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SUSTAINABLE
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GOALS

GUIDELINES ON
INTEGRATING THE

# "LEAVE NO
# ONE BEHIND"

PRINCIPLE INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Graphic Design: Nina Barrois

# CONTENTS

# BOXES AND TABLES

## BOXES

## TABLES

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **CARD** | Climate Adaptation in Rural Development |
| **CCVA** | Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments |
| **DRR** | disaster risk reduction |
| **ECA** | Europe and Central Asia |
| **ESCAP** | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| **FAO** | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| **OHPI** | Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative |
| **IFAD** | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| **IISD** | International Institute for Sustainable Development |
| **IPC-IG** | International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth |
| **LNOB** | leave no one behind |
| **MPAT** | Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool |
| **OHCHR** | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **PSIA** | Poverty and Social Impact Analysis |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goal |
| **SMART** | specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNHCR** | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| **UNSDCF** | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |
| **UNSDG** | United Nations Sustainable Development Group |
| **WFP** | World Food Programme |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# INTRODUCTION

The imperatives to leave no one behind (LNOB) and endeavour to reach the furthest behind first – as pledged by the 193 Member States of the United Nations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – are gaining more traction among development practitioners as we approach the midpoint towards the 2030 deadline. LNOB implies concrete actions to curb poverty and inequality, address vulnerabilities, and thus ensure that the prosperity of the furthest behind is fast-tracked.

In agrifood systems, reaching the furthest behind is crucial. The World Bank estimates that 80 percent of the people living below the international poverty line are in rural areas,[1] with women and children being the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. In the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, the prevalence of severe food insecurity was 2.4 percent – 22.8 million people – in 2020.[2] Smallholder farmers produce one-third of the world's food[3] but bear a double vulnerability burden: vulnerabilities inherent in agrifood systems due to climate change and vulnerabilities associated with having limited access to productive resources such as land and water, public services and markets[4] in food supply chains, often due to the remoteness of their locations and their limited decision-making powers.[5]

Challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic added an additional burden for those furthest behind. As stated by Vladimir Rakhmanin, FAO Assistant Director-General for Europe and Central Asia: "The COVID-19 pandemic has caused serious threats to food security and nutrition, especially for low-income and vulnerable populations [in the region] … [and] national and subregional inequalities in access to food and nutrition

1        **World Bank**. 2020. *Poverty and shared prosperity 2020: Reversals of fortune.* Washington, DC: World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1602-4

2        **FAO**. 2021. *Europe and Central Asia – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021 – Statistics and trends.* Budapest. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7493en

3        **FAO**. 2021. Small family farmers produce a third of the world's food. In: *Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.* https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1395127/icode/

4        Smallholders and family farmers may be excluded from credit markets, which can bar them from input purchases and land expansion. Their small size also plays against their bargaining power during price negotiations with market brokers.

5        **FAO**. 2021. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2021*. FAO. *https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4476en*

are certain to grow."[6] For example, in 2020, sex-disaggregated estimates across the region show that moderate or severe food insecurity was experienced more by women (13.4 percent) than by men (12.3 percent).[7] In addition, the deadline to deliver the SDGs is approaching quickly, and thus countries and communities need to use all means to accelerate progress towards the goals.

Against this backdrop, this paper presents a methodological guide for policymakers, planners and other experts to assist with the integration of the LNOB principle in policy and strategy development. It outlines the LNOB principle and its relevance for agrifood systems and rural development, and it lays out ways to identify those left behind with a view towards integrating their needs and proposed solutions into these strategies. The information identified during the process of the LNOB integration can also feed into the voluntary national reviews, which provide "regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels"[8] to serve as an input for reviews by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which annually reviews the progress being made on the 2030 Agenda.

This guide is based on a review of methodologies and reports published by relevant agencies, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). The focus of this guidebook is on the ECA region. Finally, pilot testing would be recommended for the approach presented here and adjustments made to the document afterwards.

6        **FAO**. 2021. *Europe and Central Asia – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021 – Statistics and trends.* Budapest. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7493en
7        **FAO, IFAD, United Nations, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and WMO**. 2023. *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2022. Repurposing policies and incentives to make healthy diets more affordable and agrifood systems more environmentally sustainable.* Budapest.
8        **United Nations**. 2015. *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* https://sdgs.un.org/publications/transforming-our-world-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-17981

# WHAT THE LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND PRINCIPLE IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

## DEFINING THE LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND PRINCIPLE IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

**Leaving no one behind is the central cross-cutting focus of the 2030 Agenda.**

The principle was introduced to reinforce the 2015 Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. In its fourth paragraph, the 2030 Agenda states,

> As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first (United Nations, 2015).

While the 2030 Agenda brought the principle of LNOB to the centre of international efforts to tackle sustainable development challenges, the notion of ensuring people's basic needs has been part of many countries' constitutions and foundational documents. These documents stress the importance of ensuring the dignity of persons and social groups; solidarity and equality without distinction based on gender, language, ethnicity or religion; and rights to basic services.

From a global and regional perspective, ensuring that no one is left behind implies reducing inequalities among countries and inequalities inside countries by putting efforts to improve the well-being of the most vulnerable groups, regions and whole countries (also stressed as part of SDG 10). The LNOB principle aims to address several focus areas of vulnerability to promote equality, support equity and focus on discrimination and the intersecting inequalities that undermine the agency of people as holders of rights (see Table 1, which reflects inequalities inherent in agrifood systems and rural well-being). The table does not mean to be exhaustive; it provides explanatory examples.

The United Nations Secretary-General has called for a food systems transformation to build a "fairer, more sustainable world" (United Nations, 2021a). A viable rural well-being, characterized by decent livelihoods, good nutrition and resilience for all, can be achieved through specific interventions – for example, safety nets for the most vulnerable, the development of infrastructure for access to markets, and the enabling of access to inputs and skill development as part of a sustainable food system.

Linkages between food systems development and rural well-being indicate that improving engagement in agricultural production through investments and other interventions is often limited for particular rural farming household groups and geographies due to structural barriers such as lack of infrastructure, limited access to markets, discriminatory social norms and policies that fail to be inclusive, lack of resources to negotiate better prices for inputs and outputs, lack of an adequate enabling policy environment, weak and unequal institutional and social systems, and limited organizational capacity among small-scale producers. Resource scarcity and degradation, climate change, political tensions and environmental and health externalities created by food production and consumption are generating more vulnerabilities and inequalities. However, disadvantaged groups – such as ageing and isolated populations (such as those living in mountainous areas, very cold or arid zones, depopulated areas, fragile and challenging agro-ecological environments and conflict-affected areas) or those with a predominance of women, (undocumented) immigrants, and people with disabilities – often face disadvantages in terms of their participation in the various areas of agrifood systems. Examples of these disadvantages include gender-based discrimination; work in fragile seasonal jobs; a lack of access to quality inputs and value chains; a lack of access to natural resources, mainly land and water; a lack of access to knowledge and information; and limited resilience to disasters and shocks.

Understanding the linkages among agrifood systems, well-being and efforts to improve the status of specific vulnerable groups and farming households is critical, and there are many examples of how improvements in agrifood systems have been able to deliver contributions to well-being. Measures that can contribute to well-being enhancement and sustainability include good governance and inclusive planning, access to technology, mechanization and skills development, and institutional and social/gender inclusion (see Table 2). One specific

**TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF EQUALITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUITY**

| Three focus areas | Description | Relevance for agrifood systems |
|---|---|---|
| Equality | Guarantee substantive equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome | Addressing knowledge, skill and income gaps to enable participation in innovations, technology and improved production options |
| Non-discrimination | Prohibit discrimination against individuals and groups | Addressing limitations in terms of access to decision-making and participation in diverse interventions and mechanisms based on gender, or limitations associated with specific religious and minority groups whose access to and control over assets is missing (including tenure systems, land ownership and individual rights, and access to markets) |
| Equity | Achieve fairness in the distribution of costs, benefits and opportunities | Addressing limitations of small-scale producers' ability to negotiate prices and improve their incomes |

Source: **UNSDG**. 2022. *Operationalizing leaving no one behind.* https://unsdg.un.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams.

example is technology, in areas such as biotechnology, digital technology, renewable energy, mechanization and data development, which can assist in improving yields and modes of production and also can impact the availability and types of jobs as well as job creation. To be truly inclusive and ensure that the furthest behind are effectively reached, the process of agrifood system development should be bottom up rather than top down (United Nations, 2021c), starting with an understanding of food systems and the interaction between agrifood systems and rural development, the identification of those left behind, and the identification of the root causes of marginalization.

