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AFGHANISTAN

GENDER ANALYSIS

Regional Agricultural Development Program – West (RADP-W)

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Acronyms

AREU	Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit
DAIL	Directorate for Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DDA	District Development Associations
FEG	Farmers Extension Group(s)
KIP	Key Implementing Partner
LFEW	Local Female Extension Worker(s)
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
RADP-W	Regional Agricultural Development Program-West
SHG	Self Help Group(s)
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit(s)

Executive Summary

The objective of Regional Agricultural Development Program-West (RADP-W) is to improve food and economic security for rural Afghans in Badghis, Farah, and Herat provinces. This gender analysis begins by exploring the broad challenges, constraints, and contribution of Afghan women in the country's agriculture sector and goes on to focus on strengthening the RADP-W gender program, by integrating it into the project's agricultural value chain activities through a detailed strategy and integration plan. By beginning with a broader and more nuanced understanding of the larger contextual environment, RADP-W will be better able to implement interventions that take into account social norms and how women's roles are defined in order to effectively expand women's potential roles in economic activities.

As backdrop, the scope of work for this gender assignment required that this analysis: 1) assess the constraints faced by beneficiaries; 2) identify opportunities to engage women in the targeted agricultural value chain activities through the development of a broad strategy and action plan; 3) develop a plan to monitor and measure the results of the proposed strategy; 4) conduct a gender workshop with RADP-W staff and beneficiaries; and 5) report on any challenges and successes faced in carrying out the task. The planned follow-on assignment to this initial output will entail detailed program design, networking, the use of local, private and government institutions and resources, as well as a review of project activities that are in the implementation phase. This second phase will also require training for the entire technical team on the role of women in economic and productive activities.

The methodology for this analysis included an in-depth literature review, in-person and telephone interviews with key informants, including project staff, RADP-W implementing partners, and local stakeholders, as well as focus group discussions with the project's direct female beneficiaries. Several limitations were encountered in conducting this analysis, such as diminished mobility of expatriate personnel to travel directly to beneficiary farms and sites due to security restrictions. Even if expatriates could travel, the high-profile nature of accompanying armed security personnel, along with their armored vehicles would draw unnecessary attention to the farmers in the village and compromise their standing and safety within the local community. Additionally, because of escalating extremist activity in the western region, beneficiaries from Farah and Badghis were not able to travel as often to Herat. Finally, some women required provisions for a *mahram* or male chaperones as a condition precedent to their participation. Notwithstanding this, interviews and discussions were held on existing barriers and the resulting strategies and solutions inform the findings and recommendations of this analysis.

As a roadmap, Section A of this report begins by exploring the rationale for integrating gender in agriculture programs. Section B provides a detailed understanding of the challenges that constrain Afghan women's full and active participation in the agriculture sector. Section C goes on to discuss the actual participation and roles of women in each of RADP-W's value chains including wheat, high value crops, livestock, as well as in nutrition, agribusiness, and the enabling environment. Against this backdrop, Section D analyzes the current situation and provides general findings and recommendations to consider in RADP-W activity planning. Meanwhile, Section E delineates the strategic approach, along with a detailed gender integration plan to inform future programmatic interventions and aims to mainstream gender across the entire RADP-W portfolio. Finally, a provisional list of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of gender integration efforts is provided in Annex 1.

SECTION A. WHY DO WOMEN MATTER? Rationale for Gender Integration

Tackling gender equality and improving food security and livelihoods are not separate agendas but are inextricably intertwined since they both provide rural populations with opportunities for a decent life.

United Nation's Resolution on
Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture,
UN General Assembly, July 27, 2012.

The global population's continued ability to support life on earth is resulting in renewed emphasis on agriculture because of its role in ensuring food security and economic opportunities for the people of the world. Decades of research supports the premise that gender in agriculture matters, from a both an efficiency and equality perspective.¹ From an efficiency point of view, equal access to and control over productive resources results in better development outcomes. For example, USAID reports that when women receive the same quantity and quality of inputs that men typically receive, such as land, agricultural crop yields increase by an estimated 10%.² From an equality point of view, gender parity in all areas of life, including equal access to agricultural resources and services, is a basic human right that has its own intrinsic value.

Women's Crucial Role

Women produce more than 50 percent of the world's food. For example, in Southeast Asia, women provide 90 percent of labor in rice cultivation. In Thailand, women lead 50 percent of field crop cultivation, horticulture, and harvesting. In Pakistan, nearly 80 percent of livestock is managed by women. And in Kenya, women are 75–89 percent of the agricultural labor force.

Source: Williams, Mariama. Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System: A Handbook for Policy-Makers and Other Stakeholders. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003.

Undoubtedly, women do play a central role in agricultural development whether it is laboring in the field, caring for livestock, or post-harvest processing of agricultural products (see text box). On small family farms, women provide a significant proportion of the agriculture labor as unpaid household workers. Commercially, they serve as employees in agribusiness to assist traders and wholesalers contribute to local, national, and global markets. Despite their contribution, women worldwide tend to lack access to natural, physical, financial, and human capital, even though studies have shown that resources and incomes that

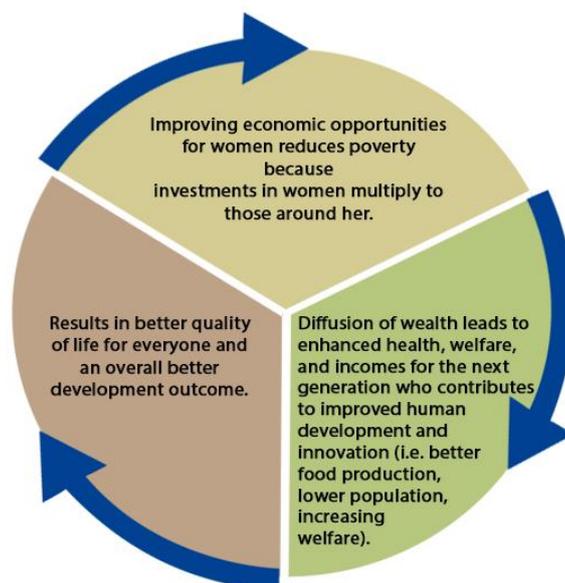
are controlled by women are more likely to be used to improve food consumption and the overall well-being of the entire family. Since women's earnings are generally invested into other family members, gender parity helps to promote economic growth through passage of wealth to multiple generations. When increased wealth contributes to greater human development, populations become more educated and more nourished thereby further

1 Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook at <http://go.worldbank.org/YQ4LDN9AB0>; The World Development Report: Agriculture for Development at <http://go.worldbank.org/ZJIAOSUFU0>; International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development at www.agassessment.org

2 <https://www.usaid.gov/infographics/50th/why-invest-in-women>

contributing to economic growth and promoting development. The perpetual, positive feedback loop that this cycle creates has been termed the “virtuous development cycle.”³

Figure 1. Virtuous Development Cycle
How Gender Equality Fosters Better Development Outcomes



SECTION B. BARRIERS & CHALLENGES: Constraints to Participation of Afghan Women in the Agriculture Sector

Overview. Afghan women’s participation in agriculture is complex and is affected by a multitude of dynamics. In order to understand the function of women in Afghanistan’s agrarian society, one must view gender roles through a multi-dimensional lens of intervening factors. Each factor, either alone or combined with others, will largely determine the extent of active participation and role that an Afghan woman occupies in the sector (see text box).

This section builds on the existing research provided by the Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit (AREU) on the nature and level of women’s involvement in Afghanistan’s agriculture sector.⁴ Even though more than a decade has passed since AREU’s research was undertaken, focus groups discussions reveal that very little has changed in Afghanistan, at least as it relates to

Navigating a labyrinth of challenges

Factors that affect equal participation of women in the agriculture sector include:

- Strict cultural norms and traditions
- Socio-economic status
- Marital status and age
- Household composition
- Land ownership
- Land inheritance
- Ethnicity and locality
- Lack of education
- Lack of access to extension services
- Lack of women’s groups and associations
- Lack of access to credit and finance

³ U.S. Agency for International Development, Development & Training Services, Inc. (dTS), Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities: Why it matters for agricultural value chains. November 2009.

⁴ AREU’s seminal publications include: Grace, Jo, Gender Roles in Agriculture: Case Studies of Five Villages in Northern Afghanistan. Kabul: Afghanistan 2004 and Grace, Jo, Who Owns the Farm: Rural Women’s Access to Land and Livestock, Kabul: Afghanistan 2004.

women’s role in agriculture. Understanding the interplay between the various dynamics, which lead to gendered roles will contribute to better planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of RADP-W gender programming.

