



ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2023

Programme Title & Project Number - Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Toward Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal - Programme Number (<i>if applicable</i>) - MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00132318	Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results² Nepal: One Municipality and Four Rural Municipalities from two local governments in Saptari and Siraha districts in Madhesh Province. Direct beneficiaries: 2500 (2000 women, 500 men) Indirect beneficiaries: 10,700 Total programme beneficiaries: 6000 (5500 women, 500 men) Saptari: - Rural Municipalities: Tilathi Koiladi and Chinnamasta Siraha: - Rural Municipalities: Laxmipur Patari, Sakhuwanankarkatti - Municipalities: Karjanha
Participating Organization(s) - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), - International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN) - World Food Programme (WFP),	Priority area/ strategic results a) improved food security and nutrition; b) increased income, decent work and economic autonomy; c) enhanced participation and leadership in rural life and institutions; and d) more gender-responsive policy environment. Implementing Partners Government: Federal level - Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) Provincial level - Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoLMAC) Local Level - Relevant Local Governments Civil Society: DidiBahini, Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal (Sappros Nepal), Center for Agro-Forestry Technology (CAFT), National People Welfare Council (NPWC)
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)	Programme Duration

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

Total approved budget as per project document: US\$ 5 Million MPTF /JP Contribution ⁴ : US\$ 5 Million • FAO US\$492,335 • IFAD US\$304,821 • WFP US\$287,400 • UN Women US\$350,641 Agency Contribution • by Agency (if applicable) Government Contribution (if applicable) Other Contributions (donors) (if applicable) TOTAL: US\$ 5 Million	Overall Duration (months): 60 months Start Date ⁵ (dd.mm.yyyy): 25/05/2022 Original End Date ⁶ (dd.mm.yyyy): 24/05/2027 Current End date ⁷ (dd.mm.yyyy) 24/05/2027
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval. Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> ☐ Yes ☒ No Date: dd.mm.yyyy Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable <i>please attach</i> ☐ Yes ☒ No Date: dd.mm.yyyy	Report Submitted By ☐ Name: Mehtap Tatar ☐ Title: Deputy Country Representative ☐ Participating Organization (Lead): UN Women ☐ Email address: mehtap.tatar@unwomen.org

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy
ESIA	Environment and Social Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEBL	Financial Education and Business Literacy
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HGSFP	Home Grown School Feeding Programme
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JP RWEE	Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal
MOALD	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
NPR	Nepali Rupee
PPCC	Provincial Level Programme Coordination Committee
USD	United States Dollar
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

The Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) in Nepal, designed in partnership with the Government of Nepal, contributes to the implementation of the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS), a twenty-year strategy of the Government of Nepal. This is the second phase of the JP RWEE in Nepal. During this 2023 reporting period, beneficiary targeting and the baseline survey were completed, and programme activities were started.

A comprehensive targeting process was carried out in the first quarter of 2023, leading to the selection of 5,500 women and 500 men facing intersecting discrimination across the five target municipalities (two in Saptari district and three in Siraha district). The baseline survey was carried out, covering 1000 beneficiaries and 6000 households. This includes a control and treatment group which will enable an impact evaluation at the end of the five-year programme. Following the targeting process, a total of 83 farmers' groups were established, comprising 2,414 farmers (2,296 women and 118 men including members of marginalised groups). These groups are at the core of JP RWEE interventions. Activities to support these groups were initiated, including capacity building in organisational development, provision of agriculture inputs, training in nutrition through Nutrition Field Schools and training in post-harvest handling, transportation, and marketing capabilities aimed at improving post-harvest practices and storage techniques.

A Financial Education and Business Literacy (FEBL) initiative, incorporating the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology, was initiated. A total of 2,096 women were equipped with the skills to create detailed action plans for their engagement in economic activities. Under GALS, 25 women were trained as GALS facilitators. These GALS facilitators enabled 177 vulnerable women farmers to develop a comprehensive planning tool for their families and their economic activities. The GALS initiatives were the start of a transformative process to bring about long-term, systemic change with regards to social norms and gender equality within the communities of intervention.

At the policy level, a comprehensive policy scoping study was carried out to assess gender-responsive agriculture policies. The study will help to determine entry points for the programme to engage in the policy spheres with the three tiers of government, primarily focusing on local government and systemic change in rural development plans. A programme exit strategy was also developed during the year, in order to support programme sustainability and encourage further scale-up of the JP RWEE model.

I. Purpose

The JP RWEE is being implemented in Nepal for the gender responsive implementation of the government's twenty-year Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS). The programme is in line with the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy of the ADS, which was developed and adopted by the government with technical support from the JP RWEE in 2017, during the first phase of the programme. The GESI Strategy is a blueprint for ensuring that the ADS is implemented with a gender perspective and conforms to the Sustainable Development Goals principle of "Leave no one behind". The JP RWEE is also aligned with Outcome 1 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027 in Nepal to strengthen the capacity of smallholder women farmers for increased farm production and marketing. The JP RWEE Phase II focuses on the following outcomes, which address the challenges and opportunities in the country: (a) Outcome 1: Improved food security and nutrition for rural women and their households that contribute to equitable and sustainable food systems; (b) Outcome 2: Rural women's income, decent work and economic autonomy increased to secure their livelihoods and build resilience; (c) Outcome 3: Rural women's voice and agency increased for full and equal participation and leadership in their households, communities, organizations and governance systems; and (d) Outcome 4: Gender-responsive legal frameworks, policies and institutions strengthened to create an enabling environment for rural women to secure their livelihoods, rights and resilience.

II. Results

Prior to the start-up of programme activities, a comprehensive community driven targeting process was carried out during the first quarter of 2023 to select 5,500 rural women and 500 rural men to participate in the

programme. Beneficiaries were selected from five municipalities, two in Saptari district and three in Siraha district. The selection process involved close collaboration with local, provincial, and federal governments, which strengthened government ownership of the programme. The local government representatives of all five municipalities were involved in selection of the wards and communities and identifying the beneficiaries in line with established selection criteria. Close attention was paid to women facing intersected forms of discrimination, including ethnicity, sexuality and disability. Community leaders, as well as local organisations working with the most marginalized groups, were also consulted to help identify beneficiaries in line with the principle of leave no one behind.

A baseline survey was carried out following completion of the targeting process. Using a cross sectional research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study collected baseline data for results indicators against which the progress made by programme will be measured. Key findings of the study were discussed and validated with key stakeholders including the government, community members and beneficiaries. Based on the baseline data, the results framework of the programme was updated with periodic milestones and final targets for each indicator. More information on the baseline survey is contained in section III of this report (Assessments).

i) Narrative reporting on results:

This section details the progress made in 2023 against the annual workplan. It should be noted that given the initial phase of project implementation, this section highlights mostly activity and output level results. Changes at outcome level will be captured in the next annual report, as per the country M&E plan and performance results framework. Please refer to section II) Indicator Based Performance Assessment for details on the figures reported at output and activity level.

