



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# THE GENDER IN AGRICULTURAL POLICIES ANALYSIS TOOL (GAPo)

## SWAZILAND

A women farmer from  
Manyandzeni Village  
©FAO/Giulio Napolitano



Women play crucial roles in rural economies, where the fight against hunger, malnutrition and poverty is most urgent. Yet, compared to men, they often face significant gender-based constraints, particularly in access to productive resources, services and economic opportunities. These gender inequalities prevent women from reaching their full potential, weakening the agricultural sector and undermining rural development.

Agricultural policies have a strong comparative advantage in enhancing gender equality in rural settings and accelerating rural women's empowerment. Well-designed agricultural policies can close the gender gap in agriculture and rural labour markets, generate gains in agricultural output, increase food security, and foster economic growth.

Policy reforms aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination and promoting equal access to resources, services, technologies, markets and opportunities can allow women and men to equally participate in rural development, cope with challenges, and benefit from opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Because women and men play different roles and face different constraints and opportunities, agricultural

policies and programmes affect them differently. While some policies incorporate specific provisions to foster gender equality, others may include measures that discriminate against women.

The degree of gender sensitivity of a policy is determined by the extent to which it takes into account relevant gender dimensions and incorporates measures to allow women and men to enjoy the same rights and opportunities, while ensuring that their different life conditions, needs and aspirations are equally valued and supported.

FAO has developed the **Gender in Agricultural Policies Analysis Tool (GAPo)** to assist national governments and relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of effective, gender-sensitive agricultural policies, with a view to achieving SDGs.

**BOX 1 - Priority areas for policy action** include eliminating discrimination against women in access to resources, services and markets; investing in labour-saving and productivity-enhancing technologies and infrastructure to free up women's time; enhancing women's participation in rural organizations and institutions (FAO, 2011).

# How the GAPo works

The GAPo aims to provide policy-makers with practical, evidence-based guidance for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through agricultural policies, with a view to achieving the new Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. It allows stakeholders involved in policy processes to analyse and assess the gender equality gaps in existing agricultural policies and identify concrete policy solutions to address those gaps. As a policy support tool, the GAPo:

1. promotes a participatory approach to policy analysis, facilitating open dialogue among representatives of key government bodies, civil society organizations, producer associations, the private sector, and academia;

2. places special emphasis on the following policy areas that have the strongest potential to influence rural women's livelihoods: access to productive resources, employment, markets, financial services, agricultural research, rural advisory services, social protection, and rural organizations;
3. recognizes that within each policy area, gender equality should be considered at all stages of the policy cycle: problem analysis, policy formulation, definition of policy goals and impact indicators, budgeting, capacity development of relevant actors, monitoring and evaluation, and policy adaptation.



KYRGYZSTAN

Farmer harvesting cotton in  
Jalal-Abad Oblast  
©FAO/Sergey Kozmin

## Implementing the GAPo at the country level

At the country level, the GAPo implementation consists of five phases. Each of these phases includes logically interlinked steps and activities. The GAPo provides detailed methodologies and tools for each phase.

### Phase 1: Inception and raising awareness about the GAPo process

Phase 1 sets the stage for the implementation of the GAPo by establishing key partnerships in the country. Through consultations with actors involved (directly or indirectly) in agriculture-related policy processes, the GAPo helps identify a core group of partners and stakeholders from different sectors (government, civil society, the private sector, academia) and establish a multidisciplinary team to provide guidance and support in the implementation of the tool. In this way, the various stakeholders have a voice in the agenda setting process from the beginning of the process.

### Phase 2: Policy and institutional mapping

Phase 2 aims to identify and build a repository of the main policies, programmes and national institutions that define the agricultural policy landscape of the country, paying particular attention to those that deal with issues that are key for gender equality in agriculture: access to productive resources, employment, markets, rural services, agricultural research, social protection, and rural organizations. The outcome of Phase 2 is a list of policies and programmes for in-depth analysis and a list of relevant stakeholders.

### Phase 3: Analysis of key agricultural policies and programmes

Phase 3 aims to assess the gender sensitivity of selected agricultural policy and programmatic documents, first through an in-depth desk review of policy texts and subsequently through interviews with selected stakeholders. The desk review uses standardized scorecards to assess the degree of gender sensitivity of specific policy provisions (Box 2).

#### BOX 2 - The GAPo scorecard methodology

Depending on how gender inequalities are addressed in a given provision of a policy document, the GAPo analysis classifies it into one of three categories:

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
	<b>Gender-blind or gender-discriminatory policy provision:</b> ignores gender inequalities, or contains measures that discriminate against women
	<b>Gender-neutral policy provision:</b> recognizes gender inequalities, but does not include specific measures to promote gender equality
	<b>Gender-sensitive policy provision:</b> purposefully tackles gender inequalities through specific measures to promote gender equality

The desk review is complemented by interviews to gather stakeholders' views on the strengths and weaknesses of individual policies/programmes, as well as ideas on what further policy actions would be needed to promote gender equality and empower rural women. Phase 3 results in an analytical report summarizing the findings of both the desk review and the stakeholder interviews.

## Using the GAPo to promote gender-sensitive policies in Ghana

In 2015, FAO partnered with the Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the University of Ghana, and selected NGOs and farmers' organizations to implement the GAPo in Ghana.

Focusing on 16 key national agricultural policies, the analysis carried out through the GAPo showed that gender considerations are not equally integrated within these policies. Only seven policies were found to incorporate provisions that tackle gender inequality through specific measures on rural women's

### Phase 4: Validation workshop

Phase 4 consists of a workshop that brings together representatives from agriculture-related ministries, relevant civil society and producer organizations, the private sector, and academia.