## TABLE 2. EXAMPLES OF MEASURES WITHIN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TO DELIVER CONTRIBUTIONS TO WELL-BEING

| Interventions | Brief overview |
|---|---|
| Income and credit | Providing access to income to smallholders, and especially women, helps ensure access to health care, education and nutritional foods. In addition, access to loans and credit can be used for investment in farm development. Specific examples can be considered, such as the Cash+ programme combining national social protection cash transfers and agricultural assistance on inputs and skill development in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan (FAO, 2023a). |
| Infrastructure | Access to infrastructure promotes market access for inputs and outputs as well as access to services. Remote communities with limited access to roads/all-season roads and – consequently, markets – are more affected by poverty and food insecurity than communities with access to infrastructure. |
| Technology | Technological interventions can assist with agricultural yield improvement, efficiency and the resilience of crops against diseases. This can support poor farmers living in remote areas where the labour force is lacking, the soil is less rich and climate risks are significant. At the same time, technology can impact jobs and incomes, especially for low-income groups. |
| Improved inputs and knowledge, skills development | For family farmers, women and small-scale farmers, access to inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, natural resources, information and credit is challenging. With targeted information, effective extension services, improved value chains, cooperatives and digital technology, interventions can improve agricultural productivity and rural household incomes and address inequality. |
| Green and renewable energy | Transition towards energy-smart agrifood systems can help optimize energy consumption and improve food security. For instance, rainwater harvesting, green fertilizers, solar-powered food dryers and food bio-preservation can assist in conserving water and energy and address food loss and waste. |
| Sustainable mechanization | Interventions can help transcend farmers' exclusion from agrifood systems, address labour shortages, reduce drudgery (particularly for women), create new jobs, leverage productivity and enhance the market for remote areas (FAO, 2023b). |
| Governance and inclusive planning | Inclusive governance and planning can help reduce interventions that exclude vulnerable groups. It also can assist with designing measures for the effective participation of vulnerable groups in targeted consultations and focus groups and ensure membership in governance bodies for representatives of vulnerable groups. |

Notes:
FAO. 2023a. Social protection. In: Developing capacity for strengthening food security and nutrition. https://www.fao.org/in-action/fsn-caucasus-asia/areas-of-work/social-protection/en/
FAO. 2023b. Why mechanization is important. In: Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization. https://www.fao.org/sustainable-agricultural-mechanization/overview/why-mechanization-is-important/en/
For further reading on digital agriculture in the region, see https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Documents/Events/2020/Series%20of%20Webinars/20-00244_Status_digital_Agriculture-revFAOV4.0-MASTER-FILE-20-JUNE_REVIEW-FAO_PL_print%20(002).pdf

# WHO ARE THE VULNERABLE GROUPS AT RISK OF BEING LEFT BEHIND?

PART TWO

## VULNERABLE GROUPS AND MAJOR CHALLENGES

**A critical part of integrating the LNOB principle into agrifood systems, strategies and policies is identifying vulnerable groups, their specific challenges, and suitable means of improving their livelihoods and well-being.**

Understanding the multitude and diversity of vulnerable groups provides a good basis for uncovering the root causes of marginalization and for tackling the needs and rights that should be fulfilled. In the agrifood system, the diagnostic of vulnerable groups requires a systemic approach that captures all sources of exclusion. These sources can be spatial, economic, social, cultural or a combination thereof (Cabral, 2020; Kabeer, 2010). For each of these groups, vulnerability depends on the country context, including politics, history, culture, environment, climate, and so on.

The identification of vulnerable groups is a key part of the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) (UNSDG, 2019b), the key United Nations national strategic documents guiding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is also crucial for the formulation of sustainable development national strategies and for the efforts undertaken under specific national programmes, such as those on poverty reduction, rural development, social protection, gender, food and nutrition. Based on the guidance provided and approaches used in these documents, we present a description of the groups that are commonly identified as vulnerable in the context of agrifood systems (Table 3). This indicative list does

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The identified issues are presented by each vulnerable group to facilitate comprehension, but it is crucial to recognize that these issues might apply to other groups as well, particularly those with intersecting vulnerabilities.

| Vulnerable groups | Description and LNOB issues |
|---|---|
| Smallholder farmers | • Production is oriented towards subsistence and highly local agrifood systems.<br>• Lack adequate access to inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and machinery, which can limit productivity.<br>• Are often excluded from market services, including finance.<br>• Live in remote areas and in rural areas in general, with limited internet access for online transactions.<br>• Are exposed to economic, health, social and climate-related shocks without enough capacities, such as savings, off-farm earnings, timely access to services and knowledge to overcome shocks and build resilience.<br>• Have limited organizational capacity.<br>• Have limited access to adequate agricultural infrastructure (access roads, irrigation and drainage systems) to improve productivity and climate resilience. |
| Rural women | • Women's "contributory" work on farms and in households is informal, unpaid and poorly recognized/valued. More than other groups, they may be subject to discriminatory social norms that limit participation and increase the risk of gender-based violence.<br>• Lack of access and ownership of necessary resources and assets to derive livelihoods from agrifood systems; constraints in market access.<br>• Persistent inequalities in decision-making and community and local leadership; policy frameworks that fail to address their needs and constraints.<br>• Unpaid household duties such as cooking, laundry, childcare and fuel and water collection, significantly increasing their burden.<br>• Limited access to subsidies and rural development support measures.<br>• Limited access to land titles and ownership to protect their security of land tenure. |
| Landless farmers in rural areas, particularly women and young women and men | • Exclusion from economic and social opportunities.<br>• Exclusion from extension services and credit.<br>• Dependence on wage labour (informal, with lower pay and often of an exploitative nature) and minor trading for food and income generation.<br>• May experience unfair and erratic contracts and trade relations (informal labour). |
| Indigenous and/or traditional communities | • Affected by loss and degradation of traditional lands, territories and natural resources.<br>• Often excluded from economic and social initiatives.<br>• Lack economic opportunities and experience land dispossession or displacement, which push many to prioritize life in urban settings, leaving rural communities more vulnerable. |
| Pastoral and semi-nomadic communities | • Overlap often with Indigenous traditional communities, face similar challenges.<br>• Often excluded from the production system, resources, services and policy dialogue.<br>• Lack access to modern reproductive health services.<br>• Experience high economic, social, health and financial vulnerability due to constant movement, depending on seasons and availability of resources. |

Source: Adapted from **Cabral, L**. 2020. *Leave no one behind in practice: Agriculture & food security.* Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/LNOB/Shared%20Documents/Working-Aid-Agriculture.pdf

| Vulnerable groups | Description and LNOB issues |
|---|---|
| Displaced people, including refugees and migrants | • Face challenges in accessing quality land, water, social protection and other services in the new location.<br>• Due to incapacity to adapt in a new environment, may be forced to move to urban and peri-urban areas, increasing their vulnerability. |
| Peri-urban and urban poor, particularly women, children and people with a disability | • Find it difficult to ensure sufficient food and a balanced diet due to financial strain.<br>• Those living in peri-urban areas are exposed to competition over land, which makes them vulnerable to unfair land transactions and jeopardizes their livelihoods. |
| People with a disability | • People with a disability face more challenges due to their lack of income and exclusion from certain forms of activities.<br>• Face challenges in access to social protection or services due to their "invisibility" and may live in non-poor households, which makes targeting them challenging. |

Source: Adapted from **Cabral, L**. 2020. *Leave no one behind in practice: Agriculture & food security.* Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/LNOB/Shared%20Documents/Working-Aid-Agriculture.pdf


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not cover all groups. Instead, it aims to give policymakers and experts a starting point for a more thorough analysis in line with their contexts.