Restrictive cultural norms and traditions. It goes without saying that Afghanistan is a conservative country rooted in religion, deep traditions, and unique cultural mores. Arising out of these highly cemented, and often overlapping influences, are a set of societal perceptions and norms that severely disadvantage the active participation of women in everyday life. In rural areas, even in relatively progressive regions like western Afghanistan, women in villages are confined to working within the home and behind compound walls to protect the *pardah* or privacy (in this context) of the family. An unwavering belief in the concept of *ghyraat* or male bravery and bravado further promotes cultural restrictions on women since men are seen as breadwinners and providers for the family. Because of long-standing cultural notions of honor and shame, women have restricted mobility and visibility outside of the home. Inside the home, they often carry the bulk of the burden through an all encompassing notion of “housework” which can include domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, child-rearing, caring for the elderly, and agricultural tasks. Even so, women are not credited for their contribution and most of this work is deemed “invisible” because society considers this to be the obligation and duty of a “good” Afghan woman.⁵ Focus groups participants noted that restrictive cultural norms, continued oppression, and a lack of appreciation for women’s contribution leads many women to the practice of self-immolation, which is especially prevalent in western Afghanistan.

Level of wealth. The extent to which a women participates in agriculture and other economic activities also depends on the socio-economic status of her family. Research has shown that Afghan women from wealthier families do not participate as actively in agriculture as those from poorer families (see Table 1). This is likely due to a pervading societal stigma attached to women working on the land. For example, one focus group participant noted that she dreams that her children will not have to toil with grueling conditions of the land and under the harsh sun because this was her lot in life as a poor woman without any other options. However, where a family’s survival depends on women farming the land, then the shame and effect of social stigmas are minimized. Women’s participation in this context is more readily accepted as a measure of last resort to ensure survivability.⁶

Table 1: Females Who Report Working Relative to Socio-Economic Status

	Wealth Level			Total/ Average
	Medium- Better off	Poor	Very Poor	
Number of females interviewed	1701	1701	1701	5103
No work activity reported	53.3	39.3	38.3	43.6
Work activity in any sector	46.7	60.7	61.7	56.4
Women in the agricultural sector	6.9	24.1	30.3	20.5
Planting	0.3	0.9	0.8	0.6
Irrigation	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2

⁵ Grace, Jo, Gender Roles in Agriculture: Case Studies of Five Villages in Northern Afghanistan. Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. 2004

⁶ Grace, Jo, Who Owns the Farm: Rural Women’s Access to Land and Livestock, Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. 2004

Harvesting	2.6	7.3	8.6	6.2
Shepherding	0	0.2	0.5	0.2
Gathering firewood	3.1	10.1	14.5	9.2
Gathering other wild products	0.6	0.9	2.2	1.3
Other farm work	4.5	15	16.3	11.9
Women in other sectors	44.1	50.8	51.5	48.8
Embroidery	14.9	8.5	4.7	9.4
Handicrafts	12.2	15.9	11.8	13.3
Weaving (mostly carpets)	17.8	21	14.8	17.9
Tailoring	29.6	20.6	12.6	21.0
Domestic service	1.6	8.3	25.3	11.8
Relief work	0.1	0.8	0.8	0.6
Other non-farm work	1.1	2.1	2.9	2.1

Source: Maletta, Hector, *Gender and Employment in Rural Afghanistan, 2003-2005*, Journal of Asian and African Studies, Volume 43(2).

Marital status and age. The marital status and age of women also plays a part in how involved they will be in agricultural activities. Generally, women who are close to puberty and culturally deemed to be of marriage age have a heavier *purdah* of privacy (veil in this context) to protect her name and honor. Relegating her to the family home and restricting her movements outside will presumably prevent any stains to her reputation, which would negatively affect her marriage prospects. A focus group participant also noted that it is important for a young, unmarried girl to maintain a fair complexion and stay out of the harsh sun if she wants to optimize her chances of marriage since fair skin is a characteristic that is highly favored by Afghan suitors. That said, when married, young women's participation is also restricted because of the need and pressure to birth children and keep up with household duties. As such, older women who are beyond child-bearing years and younger children, both boys and girls, from poorer families are more likely to work on the land than unmarried or newly married females. Additionally, it is also more acceptable for older women and widows to be granted more freedom in mobility in accessing markets and local bazaars.⁷

Household composition. In most villages, including those in the western Afghanistan, it is still a societal norm for multiple extended families to live as one family unit behind compound walls. These family units can be made up of multiple first or second wives, along with first, second and third generation relatives who all congregate and live under one roof. The allocation of labor and thus women's participation in agriculture will often be dictated by the eldest member, usually the grandfather or eldest male. In this sense, men and women's decision-making powers within the household are minimized due to the age hierarchy. Women who are newly-weds or deemed to be the more "favored" wife among multiple wives will likely not be expected to participate in more grueling, labor-intensive agriculture work. Additionally, the ratio of males to females in the household will also determine the level of participation of women. If there are enough male members of the household, agriculture work on the land will almost always be carried out by them. If on the other hand, there are not enough male members and the family cannot afford to hire laborers, then women may become more involved in crop cultivation as a survival mechanism. Finally, the number of females within the same household will also dictates whether livestock is kept. Since women

⁷ Grace, Jo, *Who Owns the Farm: Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock*, Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. 2004

are the primary caretakers of livestock within the compound, there must be enough women in the household to help shoulder the burden of regular household duties and the additional responsibilities associated with taking care of animals. If the family unit lacks the appropriate number of women to do both, then this will generally preclude ownership of livestock by the family.⁸ Focus group participants corroborated this by stating that the duties associated with caring for livestock is tantamount to caring for a child, as both are associated with much of the same needs and require the same commitment in responsibility, time, and labor.

Land ownership. Despite the household dynamics, if a family unit does not own land then women's access to agricultural activities are negligible. Quite simply, if there is no land in the family, women cannot and do not have physical access to work on it. However, a few women do undertake the role of laborers or sharecroppers on land owned by others, on the condition that her husband or other male relative is also a sharecropper on the same land. However, again, this is only as means of last resort and a practice that takes place only among the very poor. Meanwhile, landowners who are widows and who are also the primary head of their household generally do not undertake work on their own lands and usually sharecrop it out to male relatives.⁹

Land inheritance. In practice, very few Afghan women own land, though they are guaranteed inheritance rights under *Sharia* law both as daughters and as widows. However, de jure rights often do not equal de facto adherence to those rights (see text box). Reasoning based in culture, tradition, and socio-economic terms restrict a woman's land ownership rights, including:

- Insufficient amount of family land available to give to both daughters and sons
- Belief that since a man is the main breadwinner he requires the resources attached to land
- Tradition and culture favor bequeathing property to sons and looks unfavorably on women who make land rights claims
- Women's tendency to keep the peace in families and relinquish their inheritance rights to their brothers out of a sense of love, obligation, or duty
- Belief that familial land will be lost since the women will take the property out of the family upon marriage¹⁰

What the law says....

Daughters: entitled to half their brother's share of the family property

Widows: entitled to one-eighth of her husband's property if she has children from her deceased husband and one-fourth if she has no children

Divorced: not entitled to any share of property

Interestingly, when focus group were asked whether Afghan women were aware of their rights to inherit land and how to go about making a legal claim for land, the majority provided detailed and knowledgeable responses. However, one participant stated, "it's not that we don't know, it's that we don't have the courage." Whether it is or other factors, lack of ownership in land and real property affects a women's overall decision-making authority and autonomy and restricts her access to credit where, almost always, collateral is required.

Ethnicity and locality. Constraints on mobility and involvement in agriculture also vary from region to region and from province to province. Given Afghanistan's rich ethnic diversity, variations in local norms, even within the same region, can be common. For example, in the

⁸ Id.

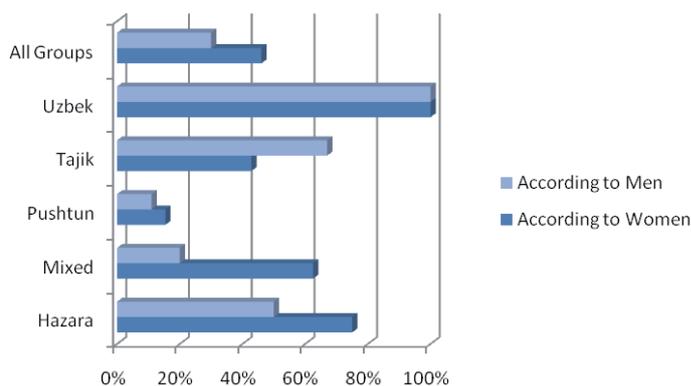
⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Grace, Jo, *Who Owns the Farm: Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock*, Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. 2004

west, women who descend from Turkmen or Hazara ethnicities are generally more liberal and experience more freedom in mobility. Additionally, *Shi'a* women are less restricted in their activities outside the home relative to *Sunni* women of the same region. For example, some *Shi'a* Hazara women are able take their animals to pasture on their own. Whereas for *Sunni* Muslims, it is generally not acceptable for *Sunni* women to take animals for grazing. Instead, they hire shepherds or send their children to graze animals, if they cannot afford hired labor. Notwithstanding that, *Sunni* women in the west, as a whole, experience more liberal attitudes than their counterparts in the more conservative eastern or southern regions of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, nomadic Kuchi women experience the highest level of independence and freedom since most male caretakers are away from encampments for extended periods of time, either grazing animals or taking on wage labor.¹¹

To illustrate this, a 2010 study of gender equity issues under the National Solidarity Program's Community Development Committees involved interviews of 438 men and women from 11 districts in 7 provinces. In those interviews, participants were asked whether women could travel beyond the boundaries of the community with or without a *mahram* or male chaperone. Based on the results, Uzbeks had the greatest mobility, followed by Hazaras and Tajiks. Pashtun women had the lowest mobility. Notably, the perception of a women's ability to travel differed among men and women, with men's responses tending to show his bias towards maintaining the cultural expectation of *purdah* or privacy of the home. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Can Women Travel Beyond the Village With or Without a *Mahram* or Male Chaperone?