Outcome 1: Improved food security and nutrition for rural women and their households that contribute to equitable and sustainable food systems.

N/A

Output 1.1: Rural women have increased access to resources, assets and technologies critical for climate-resilient agricultural production, food security and nutrition.

A total of 27 agriculture and livestock technicians, comprising 5 women and 22 men, from five local governments from Siraha and Saptari districts are now providing their expertise to programme participants, as well as other farmers not currently covered by the programme. To enable them to provide this service, the JP RWEE enhanced their capacity on climate-resilient agriculture practices and the importance of reducing the use of agrochemicals and synthetic plastics that have negative environmental impacts. This was facilitated through training on climate-resilient and women-friendly agricultural technologies, including water-saving technologies such as sprinkler and drip irrigation, mulching, and high-yielding improved varieties in close collaboration with local governments. This training also covered drought-tolerant and disease-tolerant seeds, as well as techniques like minimum tillage and water collection. Additionally, they learned about the use of compost manure and botanical pesticides derived from locally available materials such as dung, cow urine, and neem tree leaves. Furthermore, this initiative strengthened the agriculture section of local governments, enabling farmers to access extension services on-demand.

A total of 2,414 farmers (2,296 women and 118 men) 1,011 Dalit, 463 Janajati/indigenous, 80 Muslim, 10 Brahmin/Chhetri and 850 other Madhesi) were provided with 46 metric tonnes (MT) of drought-resistant wheat seeds to enhance agricultural productivity and production. These farmers also received composite packets of winter vegetable seeds, each containing 10 different varieties of vegetable seeds (radish, mustard green, cauliflower, cabbage, green beans, tomato, coriander, pea, carrot and chilli pepper). This initiative will contribute to increased vegetable production and consumption promoting nutritious diets, particularly among women and children, while enabling farmers to sell surplus production for income generation. Three farmers'



groups were provided with 2 MT of an improved variety of potato seed covering 1.75 hectares of land, engineered to resist wart disease caused by fungus (which has severe impact on crops losses) and able to thrive even in fluctuating environmental conditions. An additional 300 farmers (243 women and 57 men including 138 Dalit, 46 Janajati/Indigenous, 1 Brahmin/Chhetri; 3 Muslim and 112 Madhesi), benefitted from the distribution of 6.8 MT of climate-resilient (drought-resistant) paddy seeds, further strengthening agricultural resilience within the community and the capacity to enhance production and productivity. Six farmer's groups enhanced their productive capacity of potato and vegetable crops after receiving irrigation pumps, sprayers and agriculture farm supplies including

seeds. The irrigation pump sets will enable the availability of underground water for year-round irrigation for winter crops (potatoes and other vegetables), significantly enhancing agricultural production and productivity. During beneficiary contact visits, participants have testified to significant increases in crop production for both household consumption and sale.

A total of 359 women across 12 farmer's groups, increased their knowledge on the dietary requirements of pregnant and breastfeeding women, adolescent girls and children through participation in Nutrition Field Schools (NFS). These field schools were set up by local implementing partners with the support of FAO and in collaboration with local government. Beneficiary contract visits indicate that some of the women are starting to increase the nutritional intake of household diets.

Also under this output, a total of five labour-intensive community assets to be constructed under the programme were identified in consultation with local government. The assets identified include agri-product collection centers, a market centre and cold storage facilities primarily focused on post-harvest and marketing aspects of agricultural products. The construction of two of these community assets will commence in 2024 and the rest will be constructed in the subsequent years of implementation. The construction of labour-intensive assets will be advanced through a cost-sharing partnership with local governments, a strategy designed to promote both ownership and long-term sustainability.

FAO and WFP worked closely together under this output and collaborated in the identification of the community assets, led by WFP. To enhance synergy, FAO will concentrate on promoting the production of cereals and vegetables in the community, while WFP will spearhead the marketing of these commodities by establishing collection centres, irrigation channels, and storage facilities, as well as by linking farmer's groups with homegrown school feeding programmes and other local markets.

Output 1.2: Rural women have enhanced skills and capacities to increase nutritious food production, food quality and local food security reserves, reduce food losses and waste and improve household diets.

During the reporting period, 711 farmers (644 women and 67 men) enhanced their knowledge in advanced agricultural production techniques and agriculture-based livelihood options. This will contribute to increased food production and result in the expansion of income generation opportunities for the farmers. Beneficiary contact visits indicate that some of the women are starting to increase paddy and vegetable production by applying advance agriculture production technique learned from the programme.

A total of 1,772 farmers (1,709 women, 63 men) and 21 women community health workers and staff in rural municipalities enhanced their understanding of nutrition and sustainable consumption practices through trainings and consultative meeting respectively. A total of 60 training events were held for 1709 women's

groups and 63 male household members on nutrition, food diversity and sustainable consumption of healthy foods to improve household diets SBCC for Nutrition education. Five sessions were held for 21 women community health workers to orient them on nutrition, food diversity and sustainable consumption of foods for improved nutritional status of the target beneficiaries. These women community health workers will share this knowledge in the wider communities to support the improvement of dietary intake and nutrition among women farmers, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and young children, benefiting both JP RWEE participants and the wider community and contributing to local knowledge and capacity.

A series of IEC materials were developed and distributed among women, covering topics from nutritious food to ecological farming practices, aiming to empower the community with sustainable living principles (for example, the use of animal dung for composting, planting diverse crops and livestock, spacing crops to prevent diseases, and the importance of nutrition). The materials were distributed to JP RWEE beneficiaries and also to community health workers for ongoing use in the community.

A total of 1,990 farmers (1,930 women and 60 men) increased capacities on handling, transportation, and marketing of produce through training on improved post-harvest handling and storage practices, facilitated by the provision of essential equipment such as crates and weighing scales. Proper handling techniques tailored to the specific nature of crops, vegetables, and fruits are crucial to minimize post-harvest losses and ensure the safe distribution of produce from farms to marketplaces.

A participatory assessment and mapping exercise, entitled "Assessment and Mapping of Adaptation Status and Capacity Gaps of Rural Women," was executed across five municipalities within the Saptari and Siraha districts. This exercise evaluated the existing vulnerabilities of rural women to climate variability and extreme weather phenomena, scrutinizing their current coping strategies. It examined both indigenous practices and modern technologies employed as adaptation measures. It also assessed the capacities and strategic priorities of local governments in relation to climate resilience. The findings of the assessment will inform and guide local governments in the formulation of targeted adaptation pathways. These pathways will be instrumental in advancing climate-resilient and sustainable food systems within the project communities.

Under this output, a total of 24 out of 40 trainings on climate-resilient and nature-based agriculture were completed and the rest will be carried over to 2024. This was due to the delays in programme start-up which had a knock-on effect on activity implementation. The establishment of 5 construction management committees, was also postponed until 2024 due to the time taken to establish coordination ward representatives during the programme start-up.