Many countries already recognize in their UNSDCFs specific challenges for income generation and access to inputs for production for women and youth and suggest targeted training and support programmes (United Nations, 2020b, 2021b). The documents also stress the importance of addressing vulnerable populations' needs and access to resources, including education and health care for vulnerable people in peri-urban areas (for example United Nations, 2020b), as well as of targeted efforts to support people with a disability and displaced individuals (United Nations, 2020a, 2020b). A number of these documents also stress the need to address climate change-related vulnerabilities and promote efforts to support farmers. In the context of the suggested categories (see Table 3), most of the gaps in the mentioned strategies relate to the lack of focus on specific types of vulnerable households engaged in agricultural production, such as women-headed households, Indigenous and traditional communities, and groups that depend on informal and erratic contractual and trade relations. As these groups face specific barriers to their participation in and access to opportunities, dedicated solutions must be developed that include them in development interventions and strengthen their capacity to engage. For country-level efforts to identify vulnerable groups, see an example from the Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs and Action Against Hunger and the LNOB screening tool developed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (Box 1).

# LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND DIAGNOSTIC INITIATIVES

## BOX 1

### Identification of vulnerable groups in Serbia

In early 2002, Action Against Hunger, in collaboration with the Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs, conducted an exercise to identify vulnerable groups in the context of humanitarian assistance and long-term solutions to poverty. To help identify those groups, the agencies conducted key informant interviews with academia, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and individual households. They also held focus group discussions. In total, data for 76 municipalities and 442 local communities were analysed. The following groups were identified:

- Single female-headed households
- Roma community
- Refugees
- Elderly rural households
- Internally displaced persons

Among these groups, the Roma, single mothers, isolated rural elderly, and refugees were identified as the main priorities. Other priority groups included those with a disability, the chronically ill, and orphans. However, these groups were found to either represent an extremely small percentage or to be already benefiting from the social welfare system. The assessment led to a series of recommendations for social policy reforms for the Ministry of Social Affairs and other ministries. Specific recommendations include:

- Develop a single national database, updated monthly (instead of the numerous databases presently used that are not consolidated for each type of support).
- Develop closer follow-up of social cases through regular field visits.
- Train and equip local social workers on database management and field work.
- Build the capacity of the NGO sector and provide a legal framework that allows them to play a more effective role in social support.

### ESCAP LNOB screening tool

To support policymakers in Asia Pacific in better understanding the issues of marginalization and equal access, ESCAP developed an LNOB screening tool that uses machine-learning techniques to understand social and economic inequality. Among other functions, the tool uses a classification and regression tree approach to present graphic illustrations of the groups furthest behind and the gaps in opportunities they face. It also highlights major risk concerns, such as lack of sufficient-quality disaggregated data, which can contribute to blind spots in policy development. As members of ESCAP, countries such as Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan can take advantage of the tool to advance their LNOB mainstreaming processes.



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In addition to the groups identified above, it is critical to focus on "blind spots" that hide vulnerabilities and thus impact the effectiveness of the identification of those left behind and related policies. This is particularly relevant for agrifood systems, as many strategies and plans fail to address heterogeneity (see Box 2) among farmers and to explore, in depth, specific vulnerabilities in the context of climate change and other challenges. Multiple types and levels of vulnerabilities exist within each group (see Box 2). For example, small, specialized family farmers who focus on certain vulnerable crops and lack the resources to invest in irrigation and other adaptive measures may lose their assets when they experience prolonged droughts, pests or other impacts. Blind spots also can be driven by lack of quality disaggregated data, which undermines the ability of policies to address exclusion. For example, targeting can be compromised by a lack of sufficient sex-disaggregated data to inform policy on challenges related to women's control over and access to resources or by the challenge of properly identifying persons with disabilities.

Another dimension to consider is intersectional vulnerability, which is defined as overlapping layers of exclusion or vulnerability, compounding risks and disadvantages resulting from multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities. Vulnerable individuals and communities usually experience compound discrimination due to intersecting characteristics such as age, location, gender, culture and religion, aggravating their exclusion and vulnerability (UNICEF, 2021). Examples include an elderly displaced or rural woman from a remote area, a landless person with a disability, or a landless minority community settled in a peri-urban area or areas. Ensuring dialogue among ministries is key to designing more resilient and inclusive food systems interventions.

Finally, many countries experience rapid urbanization, which is creating more opportunities in urban areas while also contributing to rural labour shortages, farming activity and social network disruptions, and greater vulnerability in rural areas (IFAD, 2016). In addition, migration to urban areas is mostly considered by younger, often male individuals searching for viable livelihoods, compared to opportunities in rural areas. However, these migrants can face significant discrimination in the context of poverty, in addition to race, religion and other challenges. Such migration also puts pressure on urban infrastructure, and opportunities for migrants can be limited. The identification and mainstreaming of the LNOB principle should take this into account to bridge any existing and future gaps while promoting urban and rural linkages in an integrated manner.[1]

Furthermore, possible future disruptions to farming activities due to climate change can create new types of vulnerability and exclusion. Examples include impacts of global carbon pricing on agrifood system models, leading to environmental degradation; radical changes of the food and farming system due to technological advances (e.g. artificial intelligence, robotics, the "Internet of Things," genetics); and changes in consumer behaviour due to dietary shifts towards non-meat alternatives for protein (Stringer *et al.*, 2020).[2] Climate change impacts also can alter access to irrigation, grazing systems and access to technology and other inputs to build resilience. The severity of impacts due to limited capacities makes vulnerable groups even more vulnerable, and they often lack capacities and skills to access to adaptive solutions. Thus, by compounding the environmental issues the region is currently facing, these challenges will add new dimensions to the intersectional vulnerability of the different groups of farming households.

1       LNOB is not limited to individuals or communities. Inequalities between regions also should be addressed. This involves, for instance, investments in infrastructure to fill rural–urban gaps, the development of rural-specific data, and rural–urban data disaggregation (IFAD, 2016).

2       Two more scenarios were also highlighted by Stringer *et al.* (2020): disruption via universal basic income and disruption via increased engagement in agriculture through vertical farming. The potential change in consumption patterns in Europe and Central Asia is captured in the United Nations Food Systems Summit Action Tracks. Action Track 2, under "Promoting short value chains that respond to consumer demands, providing diverse foods at affordable prices," reads: "In the ECA region, there is a need to reorient production and trade systems … to move consumption within the optimal range of healthy diets. This may require, for example, the reallocation of resources to reduce the availability of such overconsumed foods as red meat and milk and to increase the availability and consumption of fruits and fish, among other foods" (Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems, 2021).

# HETEROGENEITY AMONG FARMERS

BOX 2



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There are numerous farming categories, depending on the scale and nature of the activities performed. Below are some examples of farming types, in order of decreasing risk of exclusion (McConnell and Dillon, 1997; Stringer *et al.*, 2020). Within each category, challenges are identified affecting farmers, households or labourers:

- Small subsistence-oriented family farmers usually exploit or manage local natural resources. In extreme cases, they shift cultivation to other crops or become nomads. Some can exist in complete isolation. They often have limited resources to investment in farm development (FAO, 2020).

- Small semi-subsistence or part-commercial family farmers operate first by fulfilling their basic needs and second by generating income cash.

- Small independent specialized family farmers specialize in specific crops or livestock activities. Their activity can be fully commercial, partly commercial or near subsistence.

- Small dependent specialized family farmers are similar to small independent specialized family farmers, except they lack power in decision-making for reasons that include terms of land tenancy, being part of a larger production system (e.g. tobacco-leaf producers for a tobacco factory), loans conditioned on the production of particular commodities, and government policy directives.

- Large commercial family farmers' main beneficiaries are families. Their primary objective is profit or utility maximization.

- Commercial estates serve large-scale farming and national industrialization. The primary beneficiaries are usually shareholders who employ professional expatriate management..