Source: Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, Sippi, A Study of Gender Equity through the National Solidarity Programme's Community Development Councils: If Anyone Listens, I have a Lot of Plans, Kabul, DACAAR, 2010.

Lack of education. Afghan women's participation in agriculture, especially in undertaking high value add activities, is especially impeded by a lack of education, illiteracy, lack of technical knowledge and skills, as well as a pervading social stigma against women's pursuit of careers in the agriculture sector. Women involved in agriculture at the household level are largely illiterate and do not have basic reading or arithmetic skills. As such, they are hindered from increasing their productivity when it comes to organizing in groups and carrying out rudimentary business skills such as negotiation and basic accounting. The phenomenon of poorly educated Afghan women is further exacerbated by security issues, the lack of female teachers and schools, early marriage, the burdens of domestic chores, and a general cultural norm that devalues the education of women. Women are constrained in more active involvement because neither business nor agriculture is a preferred career option for women.

¹¹ Id.

Degrees in medicine, education, pharmacy, and other sciences are heavily sought after and revered by Afghan society because females do not want to be viewed as “farmers.”¹² Many also lack self-confidence to succeed in a male-dominated sector, along with little awareness on viable and potential career options in the profession. Halima, a participant in the focus group candidly mentioned that before her participation in RADP-W programs, she had never encouraged her daughter to study agriculture, but now she sees it as not only as a respectable career choice, but also a financially rewarding one.

Lack of access to agricultural extension services. Given these multi-faceted set of constraints, Afghan women cannot readily access training, extension services, or improved technology to help enhance their productivity or provide them increased income-generating opportunities are out of reach. Because women cannot travel freely and cannot intermingle with unrelated males, they are often unable to receive information about new practices or technologies through extension efforts such as field days. Additionally, even if they could access much-needed information and training, the majority would be prohibited from doing so because most extension workers are male. Because of security and mobility constraints, it has proven extremely difficult to recruit and retain qualified female extension workers, especially those willing to travel to remote and often insecure areas. In the case of livestock, even though women play a major role in the sector, difficulties continue to exist in promoting extension services to them. For example, the Dutch Committee of Afghanistan (DCA) has had enormous trouble recruiting female paravets and livestock female extension workers. This is mainly due to the extended 6-month duration of the paravet training course, which is held in provincial centers and the need to have livestock female extension workers meet a minimum educational qualification of a high school diploma. Because of a lack of access to improved technology, training, and extension services, women undertake low-paying, laborious tasks under unsuitable working conditions.¹³



Afghan women balancing childcare duties while undertaking low wage labor under unsuitable and hazardous working conditions (dehairing cashmere, left; shelling pistachios, right).

Lack of women’s groups and associations. Short of gathering to make preparations for a wedding or other celebration such as Eid, Afghan women are not accustomed to holding

¹² Brennan, Stephanie, et. al., *Gender Analysis: Regional Agriculture Development Program (RADP) Afghanistan*, Checchi and Company, May 10, 2012.

¹³ Samuel Hall Consulting, *Social Assessment of the National Horticulture and Livestock Project (NHLP) Final Report*, December 7, 2012.

meetings with a prescribed agenda to discuss important issues that may affect them. Due to the cultural restriction on interacting with non-familial males, it is especially crucial for women involved in agriculture to form producer and trader group associations to facilitate woman-to-woman service delivery. However, women are often constrained in creating these viable links due to illiteracy, restrictions on mobility, and lack of training in planning, marketing, business management, and leadership skills. Additionally, Afghan men can be suspicious of any activity that falls outside the ambit of a woman's widely accepted household roles and that are being supported by outsiders organizing the groups and associations.¹⁴

Lack of access to finance and credit. Afghan women's access to credit is extremely limited. The biggest contributing factor to this is that Afghan women lack ownership of real property that is required as collateral. Most land that is owned is solely in the name of male family members, who are not inclined to give permission to allow women to take out loans using the land as collateral. Compounding this problem overall is the fact that most loans are given at high interest rates and are non-compliant with *Sharia* law and therefore considered to be "un-Islamic." Even when women do obtain loans and enhance their decision-making authority, they are prevented from fully utilizing the funds because of lack of mobility, proper training on how to expand their business, and lack of access to labor and markets.¹⁵

Lending a Hand to Women's Businesses

Rabia Maryam obtained a \$150,000 Agricultural Development Fund loan with a three-year term at 8 percent interest. She has paid off \$130,000 to date. The loan helped her buy property and invest in a modern silk processing factory. She now has a permanent base of operations and was also able to mechanize, increasing product volume and quality. Her experience is not the norm for women business owners attempting to access financing. Most loans are for 6-12 months, with a 10-18 percent interest rate and require land as collateral. Like many businesswomen, Ms. Maryam stresses the need for longer loan terms, improving financial literacy among women, and sensitizing loan officers to gender concerns.

SECTION C. WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? Afghan Women's Role in Agriculture

Overview. Worldwide women make up 43% of the labor force in agriculture.¹⁶ This trend is also mirrored in Afghanistan where women make up a rather large part of the workforce in the male-dominated agriculture sector. Even within the confines of their homes, women are involved in activities that contribute to the production of wheat, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and livestock, all of which can promote the economic security, nutritional diversity, and wellbeing of the family. Commercially, women work mostly in production, harvesting, and processing of export commodities including cashmere, wool, and fruits and nuts. However, women's role and involvement in high value add activities is minimal due to prohibitive cultural beliefs and practices, as well as lack of access to credit, entry into regional and international markets, and lack of education in the form of business skills and entrepreneurial leadership. This section explores the role of women in each of the main and cross-cutting components of the RADP-W program.

Role of women in wheat. Wheat is staple food in Afghanistan, contributing to over half of the average daily caloric intake in Afghan diets. Because of the crucial role it plays in

¹⁴ Wakefield, Shawna and Brandy Bauer, *A Place at the Table: Afghan Women, Men and Decision-making Authority*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Briefing Paper, August 2005.

¹⁵ Lyby Erik, *Microfinance and Gender Roles in Afghanistan, A Study Report*, World Bank, November 2006.

¹⁶ <https://www.usaid.gov/infographics/50th/why-invest-in-women>

sustenance, over 70% of all land in the country is dedicated to the cultivation of wheat.¹⁷ Notwithstanding this, all of the wheat grown in Afghanistan is used for local consumption and imports from neighboring countries are relied upon heavily to meet the shortage of supply.¹⁸ Despite its dominance in Afghanistan's agricultural sector, Afghan women are not heavily involved in wheat production. One major contributing factor for this is that planting and harvesting of wheat requires that the work be done in the fields and farther away from the home.¹⁹ While typically wheat production necessitates the least amount of female involvement in agriculture as opposed to livestock and horticulture production, women still play a role in cleaning, sifting, and storage of wheat.

Role of women in horticulture. Women play key roles in harvesting and post-harvest processing in RADP-W's horticulture chains including in the production of grapes, raisins, vegetables, and high value crops like pistachios, almonds, apricots, and other orchard crops. However, their contribution is limited to the low value add activities due to restrictions on women's mobility, along with a lack of access to inputs, technology, extension services, and finance. At the household level, women's role in horticulture production is usually in harvesting of vegetables and home-based post-harvest processing of fruits, nuts, and vegetables such as cleaning, drying, sorting, packaging, or preserving of products. Most production that is undertaken by women is on a small-scale for subsistence rather than for commercial purposes. This is because female farmers lack technical knowledge, access to inputs and improved technologies, such as greenhouses and plastic tunnels to increase their horticultural output, as well as a lack of facilities like packing houses to effectively aggregate sale to traders. Men, on the other hand, can obtain input supplies and directly link the household to market through sale of products at local bazaars and to middlemen and village-level traders.

