters. Women are not vulnerable because they are weaker; their restricted access to assets (physical, financial, human, social and natural) and unequal power relations are pivotal in undermining their capacity to respond.

For example, dwindling fish stocks often force independent fishing communities to invest in new fishing methods or to seek new fishing ground - usually further away from the coast. Women often don't have the money to invest in better boats and equipment, nor the time to reach fishing areas further afield as they must look after their family. They are often still not welcome aboard larger fishing boats that are better suited to the open sea.

In Australia, a group of women from the fisheries sector have been actively supporting other women in the sector. In 1996, they formed the Women's Industry Network (WIN) that later evolved into Women In Seafood Australasia (WISA). Through WISA, and coming from the experience that women are not visible to decision makers they have been working to make women visible through: getting women involved in leadership courses, actively pushing women into leadership roles, assisting with the preparation of Curriculum Vitae, and providing references.

Through their efforts, there has been a marked increase of women's representation on government boards. For example, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation now has an equal number of men and women. There has been a minor increase in women's representation in private sector boards.

The industry is experiencing the benefits. For example, the fishing industry in Australia is being restructured with the number of fishing boats reducing. **Women often bring a different perspective**, with better visibility of the flow-on impacts on communities such as on schools, volunteering, and services. Planning for the impacts of that reduction have been greatly improved through women's inclusion in the process.



# Innovation and Technology

## Women have access

### Promoting Gender Inclusion in Smart Agriculture (GIFTS)

**Economy:** Chinese Taipei

**Cost:** USD 48,000

**Duration:** 2016 to present



*Scaling up technology to benefit women and increase productivity*



Technological advances such as robots, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial images, and GPS technology have enabled agricultural practices to be carried out with greater precision: allowing businesses to be more profitable, more efficient, safer, and more environmentally friendly. Although almost half the world's farmers are women, their smaller farms, and lower level access to education and finance, mean it is more difficult for women to adopt these new technologies and benefit from these technological advances. This is despite research that indicates that if women had the same access to the same technological benefits as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 per cent, raising total agricultural output by 2.5 to 4 per cent.<sup>21</sup>



The GIFTS: Gendered Innovation for Technology and Science project, seeks to address this gap - aiming to **promote use of innovative gendered approaches to boost innovation and development in agricultural science, technology, facilities and the environment**; as well as encourage women's participation in an inclusive and innovative green economy.

GIFTS works on the principle of 'connectivity' and has three outputs: analysis to understand the specific needs of female farmers' and to identify constraints to women; women's participation in forums to canvas inclusive and innovative agriculture and share challenges, opportunities and obstacles; and the use of gendered innovation approaches to enhance women's participation in the digital and innovative green economy to promote sustainable, inclusive growth and food security in the Asia-Pacific region. Through this approach, GIFTS is 'connecting' women technology innovators in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors with one another to share lessons and experiences, and to advocate together through a joint platform. Early results for the project are encouraging:

Jia-Cih Yang, CEO of Telome Seedling Co and GIFTS participant on sharing her experiences said: *'Traditionally agriculture is seen as a labour intensive industry that usually attracts men, but this is a stereotype'*. Telome is training women to assist in the development of a new, disease resistant seeds. The work is highly technical and the women technicians are invaluable.

Ya-Ping Hsiung, President of Bright Green (Chinese Taipei) and GIFTS participant shared her experience: *'There are a lot of farmers interested in using technology, it saves a lot of time, labour and effort, and boosts productivity.'* Bright Green (Chinese Taipei) is using soil electrical conductivity (EC) sensors (salinity of soil) and data analytics to determine the best time to harvest high value crops.

As a result, Chinese Taipei will publish a new toolkit with strategies for increasing women's participation in smart agriculture, to integrate gender perspectives for sustainable and inclusive growth across the APEC region.