McConnell, **D.J. & Dillon, J.L.** 1997. *Farm management for Asia: a systems approach*. FAO farm systems management series 13. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
**Stringer, L.C., Fraser, E.D.G., Harris, D., Lyon, C., Pereira, L., Ward, C.F.M. & Simelton, E.** 2020. *Adaptation and development pathways for different types of farmers*. Environmental Science & Policy, 104: 174–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2019.10.007
**FAO**. 2020. *Empowering smallholders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia*. Budapest, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9586en

# APPROACH TO INTEGRATING LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND INTO NATIONAL POLICIES

PART THREE

Integrating the LNOB principle into policies targeting agrifood systems and rural development is a multi-stage process that starts with identifying vulnerable groups, the root causes of their challenges, and the policy measures needed to address them. This is followed by monitoring and accountability. At every stage of these efforts, it is important to maintain the gender perspective, as gender disparities persist across vulnerable groups. In the process of integrating the LNOB principle, it is necessary to ensure the participation of small farmers and other vulnerable groups. The process of LNOB integration calls for intersectoral thinking and the use of a diversity of tools, depending on the challenges faced (e.g. poverty, minority status, climate change, social services availability, statistical capacity). Finally, the process of LNOB integration should be backed by strong political commitment to policy implementation and contribute to a change in perception (UNICEF, 2021).

This section details four steps for integrating the LNOB principle into policies in the context of agrifood systems and rural development. The first step is a diagnostic and intersectional analysis to identify the vulnerable groups, the vulnerabilities they are exposed to, and the root causes of exclusion. The next step details the policies and interventions needed to improve the situation of the vulnerable groups, followed by the development of indicators (Step 3) to ensure quality monitoring and accountability (Step 4). The actual process outlined here is primarily targeted at government agencies leading the development and review of relevant national policies. However, these efforts should be done in collaboration with NGOs and other agencies, including educational, health care and social support agencies, that are engaged with LNOB groups.

# Four steps for integrating the LNOB principle

Revisions and adjustments to account for changes in the situations of LNOB groups

**1**
**2**
**3**
**4**

## 01

### Diagnostic and intersectional analysis

Identification of vulnerable groups and root causes

**OUTCOME**

A list of vulnerable groups with identified aspects of exclusion, root causes of challenges

## 02

### Policies to address the challenges and risks of vulnerable groups

Policy actions and capacity development and planning

Recommendations of needed actions for each LNOB group

**OUTCOME**

A list of policies and interventions to address the challenges of LNOB groups

## 03

### Indicator design to address LNOB issues

Using existing indicators, including those to track progress on the 2030 Agenda

Additional disaggregation to LNOB

**OUTCOME**

A list of selected indicators to measure and monitor the performance of interventions and the situation of LNOB groups

## 04

### Monitoring and accountability

Monitoring and tracking of policy performance

Accountability mechanisms

**OUTCOME**

Mechanisms for continuous review of LNOB interventions to ensure that the intended results are achieved

# STEP 1

## DIAGNOSTIC AND INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

**A holistic diagnosis of vulnerable, marginalized or excluded groups is required as a starting point for LNOB mainstreaming.**

As discussed earlier, vulnerability can have various dimensions, including those affected by poverty and food insecurity, not only, but also those excluded directly or indirectly from decision-making and participation. All these can be impacted by gender, race, religion and other dimensions of intersectionality. This step covers the identification of vulnerable groups, the root causes of exclusion, and the types of intersectional disadvantages they are or could be exposed to. National assessment tools such as the UNSDCF Common Country Assessment (UNSDG, 2019a) and the UNSDG guide on operationalizing LNOB (UNSDG, 2022) should form an essential part of this process.

### Diagnostic: identification of vulnerable groups and root causes

The identification process should focus on specifying the vulnerable groups along the spatial scale – country, region, city and so on. The process requires providing answers to the following questions: Who is vulnerable? What are the aspects of heterogeneity in the identified groups? What groups are excluded from services, benefits, power and so on? What are the root causes of marginalization and why? (See Table 4.)

The **identification of vulnerable groups**, the types and root causes of exclusion, and the challenges they face also helps determine the extent of exclusion and allows us to make a distinction between communities and individuals while maintaining the gender perspective. An exercise such as this requires a desk review and analysis of granular data (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, religion and language, in line with the human rights-based approach to data[3]) and consultations with local communities.[4]

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3       The human rights-based approach to data follows six principles: participation, disaggregation, self-identification, transparency, privacy and accountability (OHCHR, 2018).

4       For specific examples of participatory vulnerability assessments, please see *Good practices in participatory mapping* (IFAD, 2009), *Effective inclusion of refugees: Participatory approaches for practitioners at the local level* (UNHCR, undated) and *Assessing inclusive and participatory mapping for recognizing customary tenure systems in Myanmar* (Mark, Jansen and Bicchieri, 2021).

| Question | Description | Example based on access to land | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Who is vulnerable?** | Identify all categories of vulnerable groups | Groups within smallholders with access to land | Landless agricultural workers |
| **What are the aspects of heterogeneity?** | Specify intersectional vulnerability, heterogeneity within groups, and blind spots | <ul><li>Female-headed households</li><li>Smallholders planting crops highly vulnerable to climate change</li><li>Rural women in smallholders' households</li></ul> | Women in vulnerable situations (indigenous, poor, caring for dependents), minorities involved in agriculture, seasonal migrants working in agriculture, rural elderly with limited access to services and social safety nets |
| **What groups are excluded from services, benefits, power, and so on?** | List specific examples of vulnerabilities the groups are facing | Limited access to better input prices due to low negotiating capacities, as they rely on local markets; exclusion from grants, subsidies and other support programmes due to low levels of education, limited skills and limited access to the internet and computers | <ul><li>Limited access to formal employment, employment insurance and social services</li><li>Exclusion from grants, subsidies and other support programmes</li></ul> |
| **What are the root causes of marginalization and why?** | Identify root causes along the five intersecting domains of governance, discrimination, vulnerability to shocks, geography, and socioeconomic status | <ul><li>Geography: mountainous, remote locations</li><li>Socioeconomic status: low asset ownership/access, poverty, unequal institutional and social systems and gender relations, often in remote and degraded environments, marginal land, limited access to infrastructure</li></ul> | <ul><li>Socioeconomic status: limited education, poverty, gender, age, limited knowledge of the country's language</li><li>Location: remote, limited access to infrastructure</li><li>Governance: weak social support systems, limited law enforcement, grey economy</li></ul> |

## Intersectional analysis

The intersectional analysis is an important step in the identification of vulnerable groups in agrifood systems and rural development in terms of identifying the groups at risk of being left behind and addressing their needs. It helps to create a comprehensive understanding of specific issues that could influence inequality within a vulnerable group to explore how identities (class, race, gender, religion and others) intersect to determine well-being outcomes and means of discrimination – especially in terms of food security, agrifood systems, land, the environment and climate change – and to identify tailored solutions. A person can experience **multiple intersecting forms of inequality** based on the various social and political identities they experience. This can change over time, such as life-cycle needs.

To this end, the assessment should inform national development plans and strategies on agrifood systems and rural development. The example of Armenia (see Box 3) shows how the government incorporates into its national strategic planning the vulnerability to climate change of people with a disability.

# THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN ARMENIA

BOX 3



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From 1938 to 2018, Armenia recorded an increase in average temperature of 1.23 °C and a 9-point fall in the intensity of precipitation, leading to an intensification of extreme climate events. As a result, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases have become one of the main causes of mortality in the country. People living with a disability were found to be more vulnerable and exposed to such risks. Special attention was devoted to the needs of children, women and the elderly within the communities.

Efforts to improve the conditions of people with a disability resulted in a 2017–2019 Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy on Human Rights Protection. Initiatives undertaken as part of the Action Plan include:

- more humanitarian assistance to persons with a disability in hazardous and emergency situations, with special attention to children, women and the elderly;
- the expansion of community centres offering social rehabilitation services to children with a disability and their families;
- care, education, professional training and social assistance services to persons with a disability;
- support to employers who hire persons with a disability; and
- opportunities for persons with a disability to engage in physical activity and sports.

The government paid close attention to the climate impacts that should be prioritized in the efforts to reduce the challenges faced by people with a disability – heat weaves, flooding, a reduced number of green areas in the city, extreme weather events, decreases in potable water quality and quantity, an increase in the number of various types of diseases, and less reliable urban energy infrastructure. The government also has been implementing an integrated hazard management system to foster the resilience of communities and their livelihoods.