At the commercial level, women play a crucial role in post-harvest processing activities, such as cleaning, sorting and drying, and packaging of vegetables, fruits, and nuts for the import and export market. Post-harvest processing usually takes place at the wholesale level where traders and wholesalers outsource these activities to women, who work in their homes or in women-only facilities. The commercial post-harvesting of horticulture products is predominantly a female domain because the work is low paid, laborious, and does not garner interest from men who have other higher paying, viable income options. A number of donor efforts have worked with women to improve post-harvest processing to extend the shelf life of locally grown products which have contributed to improving household incomes and increasing the diversification of family nutrition, including:

- *Processing centers.* Set-up women-owned cooperatives and association such as the Afghan Pride Association, which operated a processing center for dried fruits and nuts and sent female staff to villages to purchase produce directly from women producers
- *Packing centers.* Establishment of packing centers to aggregate product from female producers and provide packing services to traders supplying fruit and vegetables to import and export markets

¹⁷ D'Souza, Anna and Dean Jolliffe, Food Security in Afghanistan: Household-level Evidence from the 2007-08 Food Price Crisis, October 2010.

¹⁸ Regional Agriculture Development Program-West. Wheat value chain strategy. Draft. August 2015.

¹⁹ Grace, Jo, Gender Roles in Agriculture: Case Studies of Five Villages in Northern Afghanistan. Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. 2004.

- *Diary production centers.* Created women’s cheese production centers where female farmers collected milk from their livestock on a weekly basis and took turns making the milk into cheese and selling it in local markets
- *Sulfur and solar dryers.* Introduced use of sulfur and solar dryers to preserve fruits and vegetables and extend the market window for the products, including preserving produce with small imperfections that might otherwise go unsold at markets²⁰

The Kabul Women’s Farm Store

The Kabul Farm Store is a woman-only store that provides local farmers with access to inputs such as seed, fertilizer, trellises, pruning tools, as well as extension services through training, demonstration plots, and greenhouses. The store also provided credit without any interest to its female clients to be repaid at harvest. Additionally, it served an aggregate collection point for women to bring their products to be sold to traders and wholesalers.

World Bank, *Understanding Gender in the Agricultural Value Chain: The Cases of Grape/Raisins, Almonds, and Saffron in Afghanistan*, 2011

Despite the laudable efforts to extend crucial services to women farmers, men remain as the main financial beneficiaries in more lucrative aspects such marketing and trade of the final finished products. Cultural and societal norms, coupled with a highly male dominated agriculture economy, has excluded the full and active participation of women in more profitable horticulture ventures and opportunities.²¹

Role of women in livestock. Most rural Afghan families keep livestock for consumption. Women and children are the main caretakers of small ruminants, including sheep, goats, and poultry. When the livestock is in and around the compound, women are responsible for their management including, caretaking, milking, cleaning, and medical treating. Young children and males will undertake activities that take place outside the compound such as grazing. Despite the fact that women are largely accountable for the health of the animals, they lack vital access to veterinary health care information regarding disease control and prevention. The Dutch Committee of Afghanistan has attempted to remedy this by training female paravets to facilitate greater access. However, there is still a dearth of services within close reach of most Afghan women.

Additionally, most of the diary production from livestock is also carried out by women who are responsible for processing of milk into butter, cheese, and fresh and dried yogurt. But most of these women cannot readily access markets to sell their products and participate in training on improved processing techniques and technology, which would help enhance their productivity or provide them increased income-generating opportunities. Despite the large responsibility they shoulder for livestock, women also do not have much decision-making authority over the animals since they are not considered to “own” them and therefore cannot use them as collateral for finance or credit.²² Meanwhile, de-hairing of cashmere and wool production is another viable entry point for enhancing the role of women in processing of livestock by-products. However, most farmers lack awareness about proper harvesting of cashmere and the actual value of dehaired cashmere. As such, traders usually capture the financial windfall by hiring women to dehair cashmere by hand, a grueling and laborious task that is often carried out in unsuitable working conditions.²³

²⁰ World Bank, *Understanding Gender in the Agricultural Value Chain: The Cases of Grape/Raisins, Almonds, and Saffron in Afghanistan*, 2011.

²¹ *Id.*

²² Nassery, Homira, *Gender Status Report, Rebuilding Agricultural Market Systems (RAMP)*, July 31, 2005.

²³ De Weijer, Franke, *Cashmere Value Chain Analysis, Afghanistan, USAID Accelerated Sustainable Agriculture Program*, 2007.

Role of women in agribusiness. Because agribusiness activities are further along the value chain as high value add activities, women's participation and role is marginal. Once again socio-cultural norms regarding mobility prohibit women from accessing regional and international markets. Furthermore, because most of the key actors in the agricultural value chain, such as input suppliers, middlemen, or traders are men, women are limited from interacting freely with them. While there are a handful of successful women-owned and managed agribusinesses, basic illiteracy combined with a lack of business acumen and local market knowledge regarding prices, product demand, and quality constrains the scale of women's ability to actively participate in agribusiness.²⁴

Role of women and nutrition. Afghanistan's maternal and infant mortality rates are one of the highest in the world. Growth in 59% of Afghan children under the age of five is stunted and another 33% are underweight.²⁵ Dietary diversity is essential for food security and strengthening outputs in agriculture and economic productivity. However, Afghans in urban areas lack proper nutritional education and the situation is further exacerbated in rural communities. By and large, both urban and rural Afghan women are not accustomed to cooking with vegetables in large quantities since the normal Afghan diet is rich in rice and flour. Even when they do cook vegetables, it is done in a manner that minimizes nutritional value. However, RADP-W's focus on increasing the role of women in vegetable cultivation and livestock production can play a crucial role in dietary diversity and the consumption of nutrient-rich foods. Since women are optimally suited to influence the consumption of food within the home, basic education on nutrition concepts, food preparation, dietary diversification, and food sanitation and hygiene should ideally be integrated into RADP-W programs.

Women and the enabling environment. Afghan society does not place heavy emphasis on the education of a girl, especially in rural agrarian communities. Most women do not work outside of the home and the unduly heavy load they carry inside the home is unremunerated. When women do work outside the home, it is often in low-paying, painstaking work that is carried out in hazardous working conditions. Introduction of labor saving technologies could improve production, but it could have a devastating effect on the livelihoods of these women. As such, wholesalers and traders are usually reluctant to displace them with improved technologies. Even when Afghan girls are educated, families prefer that they study in fields such as medicine, education, law, or other sciences due to the stigma attached to working in the agriculture profession. Because of restrictive norms, lack of mobility, and illiteracy, women are unaware of their rights and do not know how to or are prevented from accessing training, information, inputs, improved technologies, and formal systems of redress for their grievances. Women are also underrepresented in Afghanistan's civil service, including in MAIL and DAIL offices and as extension workers. Even when they are present, they often lack any real decision-making authority and are hired in lower grade positions to fill quotas. Without a seat at the table, any policy changes that are implemented at the government level usually fail to properly take into account gender considerations. Meanwhile in the private sector, women-focused CSOs involved in policy analysis and advocacy do exist. However, most are based in Kabul, with very little regional presence given the strong "donor pull" of resources at the capital. Most also lack adequate technical and administrative capacity and

²⁴ International Finance Corporation, Gender Entrepreneurship Markets, GEM Country Brief: Afghanistan, 2007.

²⁵ Levitt, Emily, et. al., Malnutrition in Afghanistan: Scale, Scope, Causes, and Potential Response, World Bank, 2011.

usually operate on ad hoc, project-based funding, which does not allow for long-term effect in policy change.

Table 3. Snapshot of Women’s Role in RADP-W Value Chains		
Value Chain	Household Level	Commercial Level
Wheat	<p>Very few women since work is undertaken in the fields, away from the home. Participation of women, when it exists is in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - removing stones from land - weeding - gathering straw bundles - grain cleaning and storage - preparing meals for men during harvest 	<p>Uncommon, but women may be employed as low wage laborers at flour processing mills.</p>
High Value Crops	<p>Grapes/Raisins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide unpaid family labor for watering, weeding, pruning, and harvesting from family orchards - Basic sorting/grading, cleaning, and removal of debris from grapes, as well drying of raisins 	<p>Women are extensively involved in low value-add activities in post-harvest as laborers in packing houses and processing centers.</p> <p>Work maybe undertaken at home (i.e. shelling of pistachios) or on site at trader/wholesaler’s facility.</p> <p>Grapes: sorting/grading, cleaning, and removal of debris</p> <p>Raisins: sorting, cleaning, removal of debris, and packaging</p> <p>Orchard Crops: sorting/grading, cleaning, shelling, and packaging</p> <p>Vegetables: sorting/grading, cleaning, packaging, and preserving</p>
	<p>Orchard Crops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes irrigating and weeding, if within the walled orchards - Work in early stages of the value chain, including picking/collecting the fruit, as well as cleaning and drying it 	
	<p>Vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting and caring for small gardens in the home - Sun drying or preserving vegetables for home use - Cleaning/sorting/packing for male family member to sell to traders and markets 	
Livestock	<p>Women are extensively involved in livestock activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breeding, - feeding, - milking, - treating, - tending to young livestock - dehairing and shearing at household level for male family member to sell products to traders and wholesalers 	<p>Women work as low wage laborers in cashmere, wool, and dairy processing centers.</p> <p>Work maybe undertaken at home (i.e. dehairing) or in on site at trader/wholesaler’s facility.</p>

SECTION D. Findings & Recommendations

The following findings and recommendations are provided as general guidance in mainstreaming gender activities across RADP-W’s portfolio. Section E of this report

provides the specific objectives and principles guiding the project's Gender Strategy, along with detailed activity integration by each of RADP-W's CLINs.