The validation workshop is designed to create a forum for multi-stakeholder conversations and discussions in which to jointly review, refine and validate the findings of Phase 3. The workshop enables participants to agree on priorities for policy change and identify concrete steps to make agricultural policies more gender-sensitive.

### Phase 5: High-level policy dialogue

The goal of Phase 5 is to use the findings from the GAPo assessment, validated by national stakeholders, to stimulate policy dialogue and outline concrete actions to make gender-sensitive policy change happen. This is achieved by:

- engaging high-level policy-makers to reflect on the GAPo findings and decide on follow-up steps to tackle critical policy gaps;
- developing a process in which key national stakeholders work together to make agricultural policies more coherent and more responsive to women's needs;
- providing capacity development to policy-makers (at different levels and in different subsectors) in order to improve their skills for gender-sensitive policy formulation and implementation;
- facilitating South-South cooperation to build international partnerships that promote gender-sensitive agricultural policies.

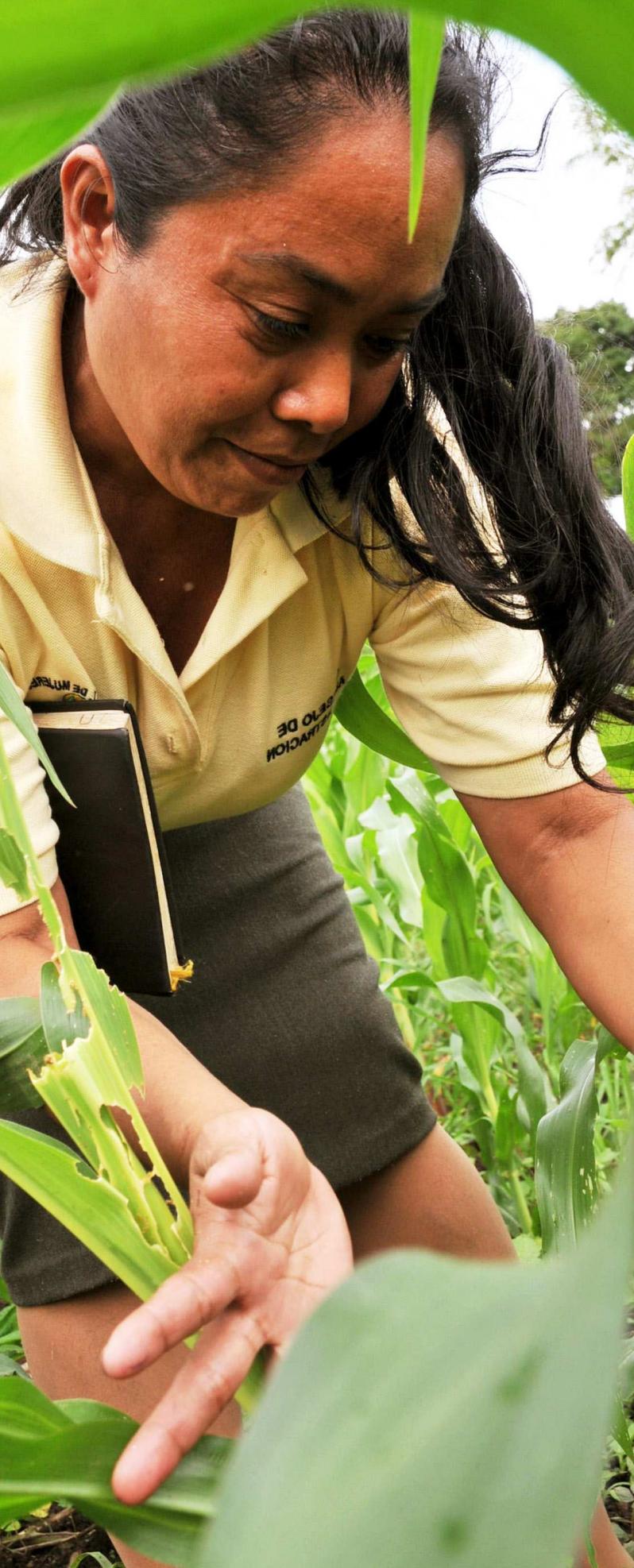
empowerment, while two policies did not consider gender disparities at all. The GAPo analysis also revealed that the majority of policies do not have specific budgets and monitoring and evaluation systems for gender, and lack provisions for developing policy-makers' capacities to address gender inequalities.

As a result of the GAPo implementation, FAO is now supporting the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in the formulation of a technical cooperation programme to help the Government of Ghana address gender inequalities in agricultural policies and programmes, including those regulating agricultural investments.



## NICARAGUA

A women farmer harvesting her products  
©FAO/Saul Palma



## Benefits of the GAPo implementation

The GAPo provides policy-makers with practical guidance for the design of gender-sensitive agricultural policies and programmes. Through its implementation, the GAPo:

- generates a participatory assessment of the gender sensitivity of the main agricultural policy documents, which identifies substantive gaps and policy incoherence;
- identifies key capacity gaps in the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive policies that need to be addressed in order to move forward;
- produces an agreed-upon set of concrete steps for further action, with clear roles and responsibilities for the actors involved;
- gives national stakeholders a strong analytical basis for developing action plans to: improve agricultural policies and make them more gender-sensitive; measure progress in policy adaptation; and design and implement related advocacy and sensitization activities; and,
- helps stimulate multistakeholder discussions, including with grassroots actors, and enhance interinstitutional and cross-sectoral collaboration.

### For further information please contact:

**Susan Kaaria**

Senior Gender Officer  
Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP)  
Email: Susan.Kaaria@fao.org

**Martha Osorio**

Gender and Rural Development Officer  
Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP)  
Email: Martha.Osorio@fao.org

**Libor Stloukal**

Policy Officer  
Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP)  
Email: Libor.Stloukal@fao.org