



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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EMPOWERING WOMEN in FOOD SYSTEMS and strengthening the local capacities and resilience of SIDS in the agri-food sector

Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM)



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INTRODUCTION



A focus on gender equality in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) can become a driver of resilience, food security and nutrition in the context of climate change.

Gender equality is central in the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States, which recognizes the key role of women in food systems in SIDS.

Addressing gender inequalities is also key to overcoming the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural livelihoods, given that women play a crucial role in maintaining household food security, as agricultural producers, farm managers, processors, traders, wage workers and entrepreneurs.

RATIONALE

Women represent 52 percent of the agricultural labour force in SIDS and are essential change agents to ensure the shift to more efficient and climate-resilient food systems. However, their socio-economic contributions and entrepreneurial potential often remain unrecognized and untapped. Prevailing sociocultural norms commonly limit their ability to exercise power

and autonomous decision-making. For this reason, women often continue to be disadvantaged in their access to productive resources, innovative technologies, market information, financial services, education and training.

Addressing gender inequalities in food systems means ensuring that women and men participate equally in and benefit equally from agricultural markets and rural economies to better sustain and improve their livelihoods, while preserving the natural resource base and adapting to climate change. This is why FAO launched the subprogramme *Empowering women in food systems and strengthening the local capacities and resilience of SIDS in the agri-food sector* under the FMM Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems Programme, to be implemented during 2020-2021.



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The subprogramme is in line with the Global Action Programme on Food Security



and Nutrition in SIDS, the commitments of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway), **SDG 1** for ending hunger, **SDG 2**



reducing poverty, **SDG 5** on gender equality and subtarget 13.b, which calls on the promotion of mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate-change-related planning and management in SIDS, including a dedicated focus on women.



OBJECTIVE

The aim of the subprogramme is to **enhance women's participation in and benefits they receive from the development of selected value chains** through improved access to resources and innovative and climate-resilient services, technologies and practices.

This subprogramme will contribute to enhancing **food security and nutrition in SIDS** through the development of efficient, resilient and inclusive food systems, which are key to mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural settings.

The tourism sector is one important area that is common to all SIDS countries and that is currently facing big challenges due to COVID-19-related restrictions. The subprogramme is addressing tourism through the analysis of the sector and assessing how women can adapt their agri-food businesses to ensure food security.



KEY AREAS OF SUPPORT

The adoption of a coherent approach to promote gender equality and climate resilience in food systems development interventions is key for the subprogramme and focuses on **three main actions:**



Institutional support:

Reinforcing institutional capacities to develop efficient, gender-sensitive and climate-resilient agri-food value chains at local, regional and national level.



Capacity development:

Strengthening the productive and entrepreneurial capacities of women operating along selected value chains through tailor-made training and improved service provision.



Knowledge products:

Documenting and sharing promising practices and successful approaches across regions to increase knowledge and evidence-base on gender, food systems and resilience in SIDS.

FOCUS COUNTRIES

Current countries of focus cover three regions: Barbados and Saint Lucia in the Caribbean; the Comoros and Sao Tome and Principe in Africa; and Palau and Samoa in the Pacific.

Targeted value chains include honey, fisheries, breadfruit, poultry and traditional food products for the tourism sector.



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THE WAY FORWARD

As the SIDS countries face many similar development challenges, this subprogramme has potential to have great impact by scaling up the work within and across the regions, reinforcing gender-sensitive value-chain development while ensuring viable livelihoods options for those who are involved in the production and transformation of local agri-food products.

FAO envisages capitalizing on this experience and continuing support to women's participation in agri-food value chains and climate-resilient agriculture. In close collaboration with key stakeholders, FAO plans to enhance women-led agribusiness by means of incubators or hubs, depending on the specific context, with the aim of facilitating entrepreneurial orientation, technology inputs, financial services, business planning and registration, marketing linkages and business match-making and social services, among other things.

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FAO is seeking partners to further develop these initiatives and to contribute technical expertise and financial support.



MAIN PARTNERS

Environment and Tourism Coalition of Fragile Ecosystems, ministries of agriculture, fisheries, natural resources, and tourism.

Mountain Partnership, Slow Food International, Sustainable Travel International, UN Women and World Bank.

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