Outcome 2: Rural women's income, decent work and economic autonomy are increased to secure their livelihoods and build resilience.

N/A

Output 2.1: Rural women have enhanced capacities, skills and time for entrepreneurship and access to markets and value chains.

Under this output, progress was made in increasing women smallholder farmers access to markets through linkages with the government's Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP). Five local governments, 13 ward offices, and 37 schools, including school management committees, teachers, and parents, strengthened their knowledge on the benefits and implementation of local home-grown school feeding. This contributed to securing commitment from school management committees to procure locally produced grains, cereals, and fresh vegetables from women farmers. This initiative will expand local market opportunities for women farmers to sell their produce and secure fair prices. It will also transform perceptions of women as valuable economic actors in the local economy. Additionally, it contributes to the nutrition of students. A total of 42 cooks (22 women and 20 men) were equipped and trained to prepare nutritious meals using locally grown produce, while a total of 34 schools were also equipped with basic kitchen utensils. This equipment was necessary as the schools lacked the basic equipment to prepare meals from locally grown produce safely.

A total of 27 women farmers (6 Janajati/Indigenous, 5 Dalit, 16 Other Madhesi) were trained as facilitators on Financial Education and Business Literacy (FEBL). For this, a comprehensive curriculum on Financial Education and Business Literacy (FEBL) was developed that included the integration of GALS 'lite', part of the Gender Action Learning System. The integration of GALS 'lite' into FEBL promotes interaction and reflection within households by involving both men and boys. It enhances effectiveness and learning for both illiterate and literate women and men, making FEBL more gender transformative. FEBL is mainly delivered at the group level, so the GALS approach also occurs at this level. These 27 women will undergo further advanced training and disseminate their knowledge to other women farmers in their respective communities going forward. To date, 2,096 women from 71 farmer's groups have participated in FEBL/GALS Lite sessions facilitated by these women, which have been instrumental in transforming their behaviours, actions, and relationships at individual and household levels. This is evidenced by testimonials from women farmers, such as the following. Such testimony provides evidence of transformative and systemic change in relation to social norms within traditionally conservative communities.

"Initially, caring for my 2-year-old son was my sole responsibility, and I couldn't leave the house. However, as I started facilitating group sessions on GALS, my father-in-law recognized my education and encouraged me to voice my opinions at home. This boosted my confidence, and my family began supporting my aspirations, even taking care of my son while I conducted GALS sessions. Now, they encourage me to engage in group activities and explore opportunities outside the village". - Rekha Kumari Khang, Sashiya Maharaj WFG, Lokharam -5, Chinnamasta.

To promote synergy building, FEBL booklets were distributed to all JP RWEE implementing partners, and they were invited to participate in FEBL classes along with the farmer's groups. This initiative aimed to deepen the understanding of the methodology and understand how the process of transformative change links to other activities within the programme and supports the empowerment process.

The workplan for 2023 initially outlined plans for linking 5 schools with women farmers, conducting 40 FEBL classes. However, 240 FEBL classes were conducted as the scope of FEBL classes was expanded, and budget resources redirected from delayed activities.

Output 2.2: Rural women have enhanced capacities, skills and time for entrepreneurship and access to markets and value chains.

The programme was successful in securing a commitment of public land and financial resources from local government for the construction of a Custom Hiring Service Centre⁸ (CHSC) in Laxmipur Patari Rural Municipality and Chinnamasta Rural Municipality. The former committed NPR 1,500,000 (approx. USD 11,440) to purchase a 4WD tractor and allocated public land for the construction of the CHSC. Discussion is ongoing with Chinnamasta Rural Municipality regarding the contribution to be made, although a verbal commitment of land for the construction of the CHSC has been made. These centres will be a significant step forward in alleviating the workload and drudgery of farm operations for women farmers, by providing timely access to advanced farm machinery and tools at low rates, thereby enhancing productivity and promoting decent work. All machinery and tools for these centres will be procured in 2024 and were selected through a consultative process involving women and men farmers, ensuring the purchase of equipment suitable for women.

The CHSC construction will be overseen by FAO, while WFP will oversee the construction of a collection centre at the same location in Laxmipur Patari. The centres will be jointly managed by a single management committee made up of JP RWEE programme participants at local level, resulting in cost and time savings. Having the CHSC and the collection centre at the same location will optimize access to agriculture extension and marketing services for beneficiaries.

Also under this output, a total of 200 landless beneficiaries (194 women and 6 men) previously working as seasonal agricultural labourers participated in business leadership development training under the programme.

⁸ Custom Hiring Service Center (CHSC) is essentially a unit comprising a variety of farm machineries, which are provided to small, marginal, and poor farmers at subsidized rates and in a timely manner for hire in order to reduce their workload and drudgery in agriculture sector

The leadership training has enhanced their abilities in collective bargaining, group mobilization, and leadership. Additionally, they have significantly improved their communication skills, particularly in areas of negotiation and bargaining on pricing.

Output 2.3: Rural women have increased access to gender-responsive financial and business development services, ICTs and other products and services.

A total of 1,990 farmers (1,930 women and 60 men) from 72 farmer's groups, enhanced their knowledge on the benefits of having insurance, including understanding premium structures, how to apply for insurance, and claim processes. This initiative aims to increase access to essential crop and livestock insurance, crucial for mitigating risks in farming. To further enhance accessibility, 50 insurance facilitators from various insurance agencies were consulted to provide hands-on guidance on navigating agriculture and livestock insurance services to these farmers. These farmers will be directly linked with insurance agencies in 2024.



Efforts were also made under this output to advance rural women's access to digital technology. The programme introduced third-party mobile applications like Smart Krish, Hamaro Krish, and GeoKrishi to beneficiaries with comprehensive orientation sessions that underscored the significance of utilizing these apps for accessing climate information, agricultural advisories, and market information systems within the agricultural value chain. All participants reported being first-time users of the agriculture mobile app. A total of 1,990 farmers (1,930 women and 60 men) from 72 farmer's groups were able to access agriculture information technology through the mobile app. Women group members

with access to a smart phone are actively using the application to access real-time market prices, weather information, and agricultural information according to informal discussion. These participants are also sharing information with others who don't have smartphone access or face literacy challenges. As a result, they are now better equipped to negotiate business deals and optimize opportunity costs for their agriculture produce.

Outcome 3: Rural women's voices and agency are increased for full and equal participation and leadership in their households, communities, organizations and governance systems.

N/A

Output 3.1: Rural women have increased skills and capacity to participate in local governance and decision-making structures.