One. From the outset, it is important to acknowledge a dichotomy that affects gender programming in the overall RADP-W program portfolio. Specifically, the focus of the program is primarily on production of wheat and high crops, both of which demonstrate high economic potential and are vital for ensuring food security. However, both chains are also highly male-dominated and areas where women participate in low value-add chain activities that lack real decision-making roles. Given the cultural context and nature of the constraints and challenges that Afghan women face, it is vital to recognize that a focusing on these broader priorities will mean there is a near term trade-off in women continuing to contribute to low-value add activities of the value chain. This is because effective gender mainstreaming interventions in Afghanistan must focus on activities and production systems in which women are already involved rather than imposing wholesale systematic changes, which run counter to expectations of Afghanistan's patriarchal society.

Two. This, however, does not mean that RADP-W gender programming should not take creative and innovative approaches to challenge assumptions in a slow and gradual push to elevate the role of women in the agriculture sector. For example, it has been shown that reasoning and behavioral change persuasion based in culture, religion, or economic gain can greatly sway prevailing norms in determining gender roles or allocation of labor. With close engagement and coordination at the local and national level with MAIL, DAILs, CDCs, and local DDC, RADP-W can and should help to bring about gradual shifts in behavior that build on the traditional roles of women and mitigate resistance relying on culture, religion, or economic incentives as leverage points.

Three. In order to truly mainstream programs, project leadership should ensure that RADP-W staff, both male and female, understand the gender objectives of the program and are familiar with the issues surrounding gender. As a starting point, RADP-W should orient all technical staff and KIP with the RADP-W Gender Strategy and Integration Plan. Additionally, to maintain focus on integration and ensure continuity in implementation, RADP-W should link the Gender Integration Plan into overall project performance and monitoring systems and reporting, drawing upon the list of provisional indicators in this report's Annex. Doing so will help measure impact, integrate work plan activities, and ensure proper resource allocation.

Four. Echoing USAID's Agricultural Gender Assessment, RADP-W program should take every precaution not to conduct small-scale, piecemeal, subsistence-focused gender programs.²⁶ While these programs help women and are popular with female beneficiaries, they serve as an obstacle to sustainable development and lack meaningful impact. Instead, interventions targeted for female beneficiaries of RADP-W should be conducted systematically, on a large scale, using greater resource investments, and with an overarching focus on sustainability in order to set the stage for market integration. In doing so, RADP-W should work with local communities to gauge their interest/buy-in, assess target location feasibility, marketing potential, and overall financial viability to create flexible and responsive programs that elevate the role of women in the agriculture sector.

Five. As it stands, RADP-W's target for reaching female beneficiaries is 15%. However, clear guidance and directives need to be given from a program management level as to exactly what this 15% target encompasses. First off, management must clarify that this 15% applies to each CLIN of the program and is not indicative of an overall 15% so that gender targets in

²⁶ Sayara Media and Communication, Gender Assessment of U.S. Agency for International Development Agriculture Programs, July – August 2012.

one CLIN are not inadvertently overlooked. Second, management must clarify that the mandate of 15% constitutes only direct beneficiaries. In this context, direct female beneficiaries should refer to women who, as a result of RADP-W interventions, make decisions or alter their behavior in a manner that leads to their improved welfare such as increased income, food security, enhanced opportunities. This definition should not include women who may be indirect beneficiaries of interventions aimed at male members of the household or the community as a whole. Clarity and consensus on this point will be vital in ensuring that meaningful interventions are carried out that directly benefit and target women.

Six. As a corollary, the number female staff employed in RADP-W’s technical and monitoring and evaluation team should reflect the number of female beneficiaries targeted and the level of effort that will be required to reach them. A gender team consisting of three or four staff members maybe unrealistically ambitious and disproportionately aligned in reaching thousands of women as direct beneficiaries. Therefore, employment and retention of female field monitors and female staff with agricultural expertise in each one of RADP-W’s CLINs will lead to more effective gender integration and ensure that women receive vital information regarding extension services and new technologies.

Seven. In Afghanistan, security always poses a challenge, especially when it involves women. Afghans are exceedingly apprehensive of the slow and gradual creep of extremist and insurgent activities into the western regions of Afghanistan. Mobility of both men and women is severely restricted, especially in Farah and Badghis provinces, relative to Herat. Therefore, RADP-W programming should be creative, adaptive, and mirror the fluidity of the security situation to focus on provinces where women are more active and have relatively greater mobility and access. However, this should not preclude efforts to work with women in more remote and insecure areas. Put simply, implementation of gender activities in these areas may become progressively more challenging and more small-scale and subsistence focused.

Eight. The key to positive cultural shifts in attitudes and behaviors is the engagement of Afghan males, including buy-in from male champions who advocate for enhanced women’s rights. However, changes in this area will take time and require gradual sensitization of both men and women on the value of women in society at large, and their significance within the agriculture sector. As such, RADP-W should build a more robust and targeted strategic communications and outreach plan to actively educate, engage, and influence Afghans on the progressive roles that Afghan women can occupy. Strategic campaigns should be multi-faceted to appeal to both conservative and progressive audiences and tailored to literate and illiterate populations. For example, the project can break down stereotypes about women and bring about change in men’s behavior through gender sensitization and awareness training, coupled with targeted radio, TV, print, and Friday messaging campaigns that are facilitated through local religious scholars and elders. See text box for sample messaging campaigns to catalyze cultural shifts that favors Afghan women’s active participation in society.

Table 4. Sample Messaging Campaigns
Highlight the example of Prophet Muhammad’s wife, Khadija, being a successful businesswoman and meaningfully contributing to her family and society.
Emphasize Afghanistan’s crucial and practical need for active participation of women as female veterinary workers, extension agents, and teachers to assist the female population because women do not engage with males and need to have access through other females in woman-to-women service delivery.
Educated, gainfully employed and savvy businesswomen will help to develop the country and bring in much-needed financial support to the entire family.

Islam encourages moderation in everything. Since women form half of the society they also need to be actively represented in every realm of society to create balance.

Nine. RADP-W should leverage these same communications platforms to educate Afghans and advocate for women’s inheritance and land rights in order to enhance women’s decision-making power. Additionally, the project should promote campaigns that chip away at the stigma attached to working in agriculture. This can be done through campaigns that highlight successful agribusinesses, showcase possible career options in agriculture such as veterinary work, and emphasize farming as a family business and viable route to economic security rather than a default act of labor for the poor.

Ten. There is a strong correlation between educating women and their enhanced economic opportunities and decision-making. The majority of RADP-W’s target female beneficiaries will likely come from poorer families and with little to no educational background. Therefore, the project directly or through a grant issued to local service providers, should ensure that female beneficiaries receive a training package to include: basic literacy and arithmetic training, along with basic business skills and negotiation to promote agricultural productivity. Efforts should be made to categorize participants according to beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Leadership and management trainings should also be offered to appropriate female beneficiaries who exhibit potential to take on greater responsibility in linking her productive agricultural activity to the larger market.

Eleven. Additionally, because women are in charge of domestic chores and cooking, they hold the key to the wellbeing and nutrition of the entire family. As such, training and information on health and nutrition should be incorporated into all CLINs. Such efforts would require the training of extension agents in nutrition to include a focus on food quality and diversity rather than quantity, promotion of food hygiene, and the importance of well-balanced diet for different target groups, such as infants, young children, and pregnant women.

Twelve. In addition to technical assistance and capacity building training on using improved agricultural techniques and technology by women across all of RADP’s CLINs, the project should focus on building a robust women-to-women service delivery model. This should include the formation of women’s producer, trader, retailer, and wholesaler groups, and facilitation of women-only sort/packing houses and processing centers, as well as the creation of women’s markets. These groups and facilities can provide a culturally accepted social and economic objective, which will enhance mobility and enable more meaningful participation of women in the sector. Training in planning, management, and business skills would be needed to ensure that women’s groups or markets are commercially orientated and financially viable.