# Data and Evaluation

## In knowing, we can manage

### USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Census

**Economy:** United States

**Cost:** Costs met through recurrent budget

**Duration:** 2012 to present



*The future is female farmers*

The United States has a long history of collecting and analyzing agricultural data, using the findings to inform policies that help shape the future of American agriculture. This data collection is undertaken by NASS, which conducts the Census of Agriculture every five years.



After the 2012 Census of Agriculture, NASS received feedback from stakeholders that the roles of women and of new or beginning farmers were not fully captured by the questions in the Census questionnaire. In response, NASS commissioned a panel of experts in 2015 to look at 'Federal Statistics on Women and Beginning Farmers in U.S. Agriculture.' The panel made a number of findings, including that up until 2002, the Census accounted for only one operator per farm operation. From then until the 2012 Census, only one person could be identified as the principal operator - the person in charge. There was no way to show shared decision-making - everyone else was considered a subordinate. In most cases, even if there were multiple family members operating the farm and making decisions, families would stick with tradition and name the most senior male as the principal operator of the farm.



As many farms have grown over the years, however, more people are involved in managing different aspects of the farming operations. **Even with smaller farms, numerous studies have shown that husbands and wives or parents and children farming together often share the management and decision-making duties of the farm.**

During the panel process, lengthy deliberations were held on how to do a better job of counting women and the multiple generations that could be involved in a single farm. It was understood that getting better statistics would take time, especially considering that there are cultural reasons for some of the responses or lack of response.

The end result of the panel's work was a change in the 2017 Census, with new questions and a slightly different approach.<sup>22</sup> As anticipated, the results have been revealing - Over the last five years, the number of male farmers fell, while the number of women rose: Female producers now make up 36 per cent of farmers, a 27 per cent increase from 2012. Now, 56 per cent of farms have at least one female producer, although only 38 per cent have a female primary producer, the person who makes the most decisions on the farm.<sup>23</sup>

Barbara Rater from NASS commented:

*...the traditional view of agriculture is shifting with new research and technological advances. One of those shifts may include seeing more women involved in American agriculture<sup>24</sup>.*

<sup>22</sup> Centre for Rural Policy and Development, 'Census of Agriculture: Asking the right questions', by Doris Mold, 4th October 2019

<sup>23</sup> Pacific Standard, 'Agriculture census data shows the U.S. has more female farmers than ever - and other key takeaways from the latest census of agriculture', by Emily Moon, 12th April 2019

<sup>24</sup> US Department of Agriculture, 'In Conversation with #WomeninAg', Barbara Rater, 13th March 2018

## Program to Improve Public Management - Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture Fisheries and Aquaculture

**Economy:** Chile

**Cost:** Costs met through recurrent budget

**Duration:** 1990's to present



*Visibility is empowering*



Since the 1990's, the State of Chile, through its *Program to Improve Public Management*, has worked to incorporate a gender lens across the design and implementation of public policy, as part of a gradual process to incorporate a gendered approach in state management.



The Program's gendered approach depends on the collection of sex-disaggregated data.

**Disaggregated data has strengthened policy-maker's understanding of the different roles and activities men and women perform, and informs actions for reducing gaps, barriers and inequities women face to equally access the supply of goods and services.**



This program was launched by the Undersecretariat for Fisheries and Aquaculture in 1998.

The main gaps that have been identified in the fisheries and aquaculture sector include: lower value of productive labour conducted by women in relation to labour carried out by men; low participation of women in recognised leadership roles; low level of formal associativity that would allow women access to information; and low acknowledgement of themselves as fisherwomen in this highly masculinized sector.

The greatest challenges are related to continuing with the reduction of sociocultural gaps and barriers, encouraging women to acknowledge themselves and the value of their participation in the value chain and productive chain and develop their business ideas and ventures to transform them into leaders promoting gender equity.