Source: **OHCHR**. 2023. The impact of climate change on the rights of persons with disabilities. In: *OHCHR and climate change*. https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/impact-climate-change-rights-persons-disabilities

The intersectional analysis is multisectoral and takes into account regional, subregional and cross-border dynamics; governance and institutions; and gender, race, age, health status and disability perspectives. It can support a mapping of existing, emerging, direct and indirect issues and context that contributes to inequality within agrifood systems and rural development. Table 5 presents examples of factors to account for in the assessment. Note that because the issue of vulnerability intersects with ongoing activities in a given country, some of these efforts already may have been covered in national and subnational agricultural planning and/or other assessments (e.g. SDG Accelerator and Bottleneck Assessment).[5] These can feed into the vulnerability assessment for agrifood systems and rural development, and vice versa.

5    For more information, see the SDG Accelerator and Bottleneck Assessment (UNDP, 2017).

## TABLE 5. OVERVIEW OF INTERSECTIONAL AREAS AND FACTORS

| Focus area | Description | Examples of intersectional inequality |
|---|---|---|
| Social cohesion, gender equality and non-discrimination | Inequality resulting from direct and indirect discrimination, horizontal inequalities, and demographic trends | • Prejudice based on sex, race, belief, ethnicity<br>• Power imbalances based on social norms<br>• Hate speech in the public domain<br>• Unequal rights for minority groups and women<br>• Limited opportunities for minority groups<br>• Social exclusion, stigmatization of minorities<br>• Unequal access to resources, including land, water and infrastructure<br>• Unmanaged urbanization or existence of poor/underdeveloped neighbourhoods |
| Food security, agrifood systems and land | • Inequality affecting the poor, women, minorities and other vulnerable groups in terms of their participation in agrifood systems and/or food production<br>• Crop and food production, livestock and land-related issues | • Loss of, damage to or lack of crops due to lack of insurance or access to affordable credit<br>• Lack of crop diversity due to lack of access to inputs, knowledge and support systems<br>• Loss of, damage to or lack of livestock<br>• Land rights issues, such as land consolidation<br>• Over-reliance on food imports due to lack of development/support of local agricultural production<br>• Lack of resources for food production sectors<br>• High levels of food insecurity among vulnerable groups<br>• Food/nutrition poverty due to increasing food prices<br>• High malnutrition and malnourishment rates |
| Environment and climate | Impacts and related inequality on the impacts of environmental change, climate change, and natural resources availability on people with different types of inequality, exclusion and vulnerability | • Damages from floods, cyclones, hurricanes<br>• Increases in frequency/duration/scale of drought, over-running the capacities to cope of vulnerable groups<br>• Erosion, rising sea level, deforestation and landslides leading to decreases in production and, often, an inability to relocate<br>• Damaging/unstainable resource extraction, with negative impacts on the livelihoods of vulnerable groups<br>• Inequitable extraction/exploitation of resources based on access to governance, institutions, social norms and capacities |

Source: This table is derived from the United Nations SDG-based risk framework and covers 12 sectors. Other sectors include political stability, democratic space, religion and global influences, internal security, justice and rule of law, economic stability, infrastructure and access to social services, displacement and migration, and public health. For more information see the following document: https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=194928

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The diagnostic and intersectional assessment can be done in a single or multiple small group setting or a participatory workshop with the involvement of representatives of vulnerable groups, policymakers and other stakeholders. In addition, several tools can inform this step, and have already been applied in similar settings. These include vulnerability, resilience and poverty assessments, as well as assessments related to gender inequality and access to services and infrastructure (see Box 4).

Primary quantitative and qualitative data collection can effectively support both diagnostic and intersectional analysis, in particular the investigation and measurement of the extent of vulnerabilities that vulnerable groups are exposed to. Quantitative data collection is mainly based on surveys.[6] However, surveys, representing traditional sources of disaggregated quantitative data and statistics, often have serious limitations in the identification and assessment of the problems that affect vulnerable groups. Given the characteristics of the design and the limited sizes of their samples, surveys are generally not capable of providing reliable estimates of key variables for most vulnerable groups. For this reason, in order to obtain accurate statistics on vulnerable groups, one often must rely on non-traditional data sources (such as administrative records, geospatial information and other big data sources) or on model-based estimation methods that rely on the integration of multiple data sources, including surveys and non-traditional sources. Therefore, it is important to engage with relevant representatives of statistical offices, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations at the inception stage of the data collection exercise. Qualitative data have the advantage of providing detailed information on specific local contexts on issues such as the types and extents of discrimination or the level of satisfaction of rights holders. Interviews and focus group discussions with local communities and stakeholders can fulfill this purpose.

6        There are various levels of data disaggregation. In agricultural surveys, we are working on sex-disaggregated data, but this is far from being systematic and regular. Intersectional analysis is even more absent.

# ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

BOX 4

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

- Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments (CCVA): assessment of the vulnerability of regions, including remote areas and Indigenous communities, susceptible to creating more vulnerable groups
- SDG accelerator and bottleneck assessment: opportunity assessment, assessment of resilience
- Strategic Framework for WASH Climate Resilience
- IFAD Climate Adaptation in Rural Development (CARD) Assessment Tool: assessment of the vulnerability of major crops to climate change

## SOCIAL/POVERTY/POVERTY REDUCTION

- World Bank's Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA): assessment of the distributional and social impacts of policy reforms on well-being across groups, particularly on the poor and vulnerable
- Word Poverty Clock
- IFAD's Multidimensional Poverty Assessment Tool (MPAT): provides information and data for a clearer understanding of rural poverty at household and village levels
- Oxfam's Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis: vulnerability assessment tool in communities where natural disasters are key drivers of poverty and suffering
- FAO (2008): Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (e-course).
- FAO (2019): Framework on Rural Extreme Poverty
- FAO (2018): Ending extreme poverty in rural areas: sustaining livelihoods to leave no one behind
- FAO (2021): A technical guide for rural poverty analysis: from measuring poverty to profiling and targeting the poor in rural areas (previously referred to as "rural poverty toolkit")
- Associated "two-pagers": Poverty measurement, Poverty maps, Poverty profiles, and Poverty targeting
- E-learning courses on rural poverty reduction
- WFP (2018): Vulnerability and Mapping Analysis

## SOCIAL PROTECTION

- FAO and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) (202): Social protection coverage toolkit
- FAO and ILO (2021): Extending Social Protection to Rural Areas
- FAO (2018): FAO Technical Guide 1 – Introduction to gender-sensitive social protection programming to combat rural poverty: Why is it important and what does it mean?
- FAO (2016): Strengthening coherence between agriculture

and social protection to combat poverty and hunger in Africa – framework for analysis and action
- FAO (2016): Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection to combat poverty and hunger in Africa – diagnostic tool

## GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- UN Women rapid assessment tool to evaluate gender equality and women's empowerment results in humanitarian contexts
- UN Women Gender Equality Capacity Assessment Tool
- WHO Health Equity Assessment Toolkit
- FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (2016): Gender mainstreaming and human rights based approach: guidelines for technical officers
- FAO (2016): A gender-responsive approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning in the agriculture sector: guidance for supporting rural women and men to build resilience in the face of disasters.
- FAO (2016): Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction in agriculture: a training guide
- FAO (2016): Gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for building resilient livelihoods

## HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES

- FAO (2012): The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
- FAO (2015): Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication
- FAO (2016): Exploring the human rights-based approach and the Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines
- FAO (2018): How can we protect men, women and children from gender-based violence? Addressing GBV in the food security and agriculture sector
- E-learning series on Responsible Governance of Tenure
- FAO Right to Food Guidelines, including the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox

## DATA COLLECTION AND MEASUREMENT

- FAO (2021): Guidelines on data disaggregation for SDG indicators using survey data
- FAO (2023): Integrating surveys with geospatial data through small area estimation to disaggregate SDG indicators at subnational level

## POLICIES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES AND INEQUALITIES OF VULNERABLE GROUPS



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**The diagnostic and intersectional analysis leads to the identification of vulnerable groups and the types of vulnerabilities that would require policy measures.**

Recommendations can be built around actions and interventions that tackle climate vulnerability, structural barriers (including quality institutions) and capacity gaps; improving access to services and measures to improve production; and market access and income generation. When addressing the root causes, challenges and risks of marginalization, attention needs to be paid to institutional, social and gender issues, and efforts should be made to narrow gender gaps in specific policy sectors. (In this context, Box 5 provides an example related to gender-responsive budgeting.) Consideration should be given to connecting social and environmental safeguards to minimize trade-offs among environmental, social and economic priorities to maximize contributions from public investments.