Thirteen. Given widespread international interest in advancing Afghan women’s economic empowerment and Herat’s proximity to commercial trade routes, RADP-W should more actively leverage and cultivate creative product branding and marketing to instill local and regional prominence and pride in Afghan products. In broad strokes, branding of products can be as simple as developing a local name brand and developing packaging, stickers and labels. This is the first step in brand recognition in terms of promoting a higher level of quality for certain recognized products. RADP- W should actively market a “Made by Afghan Women” brand, as a mark in import and export markets. Building on this and in collaboration with Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce, RADP-W should support women business owners’ participation in trade exhibitions such as the annual GulfFood Expo in Dubai to facilitate deals with regional and international buyers. Finally, RADP-W should

explore in-country and regional exchange trips where women can observe and share lessons learned from the experiences and success of their counterparts in other regions.

Fourteen. Additionally, the project should enhance linkages and increase the access of women’s groups and associations to markets. Events such as “farmers meet traders” days can be used to bring together two groups that rarely formally meet in a learning environment. Additionally, since most Afghan women in the western zone have access to mobile technology, RADP-W should explore the use of IT in creating an SMS platform that provides women producers and traders with updated price information and market supply/demand communication.

Fifteen. In its enabling environment activities, RADP-W should conduct a policy analysis of the top priority constraints for advancement of women’s economic activities in the agriculture sector via structured survey(s) or focus group(s) of key provincial and district DAIL offices, DOWA, input suppliers, VFUs, farmer associations, women’s groups, trader organizations, and agribusiness to assess priority policy constraints affecting women, such as access to markets and issues of land ownership and management.

Sixteen. The project should also hold workshops, trainings, and issue grants to build the capacity of women-focused CSOs to improve their ability to promote enabling environment advocacy efforts, such as publicly lobbying for policies that favor female inheritance entitlements, improved working conditions and equitable pay, or conducting information campaigns that clarify existing misconceptions about Sharia law and the rights of women.

Seventeen. In consultation with USAID, the project should explore extending the package of livestock programming and services that DCA provides in Herat and Badghis to Farah province. Since play a prominent role in tending to livestock, this gap in programming would help women in Farah access much-needed interventions through female paravets, LFEWs, FEGs, and community feed banks.

Eighteen. In consultation with DCA, the project should explore other innovative interventions which would increase women’s access to livestock extension services. For example, in line with recommendations made by USAID’s RAMP evaluation of DCA programs, RADP-W and DCA should aim to increase female paravet or enrollment by offering a truncated, 1 month basic veterinary worker training with a curriculum taught by female paravet instructors. RADP-W could also work with DCA to institute and facilitate a livestock borrowing program or a “pass on the gift” scheme to increase access to livestock inputs by women. Beneficiaries of these programs would breed and agree to give the offspring of their livestock to other women in the village in exchange for free input supplies and vaccines.

Successfully empowering women through culturally acceptable loans

Named after Prophet Mohammad’s daughter, Saidatina Fatima Az Zahra, USAID’s Zahara program was devised to offer products exclusively designed for female farmers and small and medium female-owned enterprises involved in horticulture, livestock husbandry, and agro-processing. The fund’s Sharia Advisory Board ensured that rules and financial principles were compliant with Sharia law by instituting culturally acceptable mechanisms such as parallel fees or service charges instead of interest so that lenders could profit. The reported default rate for the program by female borrowers was zero.

USAID Frontlines. Juan Estrada-Valle, Sowing the seeds of Empowerment: Small Loans to Afghan Women Growers. November/December 2014.

Nineteen. Insufficient access to credit and finance constrains women’s full potential to engage in high value add activities along the value chain and participate in agribusiness. Without access to land titles, women are unable to meet collateral requirements. While USAID Afghanistan’s past experience and worldwide research by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor confirm that women

pose a far lower credit risk than men, social norms and biases often outweigh logic. As such, RADP-W should facilitate self-help groups and savings boxes by women’s associations while also improving women’s access to existing financial products, and working with institutions to create new products that address women’s unique needs, as win-win for economic growth. Once formalized, RADP-W should provide technical assistance and workshops to women’s groups to help them make informed decisions regarding available financial products and options. Drawing on Chemonics’ experience on FAIDA, RADP-W should explore partnerships with Afghan commercial banks and with Indian and Pakistani banks, which have a stronger track record of supporting women-owned businesses, as well as a commercial interest in supporting trade. While Afghan banks tend to be cautious in lending to women, foreign banks may prompt behavior change as they see that money can be made from lending to women.

Twenty. Finally, in order to monitor and evaluate changes in gender dynamics and to better assess the impact of its work on gender roles in decision-making, RADP-W should consider carrying out a longitudinal study using Feed the Future and USAID’s Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index. This survey could ideally be undertaken collaboratively with all of USAID’s RADP projects across the country. The Index was designed to help track returns on investments in women and agriculture and measures change in five areas: (1) women’s role in household decision-making related to agricultural production; (2) women’s access to productive capital; (3) income and expenditures; (4) women’s individual leadership and influence in the community; and (5) women’s and men’s labor time allocations.

Table 5. Five Domains of Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Domain	Indicators
Production	Input in productive decisions
	Autonomy in production
Resources	Ownership of assets
	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets
	Access to and decisions on credit
Income	Control over use of income
Leadership	Group member
	Speaking in public
Time	Workload
	Leisure

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, Feed the Future, Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index. 2012.

SECTION E. GENDER STRATEGY

The project’s gender mainstreaming strategy is designed to ensure that RADP-W activities are implemented in a way that supports women’s active participation in the agriculture sector. The mainstreaming recommendations have been identified by examining five factors under each CLIN: women’s access to the activity, community beliefs that shape women’s

participation, how community members (specifically women) participate in the activities, gender differences in time and space allocation within a community, and gender differences in regards to power and decision-making. Because the strategy is based on the current situation in the region, the mainstreaming recommendations are meant to serve as starting point for the implementation of each activity. However, it is important to recognize that specific gender considerations will differ by locality within the western region and may change over the course of the RADP-W programming. Given the fluid nature of the operating environment, the RADP- W implementation team may need to conduct a rapid mini-analysis to ensure viability and feasibility according to local realities at the time.

To begin, in order for women to take more of a meaningful role in RADP-W’s programming, they must become integrated in a more comprehensive manner throughout each CLIN of the project and through KIP task orders. RADP-W’s gender section should be applauded for the work that it has achieved with female beneficiaries in vegetable cultivation, however, more emphasis needs to be placed on larger-scale, longer-term, direct participation of women in every other RADP-W value chain. In a relatively progressive region of Afghanistan, female beneficiaries of RADP-W should actively engage in programs where they are direct beneficiaries of programs in wheat, horticulture of high value crops, livestock, as well as in Herat’s thriving agribusiness sector. Most importantly, effective gender mainstreaming will require dedicated planning and focus on achieving community level and stakeholder buy-in for programs that incrementally shift attitudes and advocate for meaningful behavior change regarding the role of women in the sector.

Taking the five gender mainstreaming considerations into account, the following Strategy and Integration Plan aim to promote pragmatic points of entry for direct female participation in each of RADP-W’s key implementing partner activities and across each CLIN of the project.

Considerations in gender mainstreaming

Access: measures if men and women in a community are able to use the resources necessary to be fully active and productive participants.

Knowledge and beliefs: refers to the types of knowledge that women and men can access and cultural beliefs that shape gender behavior.

Practices and participation: refers to people’s behavior and responsibilities within a community (what they do during the day) and how this differs by men and women. It includes how they engage in society and development projects.

Time and space: recognizes differences between women and men in the allocation of time and space (both public and private space) and how this might affect participation in project activities.

Power and decision-making: evaluates the ability of men and women to influence and control decisions within the social sphere, household, or municipality.