A total of 112 farmers (55 women and 57 men) advocated for the increased representation of women in leadership positions and their active participation in local committees through key dialogues with local government and male stakeholders in two network and coordination meetings. These farmers specifically highlighted the roles and contributions of women within farmers groups, emphasizing the need for equitable representation in decision-making processes. As a direct result of these advocacy efforts, local governments, specifically Chinnamasta Rural Municipality and Laxmipur Patari Rural Municipality, demonstrated their commitment to support gender equality in governance structures by pledging to ensure and encourage the meaningful participation of women in various local committees. This will be followed through by the JP RWEE in the course of programme by supporting women to advocate for inclusion, participation and the provision of services and opportunities to meet their needs and supporting local government to bring about meaningful and systemic change in local development planning and interventions.

Output 3.2: Organizational capacities and social capital are strengthened to form, participate in and sustain gender-responsive producer organizations, cooperatives and unions, savings groups and self-help groups.

A total of 2,414 farmers (2,296 women and 118 men; 1,011 Dalit, 463 Janajati/indigenous, 80 Muslim, 10 Brahmin/Chhetri and 850 Other Madhesi) were organized into 83 farmer's groups (42 farmer's groups in Saptari district and 41 farmers group in Siraha district). Each of these farmer's groups were trained in organisational development and provided with essential resources, services, and technologies to boost agricultural production and productivity. All 83 farmer's groups have actively conducted monthly meetings since their formation, focusing on strategic plans and activities to advance their agricultural economic endeavors. There is almost no precedent of women's farmers groups in Madhesh province. However, initial feedback from stakeholders, notably local government, has indicated that the success of these groups in such a short period time is remarkable and contributing to a change in mindset regarding women being able to form collectives, increase production, contribute to household livelihoods and act as respected economic actors in the community.

A total of 25 women farmers (4 Dalit, 4 Janajati/indigenous, 1 Brahmin/Chhetri and 16 Other Madhesi) were trained as facilitators in the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). They provided coaching and mentoring support to 177 women members of farmer's group during the reporting period. This number will be increased and will continue over a two-year period.

Outcome 4: Gender-responsive legal frameworks, policies and institutions are strengthened to create an enabling environment for rural women to secure their livelihoods, rights and resilience.

N/A

Output 4.1: The capacities of policymakers and other relevant stakeholders to design, implement and track gender-responsive policies, strategies, legal frameworks and budgets are enhanced.

A comprehensive policy scoping study was undertaken, led by UN Women. This included policy reviews and consultations with federal government led agriculture related projects, the provincial Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture, and Cooperatives (MoLMAC), private sector stakeholders, and local government. The main objective was to assess gender-responsive agriculture policies, identify gaps, and determine entry points for the programme to engage in policy spheres in collaboration with the three tiers of government, primarily focusing on local government. The policy scoping study revealed critical gaps that impede effective GESI integration in the agriculture sector. These include:

- Limited understanding of GESI issues among local government officials.
- The absence of institutional GESI mechanisms within entities like MoLMAC for ensuring the integration of GESI perspectives into policies and programmes.
- Insufficient frameworks for communication and collaboration across government tiers, which is critical for GESI responsiveness.
- The lack of a comprehensive federal GESI policy to guide agricultural sectoral initiatives at both provincial and local government levels.
- Limited channels for information dissemination, learning exchanges, and the documentation of GESI-focused achievements.
- A deficit of human resources knowledgeable in GESI principles to effectively incorporate this knowledge into organizational practices and materials.
- Overlapping of women's economic empowerment programmes across various Ministries without a unified approach.

The key strategic entry points identified to advance gender responsive policies and frameworks at three level of government are listed below. These findings will inform the shaping of JP RWEE interventions at policy level, focusing on bringing about systemic change that will embed gender responsiveness with government policies and strategies.

Local Level	Provincial Level	Federal Level
• Training/Orientations on constitutional mandates, schedules, federal policies and international commitments to local government representatives	• Resource persons for sub-sectoral training at local level staff • Make training as regular capacity building means	• Inputs in revision of training curriculums of provincial agri-business and

• Upgrading knowledge and skills of sectoral staff on GESI at local level • Training on GESI concepts, methods, approaches for the GESI focal point • Deploy at least one female technician/intern in each municipality/rural municipality • Prioritize the skills development of women and disadvantaged groups • Information Communication Technology (ICT) literacy trainings • Financial literacy classes for women, youth and smallholder groups/cooperatives	• Revision of curriculums for the provincial agri-business and training centers to make them GESI responsive • Facilitate product promotion and investment schemes for women and youth in collaboration with FNCCI, CNI and other private sector federations • Follow up and monitoring of outputs of projects • Collaborate to establish help desks that facilitate women's access to credit and other services • Prioritize the skills development of women and disadvantaged groups	training centers to make them GESI responsive • Provide resource persons for sub-sectoral training at local level staff
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Output 4.2: Capacity of rural women and their organizations increased to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national, regional and global levels.

A total of 74 women farmers (7 farmers groups) from diverse social backgrounds (including 18 Dalit, 21 Janajati/ Indigenous, 5 Muslim, 29 Madhesi women) were effectively sensitized on accessing legal services. This sensitization programme expanded their understanding of gender-based violence, its various forms, and women's rights as enshrined in the constitution of Nepal. Women were educated about the roles and responsibilities of judiciary committee, vital registration processes, and the appropriate channels for reporting cases of violence. The women will cascade the learnings to their peer group. It's important to note that women's confidence in sensitizing others and asserting their rights comes about through the combined impact of the PUNO interventions. Testimonies provided by women during beneficiary contact visits illustrate how the collective nature of the groups and the knowledge and learning acquired helps to significantly bolster women's confidence. It is the combined learning from all of the interventions which builds individual and collective confidence to advocate for their rights.

The remaining activities planned under this output (public hearing with women farmers and the peer-to-peer learning on legal rights) were postponed until 2024 as a result of delays in implementing partner contracting.

Output 4.3: Rural women's economic empowerment strengthened through regional and global policy dialogues and processes.

N/A

- Describe any delays in implementation, challenges, lessons learned & best practices:

Challenges

Implementing Partner Contracting: It was not possible to launch the implementing partner contracting processes until government approved the JP RWEE project document at the end of 2022. The contracting procedures required by some of the agencies, in particular IFAD, took some time. Furthermore, UN Women undertook a change to their finance system as part of a wider UN system change to Quantum. This caused unexpected delays in the implementing partner contracting process which in turn resulted in the start-up of activities for IFAD and UN Women being delayed. Once partners were onboarded, they were supported to expedite activity start-up, with the PUNOs providing close monitoring and follow-up support.

Coordination and formalization with municipalities: Formalizing the programme and establishing coordination mechanisms with the local municipalities took some time, particularly as there was a transition period for newly elected officials to assume full responsibility of local government following local elections in 2022. The time taken was necessary as it is essential to promote a sense of ownership and accountability towards the programme within the municipality administration, and as part of local led development efforts for systemic change. This affected the timely formation of farmer's groups, which is a prerequisite for much of the activity implementation. Local representatives and officials were involved in the programme planning

and implementation process from the beginning. In addition, frequent induction was provided to newly elected officials at local level.