Although specific actions will depend on the country context, there are interventions known to contribute to better livelihoods and reduce marginalization and discrimination while acting as buffers against future challenges. Interventions also should prioritize the multiplying of positive effects across sectors and groups. For example, in rural areas, land reform laws aiming to remove discriminatory practices against women or Indigenous communities can be more beneficial for the community as a whole in terms of improved agricultural productivity, rural development and social cohesion. In addition, land consolidation policy and programmes can help smallholder farmers overcome structural problems in agriculture with excessive land fragmentation and small sizes of agricultural holdings and farms, and they can address the need for improved agricultural infrastructure, such as rural roads, irrigation and drainage.

Table 6 provides an overview of suggested interventions, with **specific policy actions and capacity development and planning** efforts to improve the well-being of vulnerable groups and those aiming at green, clean and sustainability practices and investments. Interventions need to be selected to address the specific challenges of vulnerable groups and available resources and to consider novel solutions and interventions, such as those on green transition. Interventions and policy measures that deliver greater impacts, both in terms of size and spillover, should be prioritized. Actions with larger impact can sometimes face resistance from rural communities and social movements due to the specificities of the local context and sensitivities in the region. In those situations, it is more efficient to focus

on small-scale interventions. Interventions also are more efficient when they form part of an integrated framework with larger strategies on rural and agrifood systems.

The selection of policy responses should be informed by **recommendations** from human rights and relevant organizations, national and subnational priorities, the voices of local communities – including those furthest behind – gender issues, existing interventions, and policy coherence considerations. In this context, several policy coherence assessments conducted in the context of the SDGs can provide guidance on how best to ensure policy alignment and appropriate linkages.

**TABLE 6. EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTIONS BASED ON LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA (PART 1/2)**

| Interventions | Example from UNSDG (2022) | Example for agrifood systems | Example social and environmental safeguards |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Skills development** | Improving specific skills of vulnerable groups through targeted programmes | • Supporting extension officers to improve skills in production and ensure LNOB groups are able to join educational programmes on agrifood systems<br>• Strengthening collective action for skills development leveraging – for example, farmer field schools or farmer business schools | Promoting organic and resilient production choices for vulnerable groups |
| **Valuing and taking into consideration local knowledge** | Indigenous communities can provide important insights on environmental change and climate adaptation | Valuing and promoting local/Indigenous food systems, including traditional crops, varieties, breeds and protection of genetic resources | Using local knowledge to promote resilience |
| **Advocacy: campaigning to bring societal changes** | National, subnational, and local government-led public awareness campaigns | • Campaigns to address nutritional challenges (e.g. for children and pregnant women)<br>• Campaigns for green/clean practices | Promote green production to produce nutritious foods, including the use of green energy and other inputs, and their access for vulnerable groups |
| **Enabling environment** | Undertaking equality assessments to identify laws and policies that may be contributing to inequality<br>Quotas and affirmative action policies | • Ensuring that women and vulnerable groups benefit from incentives (financial, subsidies, cooperatives, and other programmes)<br>• Ensuring access to/tenure security over land | • Making sure vulnerable groups have access to green and clean programmes and incentives<br>• Ensuring access to/tenure security over land |

| Interventions | Example from UNSDG (2022) | Example for agrifood systems | Example social and environmental safeguards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capacity development | Supporting organizations assisting LNOB groups, additional indicators, and capacities of involved government agencies | Supporting local experts on nutrition, food security, and agricultural practices to improve yields and data collection covering LNOB groups in agrifood systems | Developing programmes on organic and green practices, especially to promote nutritious food production |
| Protecting rights | Ensuring vulnerable groups' rights in access to services and support systems as well as natural resources and tenure rights | In addition to education and health care, within agrifood systems it is important to protect and promote land rights, food rights and children's rights | Ensuring the rights of vulnerable groups are considered when green and clean development is planned and implemented |
| Women's empowerment | Improving the participation of women in decision-making, leadership positions, and access to resources | Promoting women's leadership in agencies and ensuring women's participation in cooperatives and development programmes | Making sure of women's access and benefits from green and sustainability initiatives |
| Partnerships with civil society, local communities, cooperatives and social movements | Promoting and supporting community-led programmes, improving the participation and leadership of marginalized groups in decision-making | • Engaging local organizations and communities in planning, with a focus on agrifood systems<br>• Supporting communities to engage in such processes effectively | Ensuring the participation of the listed groups and agencies and making sure they are also involved in planning for green practices |
| Quality and accessibility of services | • Ensuring equity in budget allocation and gender-responsive budgeting<br>• Improving the quality of and access to basic infrastructure | • Assessing financial allocation by gender and vulnerable groups<br>• Ensuring infrastructure development in areas relevant for these groups and locations, including market access, irrigation and storage | Making sure as much as possible to consider green practices, infrastructure and access to vulnerable groups |
| Social protection | Supporting assessments and revisions of social protection policies | Ensuring LNOB groups' access to and relevance of support programmes, including food stamps, cash transfers and emergency assistance for droughts and other impacts | Assisting in the allocations of transfers to vulnerable groups for green and clean practices |
| Emergency preparedness | Ensuring that policies and systems are in place for disasters and hazards | Introducing measures to assist during droughts, floods and other hazards, such as food aid and other support, with modes to reach vulnerable groups | Promoting green and nature-based solutions ensuring access to vulnerable groups |

# GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN NORTH MACEDONIA

BOX 5



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Gender-responsive budgeting is an approach developed by UN Women to close gender gaps and reduce gender inequalities through transparency and accountability in national policies and budgeting.

According to UN Women, gender-responsive budgeting as a policy tool ensures that public resources are collected and allocated in ways that promote gender equality and women's empowerment by analysing central and local administrative budgets to assess gender funding gaps, identify actions to close them and ensure that commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment are adequately funded.

The approach helped the North Macedonian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy recognize that financial access for women agricultural producers is a driving force for sustainable small agricultural businesses and the reduction of gender inequality among small farmers, as well as in the agricultural sector in general.

Under a new government programme called Measure 115, through gender-responsive budgeting, 250 women farmers benefited from grants to expand their businesses.

Sources:
**UN Women**. 2021. Women agricultural producers in North Macedonia get help to grow their businesses. In: *UN Women*. https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/10/feature-women-agricultural-producers-in-north-macedonia-get-help-to-grow-their-businesses
**UN Women**. 2023. Gender-responsive planning and budgeting. In: *UN Women Europe and Central Asia*. https://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/turkey/national-planning-and-budgeting
**UN Women**. 2023. Gender Responsive Budgeting. In: *UN Women Asia and the Pacific*. https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/gender-responsive-budgeting

# STEP 3

## INDICATOR DESIGN TO ADDRESS LNOB ISSUES


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**The purpose of selecting indicators is to better measure and monitor the performance of actions and interventions that target LNOB groups.**

These indicators should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), context-specific, and based on the analyses completed in the previous steps. Many organizations frequently produce indicators on development and welfare issues (e.g. human development indicators, the multidimensional poverty index, the inequality-adjusted human development index, the gender inequality index, and SDG indicators and country databases). These indicators and data can be used as a starting point for the design of LNOB indicators. The following three features make LNOB indicators unique (based on Denz, Huys and Silvestrini, 2021):[7]

- Targeted/focused: LNOB indicators are focused on a particular group in the population – those who are (or are at risk of) being left behind.

- Disaggregated: They are able to provide information on different subgroups, according to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, location (urban/rural) and so on, allowing for cross-comparisons.