RADP-WEST GENDER STRATEGY	
OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enhance the understanding of gender equality principles and considerations within the RADP-W project and among project partners: MAIL, DAILs, input suppliers, VFUs, farmer associations, women’s groups, trader organizations, agribusiness, and direct beneficiaries ◆ Promote the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches and best practices within the RADP-W project and among aforementioned project partners ◆ Mainstream gender considerations in key project processes and activities 	
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Integrative-</i> gender considerations will be an essential built-in component of RADP-W activities and interventions across each value chain and integrated in each region through KIPs 	

- ◆ *Accountability-based*- roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the RADP-W Gender Integration Plan are clearly defined by CLIN and will be linked project performance monitoring, drawing on the list of possible indicators in Annex 1
- ◆ *Collaborative & participatory*- input from project partners will be solicited on an ongoing basis to assess the design, implementation, and monitoring of the RADP-W Gender Integration Plan
- ◆ *Adaptive*- results of periodic review and monitoring of field experiences and processes will be considered in the refinement of implementation approach and processes

STRATEGIC APPROACH

- ◆ Enhance awareness and understanding of gender within RADP-W and amongst partners
 - Roll out RADP-W Gender Strategy and Integration Plan to all RADP-W technical staff and KIPs
 - Seek input and conduct ongoing dialogue on understanding gender, gender roles, and gender relations and their implications in agriculture within RADP-W and project partners
- ◆ Mainstream gender in project processes and across all activities throughout RADP-W value chains, in each region through KIPs, as well as in the nutrition, agribusiness, and grants program
 - Incorporate gender concerns in existing RADP-W training materials and activities
 - Link RADP-W Gender Integration Plan into project performance and monitoring systems
- ◆ Enhance the enabling policy environment for gender mainstreaming in agriculture
 - Promote gender-based policy analysis of laws, regulations, and administrative procedures to improve the obstacles facing women's economic activities in the agriculture sector
 - Enlist CSOs to conduct awareness raising campaigns to educate, inform, and advocate for policy change

**REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM-WEST
DETAILED GENDER INTEGRATION PLAN**

RADP-W OBJECTIVE: IMPROVED FOOD AND ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR RURAL AFGHANS

CLIN 1: WHEAT VALUE CHAIN

Gender-Based Deliverables	Activity Response & Rationale	Timeframe	Responsibility
Task 1: Identify roles, involvement, and entry points for women in the wheat value chain strategy	RADP-W is in the process of drafting a wheat value chain strategy. As a part of this strategy, the project should assess women's roles in the wheat value chain and identify and incorporate viable entry points for greater involvement of women.	Quarter 4, FY 2015	In coordination with local counterparts and: CHA/AREA DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor
Task 2: Identify lead female farmers and introduce improved inputs, new technologies, and farming techniques	Ensure that the wheat team has selected female lead farmers in its programming. At present, RADP-W's wheat value chain has not selected any lead female farmers. This should change. Among other things, the wheat team should consider innovative approaches to promote female involvement by assigning greater priority to women-owned and women-led farms in the selection of CLIN beneficiaries. This may incentivize local farmers to consider attributing ownership rights to women family members through formal land titles and deeds.	Quarter 3, FY 2015	
	Alternatively, the wheat team can further promote men's support for female involvement by encouraging male lead farmers to allocate portions of their land to their wives for horticulture cultivation in exchange for providing the male lead farmers access to inputs such as high-quality, certified wheat seeds, fertilizer, hand-crank seeders, and training on improved farming techniques.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	
Task 3: Ensure adoption of extension methodologies by female farmers	Work with the wheat value chain team to pair female extension agents with women's groups and associations.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	

	Sponsor field days at demo plots of lead male and female farmers and issue achievement awards in the form of credits for input supplies that women could utilize such as seeds for vegetables cultivation or cashmere combs.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	CLIN 1 Team Gender Team
Task 4: Promote improved post-harvest techniques by female beneficiaries	Produce radio/TV programs that offers alternative crop messaging and use of interactive voice response as an on-demand audio information sources which male and female farmers can call to listen to relevant information on improved post-harvest handling practices.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	
	Create women's only viewing and listening clubs through subcontractor Equal Access where video/radio programs are used a basis to educate and inform participants about proper health, hygiene, and nutrition planning.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	Provide women improved technologies such as hand-held sewing machines to use at home for packing purposes.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	Work with local service providers, extension agents, or the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) to develop training materials and provide TOT training for project staff, including the gender team, on proper post-harvest handling techniques to facilitate knowledge sharing to direct beneficiaries.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	Information and knowledge is rarely shared between men and women, even in the same household. As such, the wheat and gender teams should explore the possibility of conducting culturally appropriate joint trainings to lead female farmers and male farmers and their wives on proper post-harvesting such as cleaning, sorting, seed storage, and pest management.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
Task 5: Improve market linkages along the value chain	Set-up potential meeting points for input suppliers (of certified wheat seed and vegetable seed) and customers at demonstration sites to facilitate access to inputs for female farmers.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	In coordination with local counterparts and: CHA/AREA
	The wheat team is currently in the process of setting up a pilot processing center in each target district which will contain cleaning and sorting machines for use by male farmers. Every effort should be made to provide a partitioned, culturally appropriate space for separate cleaning and sorting machines to be used by women.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	

Task 6: Provide technical assistance for community and commercial-level value-added activities	Identify small-scale processors, including female-led enterprises, to issue grants and technical assistance to improve their products and business practices. Creative approaches should be used such as conditional criteria to incentivize male-led commercial-level value added enterprises to promote the role and participation of women, i.e. increased employment of women at processing centers.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor CLIN 1 Team Gender Team Agribusiness Specialist Grants & Subcontracts Manager
CLIN 2: HIGH VALUE CROPS			
Deliverables	Activity Response	Timeframe	Responsibility
Task 1: Develop gendered HVC value chain strategies (Grapes/Raisins, Orchard Crops, & Vegetables)	The project should develop a gendered value chain strategy that includes analysis of all HVC activities and consults with female farmer associations, input suppliers, DOWA, and DAIL Home Economics Department officials to assess women's roles in each value chain and identify viable entry points for greater involvement of women.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	In coordination with local counterparts and: CHA/AREA DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor
Task 2: Identify and mentor female lead farmers in each HVC chain and introduce improved inputs, new technologies, and farming techniques	It is vital that women producers are trained in harvest and post-harvest techniques. CLIN 2 and the gender team should provide training on: 1) post-harvest sanitation and hygiene, 2) improved techniques for drying using mats or solar dryers (raisins, fruits, vegetables), 3) appropriate handling of sorting, grading, and storing HVC such as grapes to reduce damage, and 4) improved formulas for canning preservation of produce.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	CLIN 2 Team Gender Team
	Provide technical assistance on proper crop cultivation and access to seeds, fertilizer, improved irrigation, greenhouses, plastic tunnels, and trellises to improve productivity by female farmers.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	It is vital that women producers are trained in harvest and post-harvest techniques. CLIN 2 and the gender team should provide training on: 1) post-harvest sanitation and hygiene, 2) improved techniques for drying using mats (grapes, fruits, vegetables), 3) appropriate handling of sorting, grading, and storing such as grapes to reduce damage, and 4) improved formulas for preservation and	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	

	canning at processing centers.		
Task 3: Strengthen existing and new farmer groups and associations	Develop and improve new or existing women-owned processing centers modeled after USAID's Afghan Pride Association in Kabul, which runs and operates an all-women processing center, including female village-level traders and sales agents, which facilitate direct interaction with women producers.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	CHA/AREA DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor CLIN 2 Team
	Provide business training for women farmer groups in order to assist them to effectively operate and manage their activities.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	Gender Team Agribusiness Specialist
	Conduct in-country and regional exchange visits for female farmer groups and associations to enhance their understanding and knowledge and exchange ideas and lessons learned.	Quarter 3, FY 2017	Value Chain Advisor Gender Team
Task 4: Promote improved post-harvest handling techniques	Provide women producers equipment and tools to improve post-harvest handling techniques such as drying mats for raisins; tools/machines to shell almonds and pistachios, solar dryers, and packaging materials such as glass bottles for preserved products.	Quarter 3, FY 2015 and ongoing	CHA/AREA DCOP Technical
	Create women's only viewing and listening clubs through subcontractor Equal Access where video/radio programs are used a basis to educate and inform participants about proper crop cultivation, post-harvest handling techniques, health, hygiene, and nutrition planning.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	Value Chain Advisor CLIN 2 Team Gender Team Community Communications Specialist
Task 5: Improve market linkages along the value chain	Increase women-to-women service delivery by setting up culturally appropriate and female-friendly collection points for producers of HVC products to ease access and transfer to markets.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	Facilitate women's producer groups instituting a transport/delivery service to the nearest market using self-generated funds.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	CHA/AREA