Managing community expectations: Managing high community expectations emerged as a key challenge. To address this, community engagement including organizing regular group meetings and workshops to provide updates on the programme plans, solicit feedback, and foster dialogue among community and group members was carried out. This approach helped in educating the community about the programme and aligning their expectations with the programme's objectives and scope.

Beneficiary Registration and Selection: During implementation, some rural farmers faced challenges due to the lack of legal identities, such as citizenship or a permanent account number. This posed a problem for group registration in accordance with programme mandates. The programme responded by providing referral and vital registration support and advocating with local governments to consider the inclusion of individuals without legal identity during group registration.

Best Practices

Scheduling activities according to rural women's availability: Aligning activities with the schedules of rural women farmers leads to active and complete participation. This consideration helps them to better manage their commitments, thereby increasing their engagement in programme activities.

Importance of joint review meetings and monitoring visits: Conducting joint review meetings and monitoring visits, which include Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs), local government representatives, and community members, is crucial for the smooth and effective implementation of the programme. These collaborative efforts promote innovative ideas and solutions and establish accountability and ownership among all stakeholders.

Leveraging domestic resources for co-ownership: Utilizing domestic resources such as public land, and financial resources from local government within the programme framework aids in establishing co-ownership. This strategy is instrumental in ensuring the programme's sustainability over the long term, as it builds a sense of shared responsibility and investment in outcomes.

Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM): A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was developed to set up and manage a joint community feedback mechanism for the programme. The CFM is designed to provide avenues for affected populations and stakeholders to access information, offer feedback, or voice concerns related to JP RWEE activities. It also aims to strengthen the programme's communication, accountability, transparency, and consequently, the overall quality of the programme delivery. The SOP has established an effective feedback handling, reporting and management process while ensuring project participants data protection, privacy, and confidentiality through operational guidance. Additionally, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment has been integrated into the CFM linking it with the existing reporting and case handling mechanism of each PUNO and the overall UN Country Team. A primary focal point and an alternate has been assigned at the community level in each municipality, who directly transfer the messages to CFM manager. These primary and alternate focal points are the staff from two different implementing partners who directly interact and engage with the project participants on a regular basis.

- **Qualitative Assessment**

During this first year of implementation, the programme established a strong foundation for engagement between PUNOs, federal and local governments, and implementing partners. Joint field visits at the local level and joint partner review meetings at central level were conducted during the reporting period. The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) focal point from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) also participated in joint field missions with PUNOs during the programme start-up. This helped to establish strong contextual understanding of the communities of intervention and establish dialogue with local government on the programme modality, their expected roles, and contributions for smooth implementation of the programme.

A multi actor coordination platform consisting of the PUNOs, implementing partners and local government was established and 4 meetings were held in 2023. This platform enabled the discussion of progress and challenges and contributed to creating greater understanding and awareness of each agency and implementing partner's components of the programme. The platform has contributed to strong coordination and collaboration at the field level. It has also served as an avenue for constructive feedback, innovative ideas, solutions, and enabled joint accountability and ownership of the programme among partners and stakeholders. During the multi-actor coordination platform, the chairpersons from Chinnamasta and Laxmipur Patari rural municipalities expressed a strong commitment to engage with the JP RWEE and co-invest in the women farmers groups, appreciating the programme's approach to women's empowerment. They also emphasized the need to shift women's role as seasonal agricultural laborers to established farmers.

An annual review meeting was conducted between the PUNOs and implementing partners in December. This was a further opportunity to share progress, challenges and lessons learned. It also enabled the PUNOs and partners to come together and share workplans to ensure clear alignment between country-level work plans and implementing partners workplans. Data collection flows, M&E indicators and activity tracking were also discussed. Outside of the coordination platform, effective partnership with local government was established. This partnership is key to ensuring ownership and sustainability of the programme, and helping to support transformative, systemic change at the local level over the course of the five-year programme. In these early stages of the JP RWEE, local government committed resources, pledged to support the meaningful participation of women in local development and provided extension support to women farmers both within and outside of the programme. Likewise, community health workers have extended their support to local communities as a result of the programme partnership. Their commitment to raising awareness on gender equality and the inclusion of women is also important as it will entail forging strong collaborations with different local, provincial, and national networks.

With regards to collaboration with national government, a National Steering Committee was held in February 2023, attended by senior Ministry representatives and PUNO senior management. Key discussions were held on lessons learned from JP RWEE phase I and the scope of JP RWEE phase II. A joint Op-Ed was published in a national newspaper on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women in October. This Op-Ed highlighted the role of the JP RWEE as a good practice for the implementation of the Ministry's Agriculture Development Strategy. Additionally, the Ministry was involved in the policy related work of the programme under Outcome Four. There was also a change in government officials in relation to the programme and the JP RWEE is working to establish a new rapport with these officials and induct them on the programme, primarily with Development Cooperation Unit of MoALD.

Building on the experience of Phase I of the JP RWEE, the four PUNOs continued to work collaboratively. A monthly PUNO technical working meeting was held, coordinated by the National Coordinator. This involved joint planning, including the development of the annual workplan, and a focus on identifying opportunities for synergy building, as per the examples provided in the report. In addition, the JP RWEE Nepal played a leading role in sharing the experiences of phase one with other participating JP RWEE countries. This included sharing experiences and learning on joint working and synergy building, gender transformative approaches, group work and working with government. These knowledge exchanges were particularly appreciated by those countries who are new to the JP RWEE.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment

The table below reports changes (increase and decrease) **after 12 months implementation cycle⁹** of the first intervention over the baseline and against global programme indicators at **Goal, Outcome and Output level** as per the approved Country's Performance Result Framework. Baseline figures are representative of the Country targeted population (total) and therefore they appear in % as per the JPRWEE M&E guidelines. Yearly targets also appear in % (in most cases and as per the indicator requirement to calculate changes overtime) and are established by the country team during the Annual planning exercise, while endline targets are established and validated internally right after the finalization of the baseline. Endline targets are also mentioned in this table to understand the progresses against the final expected change. In addition, this table reports also at **activity level**. Activity Targets are also established during the Annual Plan exercise and are specified in 2 reporting categories: N. of beneficiaries to be reached and related N. of inputs to be delivered.

The achievement is marked as: **NA, NOT ACHIEVED, PARTIALLY ACHIEVED, ACHIEVED, OVERACHIEVED**. **NA**: When the indicator is "optional" as per the Country's PRF and the country did choose to report against across the programme cycle because not relevant to the country context, or when the indicator is measured every 4/5 years or at mid-term, not annually. **0%**: When no changes could mature for that particular output due to short span implementation (example: Activities directed to distribute seeds are planned in August, but harvest season and market season would not allow the generation of changes before the reporting period).