- Show group (mean) difference: They capture the difference between a group left behind and the rest of the population.

These three features can be applied to a set of indicators to capture the situation of vulnerable groups and measure the impact of implemented policies. When selecting indicators, priority should be given to **existing indicators**, aligning to the extent possible with national monitoring frameworks or systems, as creating new indicators is costly and time-consuming. Indicators can come from the SDG monitoring framework (Table 7), as disaggregation is required for the monitoring of the SDGs, in line with the LNOB principle, **to account for specific vulnerable groups**. We also propose additional indicators to capture the specific features of the agrifood systems that are covered in the SDGs only to a limited extent.

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7       Denz, Huys and Silvestrini's (2021) LNOB indicator toolbox contains many useful materials and information that can support national LNOB mainstreaming processes during the indicator development phase.

**Required disaggregation:** SDG indicators can be used to monitor the well-being of vulnerable groups in agrifood systems. In most cases, the SDG indicator framework requires disaggregation by sex, age (including children under 5 years), occupation, disability, and economic or other status of groups such as race, ethnicity, origin (migrants), and religion.

**Specific SDG indicators relevant for the monitoring of well-being of vulnerable groups**

**SDG 1.** Proportion of the population in poverty (1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2); proportion of the population covered by social protection (1.3.1); access to basic services (1.4.1); secure tenure rights to land (1.4.2); deaths, missing and affected persons due to disasters (1.5.1); economic loss attributed to disasters (1.5.2); local governments with local disaster risk reduction strategies (1.5.4); official development assistance allocated to poverty reduction (1.a.1); government spending on services (education, health social protection) (1.a.2); and pro-poor public social spending (1.b.1)

**SDG 2.** Prevalence of undernourishment, moderate/severe food insecurity (2.1.1, 2.1.2), stunting (2.2.1), and malnutrition (2.2.2); productivity of small-scale food producers (2.3.1); average income of small-scale food producers (2.3.2); total official flows to the agriculture sector (2.a.2); and food price anomalies (2.c.1)

**SDG 3.** Coverage of essential health services (3.8.1); mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution (3.9.1) and to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and hygiene (3.9.2)

**SDG 4.** Completion rate (primary, lower and upper secondary education) (4.1.2); parity indices for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated (4.5.1); population with proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills (4.6.1); and schools offering basic services, by type of service (4.a.1)

**SDG 5.** Time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (5.4.1); agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (5.a.1); proportion of countries where the legal framework guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control (5.a.2)

**SDG 6.** Population with safely managed drinking water services (6.1.1), with (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility (6.2.1), and water- and sanitation-related official development assistance (6.a.1); local administrations with policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management (6.b.1)

**SDG 7.** Population with access to electricity (7.1.1) and clean fuels, technology (7.2.1)

**SDG 8.** Proportion of informal employment (8.3.1); average earnings (8.5.1); unemployment rate (8.5.2); child labour (8.7.1); occupational injuries (8.8.1); compliance with labour rights (8.8.2); and access to a bank account, mobile money services (8.10.2)

**SDG 9.** Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road (9.1.1); proportion of the population covered by a mobile network, by technology (9.c.1)

**SDG 10.** Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 percent of the population (10.1.1); proportion of people living below 50 percent of the median income (10.2.1); proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed (10.3.1); number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration (10.7.3); and proportion of the population who are refugees (10.7.4)

**SDG 14.** Application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework that recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries. (14.b.1)

**SDG 15.** Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits (15.6.1)

**SDG 16.** Proportions of positions in national and local institutions (legislatures, public service, judiciary) by sex, age, persons with disabilities (16.7.1); proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group (16.7.2)

Note: The titles of the indicators were shortened to fit the table. The numbers in brackets correspond to the indicator numbers in the Global SDG indicator framework (United Nations, undated). Other indicators are based on the authors' suggestions as well the *Rural Multidimensional Poverty Index* (FAO and OHPI, 2022).

| Other indicators |
|---|
| Small-scale food producers and other relevant farmers and producer groups with access to high-quality seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, extension services and credit in district/country/specific project area, disaggregated by gender, size of farm, income, and region |
| Proportion of small-scale food producers and other relevant farmers and producer groups with access to storage and involved in the processing of their harvest in district/country/specific project area |
| Proportion of small-scale food producers and other relevant farmers and producer groups with market access to sell their harvest in national, regional and local markets |
| Production losses due to environmental and climate change impacts, including production losses due to droughts, floods and lack of access to irrigation, costs, pest and diseases impacts and related loss of production (monetary or non-monetary), seasonal food security and nutrition challenges during droughts, floods and other extreme weather, food aid needs (volume, value) |

Note: The titles of the indicators were shortened to fit the table. The numbers in brackets correspond to the indicator numbers in the Global SDG indicator framework (United Nations, undated). Other indicators are based on the authors' suggestions as well the *Rural Multidimensional Poverty Index* (FAO and OHPI, 2022).

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It is also important to keep in mind that indicators can come in a variety of forms. They can be quantitative (such as those coming from censuses and surveys or geospatial information systems to help localize the geographic and social position of vulnerable groups) or qualitative (such as those coming from stories, interviews and focus groups). It is essential that different forms of disaggregation of time-series data be used to understand marginalization trends and the multiple and compounding dimensions of discrimination. Finally, disaggregated data are often unavailable in areas where they are needed the most – sometimes due to political leaders' reluctance to obtain certain data, but mostly because in many cases vulnerable populations are minority groups or population groups that are hard to reach with traditional data collection systems, leading to their underrepresentation in most survey samples. Thus, it is vital to involve national statistical offices in designing a dedicated survey programme that can help address the peculiarity of specific disaggregation dimensions needed for developing indicators that would help in identifying and monitoring vulnerable groups. This should be done in collaboration with policymakers and with the participation of local communities and vulnerable groups. Governing authorities also should be committed to funding statistical offices to undertake relevant surveys and research.

# ATLAS OF ROMA COMMUNITIES IN SLOVAKIA AND EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF ROMA COMMUNITIES IN BULGARIA

BOX 6



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Since the 1970s, surveys and quantitative research have been implemented to map the discrimination faced by the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. In Slovakia, for instance, the United Nations Development Programme, in coordination with the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities and Municipalities, surveyed 1 575 Roma settlements in 2004 and 1 070 in 2013. The survey contributed to a mapping of spatial distribution of Roma communities and the collection of highly granular data on the availability of infrastructure in their communities; their level of access to social, education and health services; and the activities of their people, including political, cultural and economic. Approximatively 30 researchers, including activists, employees of the Roma Plenipotentiary Office, and university fellows (with half of them being Roma) were mobilized for the survey. The collected data helped support policymaking and mobilize European Union funds.

The National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of the Roma (2021-2030) is a policy guideline for the implementation of strategies to increase the inclusion and participation of the Roma in the economic and social sphere. The monitoring process (known as "The System") is based on an indicator model and, using primary data, establishes a set of quantitative targets to track progress to meet the 2030 Agenda and ensure the achievement of the long-term ambition of reducing disparities between the Roma and the general population.

The System involves periodic and systematic verification, assessment and monitoring of the progress and quality of the implementation of the Strategy, as well as various interventions to ensure the inclusion and participation of vulnerable ethnic communities with a focus on the Roma, including activities, projects, research and studies involving different municipality levels, non-governmental organizations, institutions, and so on. The System has the following functions:

• Data collection through formal and informal methods at local, regional and national levels in diverse sectors.

• Analysis of the collected information and impact assessment.

• Learning lessons and formulating recommendations and guidelines for improving the implementation of the National Strategy and integration policies.