	Support use of information technology to enhance women's involvement in value chains such as SMS or voice activated extension information or market-price information sharing between traders and female producers.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor Gender Team
Task 6: Build the capacity of agribusiness	Identify agribusinesses, including female-led enterprises, to issue grants and technical assistance to improve their products and business practices. Creative approaches should be used such as conditional criteria to incentivize male-led agribusinesses to promote the role and participation of women, i.e. increased employment of women.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	CHA/AREA DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor Gender Team Agribusiness Specialist
Task 7: increase access to financial services	Women's producer groups allow women to have collateral to obtain credit. Assist producer groups to set up self-help savings boxes.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	CHA/AREA DCOP Technical
	Work with local banks such Ghanzanfar or Pashtany Back to create products and services targeting women such as USAID's Zahra program.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	Value Chain Advisor Gender Team Agricultural Finance Specialist
CLIN 3: LIVESTOCK			
Deliverables	Activity Response	Timeframe	Responsibility
Task 1: Develop a gendered livestock value chain strategy	DCA to develop a gendered livestock value chain strategy that provides detailed information of patterns of livestock ownership by province and identifies SMEs who act as traders/middlemen to ascertain women's roles and viable entry points for greater involvement of women in the value chain, including facilitating greater flow of commodities to market by women, such as cashmere, wool, and dairy.	Quarter 4, FY 2015	DCA DCOP Technical
Task 2: Increase women's access to inputs and introduce new or improved husbandry techniques	Work with DCA to increase the number of Livestock Female Extension Workers (LFEWs), Farmer Extension Groups (FEGs), and female paravets in existing target provinces in order to enhance access to quality extension services and awareness regarding animal health, gender, nutrition, and livestock husbandry	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	

	techniques.		Value Chain Advisor Deputy Livestock Team Leader
	Extend the package of services that DCA provides in Herat and Badghis to Farah province, including LFEWs, FEGs, female paravets, and community feed banks, with an emphasis on increasing access by female livestock holders.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	Undertake a rural female paravet recruitment campaign to educate and inform rural communities on the need for female veterinary service providers.	FY 2015 and ongoing	DCA DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor Community Communications Specialist
	Conduct trainings on proper nutrition and the role of personal hygiene in minimizing human and livestock disease.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	DCA DCOP Technical
	Work with DCA to institute and facilitate a livestock borrowing program or a "pass on the gift" scheme to increase access to livestock inputs by women. Beneficiaries of these programs breed and agree to give the offspring of their livestock to other women in the village in exchange for free supplies, vaccine vouchers, manure, or milk. This concept known as Mazaaribat is an Islamic concept of partnership and has traditionally be undertake to poor households to rebuild their herds and ensures sustainability.	Quarter 1, FY 2016	Value Chain Advisor Gender Team Deputy Livestock Team Leader Community Communications Specialist
Task 3: Develop capacity of female veterinary service providers	Conduct an analysis of existing VFUs, inventory their level of activity, and assess obstacles to identify mechanisms to allow for greater access to vet services by women livestock holders	Quarter 1, FY 2016	
	Conduct in-country and regional exchange visits for female paravets to enhance their understanding, knowledge, and share lessons learned.	Quarter 2, FY 2017	DCA DCOP Technical
	Increase female paravet enrollment by offering a truncated 1 month paravet or basic veterinary worker training curriculum taught by female paravet instructors, in line with recommendations made by USAID's RAMP evaluation of DCA programs.	Quarter 2, FY 2016	Value Chain Advisor Deputy Livestock Team Leader

Task 4: Improve the availability and quality of feed and fodder	Work with DCA to implement practical training on proper husbandry techniques to female livestock holders.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	DCA DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor Gender Team Community Communications Specialist Grants & Subcontracts Manager
	Increase the number of community feed banks in RADP-W target provinces.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
Task 5: Improve market linkages along the value chain	Work with DCA and VFUs to facilitate services, which provide include income-generating activities to female livestock owners, such sale of cashmere, wool, and other livestock activities.	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
	Work with DCA to create and strengthen existing and new female farmer groups, both extension and self-help groups in each district		
	Issue equipment for female extension and self-help groups (i.e. cashmere combs, churners, milk separators and containers), as well as grants to facilitate market linkages with regional traders and buyers	Quarter 4, FY 2015 and ongoing	
Task 6: Increase the technical and managerial capacity of agribusiness and local organizations involved in livestock	Hold workshops, trainings, and issue grants to build the capacity of local organizations to improve their technical and managerial capacity to effectively process livestock by-products such as cashmere and wool.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor Deputy Livestock Team Leader Gender Team Grants & Subcontracts Manager
	Conduct a needs analysis and strengthen the business and organizational management capacity of the Afghanistan Veterinary Association, including targeted leadership training for its female board members.	Quarter 2, FY 2016 and ongoing	
CLIN 4: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT			
Deliverables	Activity Response	Timeframe	Responsibility
Task 1: Identify and analyze obstacles to doing business for women in western Afghanistan	Conduct a policy analysis of the top priority constraints for advancement of women's economic activities in the agriculture sector via structured survey(s) or focus group(s) of key provincial and district DAIL offices, DOWA, input suppliers, VFUs, farmer associations, women's groups, trader organizations, agribusiness, and direct beneficiaries to assess and identify priority policy	Quarter 1 & 2, FY 2016	In coordination with local counterparts and: DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor

	constraints affecting women such as access to markets and issues of land ownership and management.		Enabling Environment Team
Task 2: Support rollout of new or improved policies, regulations, or administrative procedures at the local level	Hold a key stakeholders workshop to discuss findings of the gendered-policy analysis and obtain stakeholder input.	Quarter 3, FY 2016	Gender Team Agribusiness Specialist
	Incorporating stakeholder input, draft a policy recommendations report that provides a concrete action plan to enact at least eight pro-gender agricultural policies, laws, regulations, and administrative procedures to improve the obstacles facing women's economic activities, i.e. improved working conditions for women or improvement of rural road infrastructure to enable access by women service providers.	Quarter 4, FY 2016 and ongoing	
	Coordinate with USAID's PROMOTE Musharikat program to identify local CSOs and activists who can produce white papers, hold press conferences, and lobby for policy change.	Quarter 2, FY 2016 and ongoing	
Task 3: Strengthen the capacity of local organizations involved in enabling environment activities	Undertake mapping to identify women-focused organizations in Herat, Badghis, and Farah provinces that are involved in policy analysis and advocacy.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	
	Engage the University of Herat to identify mechanisms to increase female student interest and enrollment in the Faculty of Agriculture. Develop opportunities for female students to gain practical work experience through internships in RADP-W's CLINs.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	
	Enlist local CSOs to conduct radio/TV/print awareness campaigns regarding cultural and socio-political factors affecting women's agency in agriculture and to highlight economic incentives or leverage cultural/religious basis for women to actively participate in or agricultural enterprise. (i.e. Prophet Muhammad's wife as a businesswoman).	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	In coordination with local counterparts and: DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor
	Hold workshops, trainings, and issue grants to build the capacity of women-focused CSO to improve their ability to promote enabling environment advocacy efforts such as advocating for policies that favor female entitlements inheritance or that clarify existing misconceptions about Sharia law and the rights of women.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	Enabling Environment Team Gender Team Community Communications Specialist
Task 4: Support provincial DAILs and MAIL to gather and	Conduct a needs assessment of relevant DAIL and MAIL departments to assess capacity to analyze markets.	Quarter 2, FY 2016 and ongoing	

analyze market information regarding women's involvement in the agriculture sector	Provide technical assistance and capacity building trainings to enhance DAIL and MAIL market analysis skills.	Quarter 2, FY 2016 and ongoing	In coordination with local counterparts and: DCOP Technical Value Chain Advisor Enabling Environment Team Gender Team
	In consultation with the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), work with MAIL to develop a marketing strategy for each of RADP-W's value chains to access key regional and international markets. The strategy should identify quality standards and certification requirements to be incorporated into extension services.	Quarter 1, FY 2016 and ongoing	
	Work with the EPAA, ACCI, MAIL and DAILS to actively promote branding and marketing campaigns that highlight the "Made by Afghan Women" brand to instill local pride and regional and international interest in Afghan products.	Quarter 3, FY 2016 and ongoing	
CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITY: Across each of RADP-W's CLINs, direct female beneficiaries should receive a basic training package to include: literacy training, basic arithmetic, business skills and negotiation, along with information on health and nutrition. Efforts should be made to categorize participants according to beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.			

ANNEX 1. MONITORING & EVALUATION

Provisional Indicators to Track Gender Integration Efforts

#	Indicator	Indicator Type
1	Percentage of women who demonstrate an increase in their agricultural production in terms of e.g. quality, volume, costs efficiency and/or productivity.	Outcome
2	Number of women who add value to their produce through e.g. sorting and grading activities.	Outcome
3	Number of women who add value to their produce by packaging, trading and branding.	Outcome
4	Number of women who report higher annual incomes as a result RADP-W interventions in the wheat, high value crops, and livestock CLINs.	Impact
5	Number of women involved in producer or trader organizations as members.	Output
6	Number of women involved in management of producer or trader organizations.	Output
7	Number of women involved in information management and development of networks within the chain.	Output
8	Percentage of direct female beneficiaries whose practices exhibit value chain related skill development e.g. in agricultural production, processing, literacy, numeracy, marketing/branding, etc.	Outcome
9	Number of women trained in organizational skill development e.g. negotiation skills and leadership skills.	Output
10	Percentage of direct female beneficiaries who demonstrate increased value chain related knowledge e.g. technical knowledge, market and network information.	Outcome
11	Percentage of women who attest to an increased ability to make choices, self-determination and exhibit self-confidence.	Impact
12	Percentage of women who report an equal say in the household with regards to access to and control over resources and expenditures.	Impact
13	Change in perceptions, norms, and values at the community level which favor women as economic actors equal to men.	Outcome
14	Number of women who report increased access to financial services through group lending, banks, savings and credit cooperatives, and microfinance institutions.	Outcome
15	Number of formal laws, rules and regulations which are favorable for gender equality in value chain development and improved economic activities for women.	Outcome

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