Baselines and <u>targets for 2023</u>	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
OUTCOME 1: Improved food security and nutrition for rural women and their households that contribute to equitable and sustainable food systems.			
OUTCOME 1.1 Percentage increase in production/productivity of nutritious crops by rural women disaggregated by food crop (% change in production volume, kg/ha)			
Baseline: Pulses (Food group 2): 225 kg/hectare Nuts/Seeds (Food group 3): 167 kg/hectare (Aalas) Other vegetables (Food group 3): 2243 kg/hectare (Onion) Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endling Target: +70% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: Activity intervention under this outcome has not completed the 12 months cycle and the seasonal calendar for harvesting.	Individual Interview with Rural Women (Holder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS) Sub-Module B1)
OUTCOME 1.2 Increase in the proportion of rural women who reach minimum dietary diversity (MDD-W) (% increase from baseline)			
Baseline: 16% Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 26% increase from baseline	0%	Reasons for Variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this outcome indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12-month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	Individual Interview with Rural Women (Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women module)
OUTCOME 1.3 Decrease in the proportion of households spending 65% or more of their monthly budget on food (Household Food Expenditure Share)			

⁹ IMPORTANT NOTE: In Nepal, some of 2023 activities began to gain momentum after the mid-year mark, resulting in less than 12 months of implementation for some of them. Therefore, individual and household surveys to monitor increase over the baseline for outcome indicators and some of the output indicators will be conducted when a more mature cycle of implementation has been completed. Outcome monitoring reporting results will be shown in Annual Report 2024.

Baseline: 59% Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline Target: 10% decrease from baseline	NA	NA: Measured every 2 years	Household survey (Household Food Expenditure Share (FES) module)
Output 1.1: Rural women have increased access to resources, assets and technologies critical for climate-resilient agricultural production, food security, and nutrition			
1.1.1: Increase in the proportion of rural women with access to productive resources as measured by the relevant WEAI (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 88% Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline: 3% increase from baseline	NA	NA: measured every 4/5 years	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI (control over productive resources module), individual interview with rural women).
1.1.2: Increase in the number of rural women with access to climate-smart inputs, assets and natural resources for agricultural production such as high-quality drought resistant seeds, tools and machinery, water and irrigation, land, greenhouses/ polytunnels (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +40% Endline Target: 100% increase from baseline	+40%	ACHIEVED*	- IP's report - Agency reporting <i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module)</i>
1.1.3: Increase in the number of rural women adopting improved value -chain specific, climate-smart and indigenous agricultural production techniques (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +40% Endline Target: 100% increase from baseline	+40%	ACHIEVED*	IP's report including pre/post-training survey and FGD reports <i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module)</i>
1.1.4: Increase in the number of rural women with access to time- and labor-saving technologies (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0% Endline Target: 5% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12-month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level	- Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module), - IP report, - IUP distribution list
Activity under output 1.1			

Project Participants Target : 2,400 (disaggregation is missing) Input Yearly target 13 metric tons of seasonal crop seeds; 2,400 composite packages of vegetable seeds 12 nutrition field schools trainings	Project participants reached: Total - 2,414 Women - 2,296 Men - 118 Input delivered 12 Nutrition Field Schools 46 metric tons of draught resistant wheat seeds 2,400 composite packets of winter vegetable seeds (each packet has 10 different vegetable seeds) 2 metric tons of improved variety of seed potato 6.8 metric tons of climate resilient (drought resistant) paddy seeds distributed.	OVERACHIEVED : +14 Reason variance: The initial plan was to form 80 farmer's groups of 2,400 members. However, 83 farmer's groups of 2414 members were formed and supported with agriculture-related inputs in 2023.	- IP's reporting - Participant attendance list and distribution lists.
Output 1.2: Rural women have enhanced skills and capacities to increase nutritious food production, food quality and local food security reserves; reduce food losses and waste; and improve household diets.			
1.2.1: Increase in the number of rural women and men with improved skills and capacity for nutrition, health and food safety disaggregated by sex (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +30% Endline Target: 100% increase from baseline	+30%	ACHIEVED*	- IP's report - Pre/post-training survey and FGD reports <i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module)</i>
1.2.2: Increase in the number of rural women accessing extension services, including weather information (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +44% Endline Target: 100% increase from baseline	+40%	ACHIEVED*	- IP's report - Agency's report <i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module)</i>
1.2.3: Increase in the number of rural women utilizing improved and value-chain specific post-harvest handling and storage practices (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0% Endline Target: 60% increase from baseline	+0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module) and FGD reports
Activity output 1.2			

Project Participants Target: - 1,800 Yearly Input Target: 40 trainings on climate resilient and nature-based agriculture; 60 trainings on nutrition and sustainable consumption 5 construction management committees; and - adaptation pathway assessments in 5 municipalities	Project participants reached: Women – 1,709 Men - 63 Total – 1,772 Input delivered: 24 trainings on climate-resilient and nature-based agricultural practices 65 trainings on nutrition (including diet plan, daily healthy food intake) and sustainable consumption - adaptation pathway assessment in 5 rural/municipalities	PARTIALLY ACHIEVED: - 28 Reason for variance: Due to challenges in initial coordination with the ward representatives.	- Meeting minutes - List of training participants
Outcome 2: Rural women's income, decent work and economic autonomy increased to secure their livelihoods and build resilience			
2.1 Percentage increase in rural women's average annual farm incomes			
Baseline: NPR 13,427.92 (USD 102.7) Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 40% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this outcome indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP reporting - FGD with rural women <i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview with rural women (SAMS Module)</i>
2.2 Percentage increase in rural women's average annual off-farm incomes (including from micro-enterprises and wage employment promoted by the project), disaggregated by employment type			
Baseline: NPR 39,806.67 (USD 304.45) Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 15% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP reporting - FGD with rural women <i>*To be triangulated Individual interview with rural women (Non-farm employment and income survey module)</i>
2.3 Increase in the proportion of rural women with control over the use of their income and expenditures as measured by the relevant WEAI			
Baseline: 79% Planned Yearly Target: NA* Endline Target: 15% increase from baseline	NA	NA: Measured every 5 years (baseline and endline)	Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Access to Productive Capital)
2.4 Household redistribution in the average number of daily hours spent on unpaid care and domestic work, by sex and age (adapted from SDG 5.4.1) as measured by the relevant WEAI (Gender gap in hours per day)			
Baseline: Men: 1.6 hours; Women: dual HH - 4 hours; Women Single (Female headed household) - 3 hours Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline Target: Men – 2 hours; Women: dual HH - 3 hours and Single/female headed HH – 2 hours	NA	NA: Measured every 5 years (baseline and endline)	Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Time Allocation)
Output 2.1: Rural women have enhanced capacities, skills and time for entrepreneurship and access to markets and value chains			
2.1.1 Increase in the number of rural women with improved financial literacy and/or entrepreneurship skills (% of increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +9%	+9%	ACHIEVED*	- IP's report - Agency's report