To address these barriers, the following actions have been implemented:

- Diagnosis for the collection of information on gender gaps and needs (2014).
- Development of the Gender Map in the Chilean Fishing Sector, 2018. Representing geo-referenced information on the participation of women and men in fisheries.
- Workshops and exhibitions with areas for child-care, aimed at providing tools for strengthening leadership, empowerment, entrepreneurship, and financing options.
- International Meetings for Women of Small-Scale Fisheries (2007 and 2013), gathering women to share experiences and compare information on their needs. 400 women attended.
- Programs for women from small-scale fisheries to promote their businesses and productive diversification. These programs were worth around USD 11 million during the eight years of their implementation.
- Publication of the Joint Document 'Women and Men in the Chilean Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector'.
- The Contest 'Mujer Pescadora Emprende' (Fisherwoman, start up a business), (2016 and 2017) aimed at awarding women with successful businesses. 300 women participated.
- As a result of these actions, Chilean women from the fisheries and aquaculture sectors are visible. The deliberate interventions are taking effect – for example, there are now 1,094 women in leadership positions in Chilean artisanal fisher's organisations.



## Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AELM	APEC Economic Leaders Meeting
AMM	APEC Ministers' Meeting
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
FCC	Farm Credit Canada
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIFTS	Gendered Innovation for Technology and Science
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NASS	National Agricultural Statistic Service
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPFS	Policy Partnership on Food Security
PPWE	Policy Partnership for Women and the Economy
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda)
WEF	Women and the Economy Forum
WIAF	Women in Agriculture and Fisheries
WIN	Women's Industry Network
WISA	Women In Seafood Australasia

## Picture Credits

### Front Cover

Tinganagalip Women Cooperative Group member Elizabeth Tiniu carries canarium seedlings out of the groups greenhouse. The group has been planting new canarium trees as well as exploring new value-added canarium products they can make such as canarium cakes and scones. ACIAR has been supporting research into the development of a canarium industry in Papua New Guinea.

### Page iii

A smallholder farmer examines her crops in Aceh, Indonesia.

### Page iv

Smallholder farmer, Nguyen Thi Xoa, in her cabbage garden in Viet Nam. Nguyen Thi Xoa has helped establish safe vegetable cooperatives to engage local farmers, particularly women, to enhance their lives.

### Page 6

Johnny Wemin (hat) from the Fresh Produce Development Agency visits Wasi and Lina Waukawe's screen house and inspects the clean kaukau they are growing inside. Wasi has been a key farmer in the sweet potato project and has received one of the screen houses from the project to grow clean kaukau (Sweet potato) roots. The sweet potato is one of five under the TADEP initiative which is supported by ACIAR and DFAT.

### Page 13

At the NARI research station in Aiyura, Eastern Highlands, sweet potato researcher Winnie Maso inspects some of her clean kaukau (sweet potato) growing in the lab. NARI is providing FPDA sweet potato vines as part of the ACIAR sweet potato project. The project is one of five under the TADEP initiative supported by ACIAR and DFAT.

### Page 17

A farmer inspects produce with her daughter in Aceh, Indonesia, as part of a dryland cropping project funded by ACIAR and run through the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

### Page 18

Grace Enoch (black & white striped shirt) demonstrates to other female farmers how to correctly graft cocoa seedlings. Grace Enoch is the lead farmer for the cocoa group from Damakoo Village in Central Bougainville which is part of Bougainville Cocoa Project. The cocoa farming group has up to 60 members many of whom are women. Last year during the chocolate festival held in Arawa, two women from the group received awards for the high quality of their cocoa beans. A key part of the project is trying to support farmers to increase the quality of their fermented beans. (Part of the TADEP initiative supported by ACIAR and DFAT.)

### Page 23

The daughter of a smallholder cattle farmer in Indonesia feeding her father's cattle.

### Page 31

A women's farmer group at an Aceh Soil Project research site.

### Page 34

Smallholder farmers in Aceh, Indonesia, tend to their crops. The farmers a part of an ACIAR-funded project improving dryland cropping productivity.

### Back Cover

Oyster industry workers harvest their produce in Viet Nam.

With thanks to the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research who supplied the photos.