# STEP 4

## MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY


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**To ensure that LNOB policies are fulfilled, a continuous tracking of policy performance and a system of accountability will be required.**

Monitoring and accountability should allow for a continuous review of actions and interventions in favour of the vulnerable to ensure that the intended results are achieved. Successful **monitoring and tracking of policy performance** relies on granular data rich in quantitative, qualitative, spatial and temporal information to closely assess and monitor those who have benefited from actions and interventions. Using the collected data, a set of achievable local and national targets should be defined, with an aim of closing any gaps and eliminating inequality and marginalization. Targeted strategies can, inter alia:

- Track the rate of change among vulnerable groups with respect to the median or other groups: for example, income changes, access to food, diet structure and access to services such as health care, education, credit and others.
- Set up several year-long milestones: for example, reduce from 30 percent to 25 percent the rate of small-scale women farmers who have no access to credit in the next two to three years.
- Focus on – when a target has no measurable upper bound, such as life expectancy – reducing disparities between men and women and between those furthest behind and those better off.
- Include a geographical dimension: for example, reduce by at least 5 percent every year the ratio of landless farmers in every rural setting.
- Set targets on and give more attention to the largest drivers of marginalization and inequality and intersectoral issues.

In addition to these quantitative targets, a set of qualitative goals should be set up to measure and monitor the institutional and policy frameworks and efforts put in place to address LNOB issues. Examples can include the extent to which local laws (such as labour and land legislation) align with national legislation and international human rights or systems and financial allocations put in place to increase the engagement of vulnerable groups. Finally, monitoring will be more effective if close collaboration exists among statistical agencies, local communities, and human rights institutions and agencies working directly on LNOB issues in the areas of gender, youth, social protection and disability, among others.
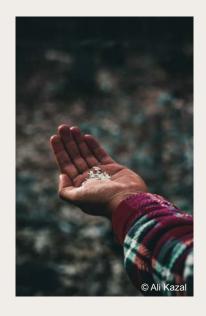
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**Accountability mechanisms** are about the relationships between policymakers and duty bearers, on the one hand, and rights holders impacted by decisions and actions, on the other (UNICEF, 2021). Therefore, a sound accountability mechanism should be implemented to allow vulnerable groups to be heard and express their grievances, through formal or informal channels, and sanction bad practices. Action items in the accountability framework can be divided into three groups (UNICEF, 2021):

- Responsibility: Clearly specify the allocation of roles and responsibilities between stakeholders and set up a coordination mechanism.

- Answerability: Improve community access to information and create a feedback environment and a space for influence and participation.

- Enforceability: Set up a regulatory framework and strengthen internal and external control mechanisms.


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Implementing an accountability mechanism can be challenging, especially in countries with weak capacities or where vulnerable groups are not open to holding policymakers accountable. To improve accountability, a number of avenues can be explored, such as educating rural communities on accountability and building vulnerable groups' capacities with regard to claiming rights, developing a transparent budgeting system, tracking the achievement of human rights, supporting national and local media freedom, and prioritizing participation in programme development and reviews.

Additionally, data collected for and information on the progress achieved in LNOB monitoring can contribute to countries' voluntary national reviews of SDG implementation, showing efforts to achieve specific SDGs while leaving no one behind. This information also can be used to revise and adjust the developed strategies and plans to account for changes in the situation of the vulnerable groups – for example, changes in risks, national and global trends, actual effectiveness of the implemented policies and measures to improve the conditions of vulnerable groups, and others.

# CHECKLIST
## INTEGRATION OF LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND PRINCIPLE INTO AGRIFOOD PLANNING DOCUMENTS

### STEP 1. DIAGNOSTIC AND INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS
**Outcomes**: A list of specific vulnerable groups that accounts for different aspects of their exclusion and root causes of their challenges, including intersectional vulnerability and heterogeneity

### SPECIFIC STEPS:
**Diagnostic: identification of vulnerable groups and root causes**

- [ ] Identify groups that are vulnerable: Who is vulnerable? Who are the poor? Who are the food insecure? Based on published studies, policy priorities, statistics and indicators, and feedback from vulnerable groups and agencies working with them, specify the subgroups within the vulnerable groups and list specific characteristics that make the subgroups vulnerable, including multiple characteristics: What are the aspects of compounding risks and disadvantages resulting from multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities and heterogeneity?
- [ ] List specific services, opportunities, inputs and production options, including income opportunities: What benefits/services/advantages are the groups excluded from?
- [ ] Identify the root causes of why the groups are excluded from benefits: What are the root causes of marginalization? Why? Identify sources of vulnerability and why the groups are facing disadvantages.

**Intersectional analysis**

- [ ] Identify a broader context and specific issues that could influence inequality within a vulnerable group to explore how identities (class, race, gender and other) intersect to determine well-being outcomes and means of discrimination, especially in terms of food security, agrifood systems, land, the environment and climate change.
- [ ] Because the issue of vulnerability intersects with ongoing activities, these efforts may already have been covered in national and subnational agricultural planning and/or other assessments.

### STEP 2. POLICIES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES AND INEQUALITIES OF VULNERABLE GROUPS
**Outcomes**: A list of specific policy measures and interventions to address the challenges and inequalities that the identified vulnerable groups are facing

### SPECIFIC STEPS:
**Policy actions and capacity development and planning**

- [ ] Identify specific policy measures and interventions, which could include skills development; exploring local knowledge; advocacy, such as campaigning to bring societal changes; enabling environment; capacity development; protecting rights; women's empowerment; partnerships with civil society, local communities, cooperatives and social movements; quality and accessibility of services; social protection; access to jobs, job creation; access to resources and services; emergency preparedness.
- [ ] Identify measures and interventions to address multiple challenges of vulnerable groups, including social and environmental safeguards so vulnerable groups can access green and sustainable solutions.
- [ ] Identify measures and interventions that deliver greater impacts, both in terms of size and spillovers.
- [ ] Identify measures and interventions that create positive reinforcement between interventions by ensuring policy coherence.

# CHECKLIST

**Recommendations of needed actions by LNOB groups**

☐ Once policy responses are identified, recommendations from human rights and rural organizations, national and subnational priorities, the voices of local communities – including those furthest behind – and gender issues should be taken into account.

## STEP 3. INDICATOR DESIGN TO ADDRESS LNOB ISSUES
**Outcomes**: A list of selected indicators to measure and monitor the performance of actions and interventions targeting, and the overall situation of, the identified vulnerable groups

### SPECIFIC STEPS:
**Using existing indicators, including the 2030 Agenda**

☐ Indicators to monitor policy impacts and the situation of vulnerable groups in the context of LNOB need to focus on the identified groups, disaggregated by characteristics such as gender, age, disability, and so on, allowing for cross-comparisons to capture differences between a group left behind and the rest of the population.

☐ For indicator selection, focus on existing indicators, such as those of the 2030 Agenda (particularly SDGs 1 through 10), with added disaggregation to account for vulnerable groups.

**Additional disaggregation to account for LNOB**

☐ It also is important to keep in mind that data for indicators can come in a variety of forms: quantitative (such as coming from censuses and surveys or geospatial information systems to help localize the geographic and social position of vulnerable groups) or qualitative (such as those coming from stories, interviews and focus groups).

☐ Indicators should be developed in collaboration with national statistical offices and policymakers, with the participation of local communities, vulnerable groups, and community and civil society organizations.

## STEP 4. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY
**Outcomes:** Monitoring and accountability mechanisms are created to allow a continuous review of actions and interventions in favour of the vulnerable to ensure that the intended results are achieved

### SPECIFIC STEPS:
**Monitoring and tracking of policy performance**

☐ Identify key actors from central government to support the monitoring process.

☐ Create a participatory and inclusive team comprising local stakeholders and communities.

☐ Nominate a local focal point to be in charge of monitoring.

☐ Create opportunities for local actors to take part in national reviews.

☐ Ensure that budgets and capacities are available and that gaps in these areas are addressed.

☐ Develop a work programme, including a calendar of reports.

**Accountability mechanisms**

☐ Ensure that all members of the process understand their duties and responsibilities.

☐ Appoint a local focal point to be in charge of accountability matters.

☐ Discuss with the team how to improve transparency and accountability.

☐ Agree on information exchange at all levels of governance.

☐ Identify a mechanism for sharing information and for making information accessible to citizens.

☐ Work with partners to include progress on LNOB, measures, and specific indicators in national reporting on the 2030 Agenda, including voluntary national reviews.Indicators should be developed in collaboration with national statistical offices and policymakers, with the participation of local communities, vulnerable groups, and community and civil society organizations.

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