Endline Target: 100% increase from baseline			<i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview</i>
2.1.2: Increase in the number of rural women who initiate new agribusiness and/or self-employment activities, disaggregated by sector (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 27% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women
2.1.3: Increase in the number of rural women with improved physical access to markets, processing and/or storage facilities (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 27% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women
Activity under output 2.1			
Project Participants Target - 600 Yearly Input Target: 40 FEBL classes; 5 schools to be linked with rural women farmers; 1 FEBL training of trainers) 1 FEBL refresher training	Project participants reached: 2,096 rural women Input delivered: 240 FEBL classes 1 FEBL TOT	OVERACHIEVED: +1,496 Reason for variance: The initial plan was to engage 600 project participants. However, in the process of implementation, the scope of this activity was expanded, and budget were pulled in from other activities which were delayed. No schools have been linked with women farmers yet. However, initial commitments were secured from 37 schools to launch the Home-grown School Feeding Programme providing space for rural women to sell their home-grown agricultural products.	- Attendance sheet - Photographs
Output 2.2: Rural women have increased access to decent work, including off-farm work and social protection			
2.2.1 Increase in the number of rural women who enter employment in the formal labour market (% increase over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 4% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women (non-farm employment and income survey module)

2.2.2: Increase in number of rural women covered by social protection systems (% change over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0% Endline Target: 9% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12 month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women
Activity under output 2.2			
Project Participants Target: - 600 Yearly Input Target : 2 custom hiring centers; 4 trainings 5 group meetings for cash assistance component.	Project participants reached: Women – 194 Men - 6 Total – 200 Input delivered: 10 business leadership trainings 5 consultation meetings for cash assistance component	PARTIALLY ACHIEVED: - 400 Reason for variance: Total target for activities under this output was 600. However, establishment of the custom hiring centers which were expected to be accessed by 600 rural women, has been delayed as the selection of land and allocation of resources from the local government took longer than expected. For custom hiring center establishment, local government (municipality and respective ward) has committed to provide budget and land. Due to delays in local government budget allocation and coordination process, the establishment got delayed.	- IP's report - Training and meeting attendance sheet - Meeting minutes
Output 2.3: Rural women have increased access to gender-responsive financial and business development services; ICTs and other products and services			
2.3.1: Increase in the number of rural women using gender-responsive financial services and products (including savings, credit, and insurance), disaggregated by type and total amount (USD) (% change over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 9% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this out indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12-month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Access to financial services)
2.3.2: Increase in the number of rural women who access and use new business knowledge, products, services and technologies for improved market access (% change over baseline)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: +10% Endline Target: +27% increase from baseline	10%	ACHIEVED*	- IP's report - Agency's report <i>*To be triangulated with Individual interview</i>
Activity under output 2.3			

Project Participants Target: - 300 Yearly Input Target : 10 training/orientations on crop/livestock insurance 2 orientations on accompaniment support	Project participants reached: Total – 2,372 (W 2,205 M167) Inputs delivered: 87 orientations/training sessions on crop/livestock insurance 7 orientations on accompaniment and referral support	OVERACHIEVED: +2,072 Reason for variance: The initial plan was to engage 500 project participants. However, in the process of implementation, the scope of this activity was expanded, and budget were pulled in from other activities which were delayed.	- IP's report - List of participants (training and orientation)
Outcome 3: Rural women's voice and agency increased for full and equal participation and leadership in their households, communities, organizations and governance systems			
3.1 Increase in the proportion of rural women with decision-making power over production and productive assets as measured by the WEAI ('Instrumental Agency' in Pro-WEAI)			
Baseline: 86% Planned Yearly Target: NA* Endline Target: 3% increase from baseline	NA	NA; Measured every 5 years (baseline and endline)	Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Access to Productive Capital)
3.2 Increase in the proportion of rural women with empowerment in the leadership domain as measured by the WEAI ('Collective Agency' in Pro-WEAI)			
Baseline: 24% Target: NA* Endline Target: 5% increase	NA	NA: Measured every 5 years (baseline and endline)	Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Autonomy in Decision-making)
3.3 Increase in proportion of women in elected local governance structures			
Baseline: 42% Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 1% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this outcome indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12-month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	Secondary data (Election Commission Nepal)
3.4 Increase in the proportion of participating women who are empowered or whose achievements are at least as high as men in their households according to the WEAI Gender Parity Index			
Baseline: 49% (GPI - 0.86) Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline Target: 20% increase from baseline	NA	NA: Measured every 5 years (baseline and endline)	Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module)
Output 3.1: Rural women have increased skills and capacity to participate in local governance and decision-making structures			
3.1.1: Increase in the proportion of women members in community decision-making structures, including producer organizations, cooperatives, unions and local food security reserves			
Baseline: 12% Planned Yearly Target: 0% Endline Target: 50% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12-month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Group Membership)

3.1.2: Increase in the proportion of women leaders in community decision-making bodies, producer organizations, cooperatives, unions and local food security reserves			
Baseline: 0% Planned Yearly Target: +0% Endline Target: 30% increase from baseline	0%	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that the implemented activities directly linked to this indicator have not completed the 12-month cycle and could not produce a change at outcome level.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Individual interview with rural women (Pro-WEAI Module – Group Membership)
Activity under output 3.1			
Project Participants Target: - 0 Input target: - 0	NA Project participants reached: 112 farmers (55 women and 57 men) Input delivered: 2 network and coordination meeting	OVERACHIEVED	- IP's report - Attendance sheet
Output 3.2: Organizational capacities and social capital strengthened to form, participate in and sustain gender-responsive producer organizations, cooperatives and unions, savings groups and self-help groups			
3.2.1: Increase in the number of informal rural women's groups which become formally registered producer organizations, cooperatives and unions			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 200	0	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that there is no activities directly or indirectly linked to this output so to generate changes in the reporting year.	- IP's report - Agency's report - FGD with rural women's group
3.2.2: Increase in the number of producer organizations, cooperatives and unions that adopt a gender policy/ strategy/ training/ women's quota for their board, etc.			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 200	0	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that there is no activities directly or indirectly linked to this output so to generate changes in the reporting year.	- IP's report - Agency's report - FGD with rural women's group
Activity under output 3.2			
Project Participants Target: - 2,400 Yearly Input Target: 80 trainings on group management; 1 ToT for GALS facilitators; 25 GALS sessions	Project participants reached: Women - 2,296 Men - 118 Total - 2,414 Inputs delivered: 80 trainings on group management 1 ToT for 25 women GALS facilitator	OVER ACHIEVED: +14 Reason for variance: Initial plan was to form a total of 80 farmer's groups consisting of 2,400 members and engage them in 2023. However, a total of 83 farmer's groups were formed and engaged.	List of participants (training and orientation) Photos
Outcome 4: Gender-responsive legal frameworks, policies and institutions strengthened to create an enabling environment for rural women to secure their livelihoods, rights and resilience			

4.1 Number and type of revised or adopted national or regional legal frameworks, policies, or strategies that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in agriculture, national food security and nutrition, social protection, emergency preparedness, and economic and labour systems (% change from baseline) (adapted from SDG 5.1.1)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline Target: 1 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development Gender Strategy	NA	NA: Measured every 2 years from implementation	- Feedback from government officials, policymakers, and representatives of civil society organizations involved in the development or revision of legal frameworks, policies, or strategies. - Reports documenting UNWOMEN's advocacy efforts - Studies, evaluations, or assessments conducted by independent organizations or research institutions,
4.2 Increase in the number of programme countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment in the agricultural sector (adapted from SDG 5.c.1) (% change from baseline)			
Baseline: Yes Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline Target: 1 Federal Ministry of Ministry of Finance (Line Ministry Budget Information System)	NA	NA: Measured every 2 years from implementation	- UNWOMEN's Annual country reports - National Government Reports related to the National strategy of economic and social empowerment for women and girls in rural area, - KII with national stakeholders
Output 4.1: Capacities of policymakers and other relevant stakeholders enhanced to design, implement and track gender-responsive policies, strategies, legal frameworks and budgets			
4.1.1: Increase in the number of national women's machineries and policymakers with capacities to advocate for gender-responsive policies and budgets			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 4	0	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that there is no activities directly or indirectly linked to this output so to generate changes in the reporting year.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Interview with policymakers including the representatives from national women's machineries
4.1.2: Increase in the number of rural women engaged in local and national-level government meetings on policy formulation, budget allocation and monitoring for gender commitments			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 200	0	Reason for variance: No increase/change has been foreseen under this output indicator in 2023 due to the fact that there is no activities directly or indirectly linked to this output so to generate changes in the reporting year.	- IP's report - Agency's report - Interview with rural women
Activity under output 4.1			

Project Participants Target - 0 Yearly Input target: - 0	NA	NA	▪ IP’s report ▪ Agency’s report ▪ Attendance sheet
Output 4.2: Capacity of rural women and their organizations increased to engage in and influence relevant policy forums at national and regional levels			
4.2.1: Increase in the number of rural women who demonstrate increased awareness and understanding of legal rights and relevant policy mechanisms			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 2,500	NA	NA	▪ IP’s report ▪ Agency’s report
4.2.2: Increase in the proportion of women’s groups linked to advocacy networks and alliances, by network focus (e.g., gender, climate action, etc.)			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 50%	NA	NA	▪ IP’s report ▪ Agency’s report
Activity under output 4.2			
Project Participants Target: 0	NA	NA	▪ IP’s report ▪ Agency’s report ▪ Attendance sheet
Yearly Input Target: - 0			
Output 4.3: Rural women’s economic empowerment strengthened through regional and global policy dialogues and processes			
4.3.1: Increase in the number of policy briefs and/or knowledge products published on rural women’s economic empowerment topics and measurement strategies.			
Baseline: 0 Planned Yearly Target: 0 Endline Target: 36	NA	NA	▪ Link to published policy briefs and/or knowledge products
4.3.2: Increase in the number of regional and global policy dialogues on rural women’s economic empowerment.			
Baseline: NA Planned Yearly Target: NA Endline Target: NA	NA	NA	NA
Activity under output 4.3			
Project Participants Target: - 1,500	Project participants reached: Women – 1,930 Men - 60 Total - 1,990 farmers	OVERACHIEVED +490 Reason for variance: The initial plan was to engage 1,500 project participants with specific orientation sessions on the Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM). However, this was integrated into other programme activities and information related to CFM was disseminated while those other programmatic activities.	▪ Attendance sheet ▪ Case story
Yearly Input Target:: ▪ 1 case story; ▪ 1 CFM	Inputs delivered: ▪ 1 CFM ▪ 1 case story		

iii) A Specific Story

Mundrika Devi Khang, a member of the Dalit community in Chinnamasta Rural Municipality, Saptari, has faced significant hardships in her life, primarily due to her socio-economic status. As a small-scale women farmer responsible for a family of five, Mundrika's challenges were multifaceted, encompassing the struggle to meet basic family needs and an ongoing battle with food insecurity. Her limited agricultural resources, consisting of a mere 5 *Katha* (0.17 Hectare) of land, were predominantly used for paddy and wheat cultivation for home consumption. A critical barrier in enhancing her livelihood was the lack of irrigation facilities, quality vegetable seeds and cultivation techniques, which restricted her farming potential and kept her family in a cycle of poverty.



To address these challenges, the JP RWEE implemented several strategic interventions. These included providing comprehensive training and distributing seed inputs and irrigation support to Mundrika and her peers in the Bishara Farmer's Group. The project facilitated a crucial transition from cereal to vegetable farming by supplying essential resources such as seeds, micro-nutrients, and irrigation equipment, coupled with the necessary training. The programme further supported this initiative by distributing irrigation pumps and offering technical assistance.

The impact of these interventions was profound and multifaceted. Mundrika experienced a remarkable improvement in both the yield and income from her farming activities. Initially, Mundrika was producing traditional crops such as paddy and wheat for their sole consumption but is now encouraged to grow nutritious crops including cauliflower, cabbage, radish, green leafy vegetables. She produced 1,130 kilograms (KG) during the reporting period. Out of the total produce, she sold 800 KG, and earned an income of NPR 25,000 (USD 190.68¹⁰). This amount was crucial for Mundrika and her family. The earned income not only addressed her family's immediate needs but also enabled her to start saving as part of a cooperative. Her enhanced confidence and skills led to a shift towards organic cash crop production, transforming her previously modest plot into a flourishing source of productivity. The programme also catalyzed a communal shift towards vegetable cultivation, with many members of the Bishara Farmers Group actively engaging in the process.

Moreover, Mundrika is empowering women like her within the farmer's group and the community, encouraging them to actively engage with local representatives and access necessary resources. This empowerment includes sensitization on legal access and referral systems.

The experience of Mundrika provides valuable insights into the change brought about in women's lives as a result of the programme. Providing initial tangible support in terms of resources, training, and infrastructure is essential to elevate agricultural productivity and income. The empowerment of women is not only a goal in itself but also a catalyst for broader community development. Active participation and decision-making by women leads to comprehensive community benefits, amplifying the effects of empowerment. Mundrika has also remarked on a change in attitudes towards her within her household and the wider community. Previously she was confined to the household and not valued as someone who

¹⁰ USD 1=NPR 131.11

could contribute to the household livelihoods. Now however, she is recognised and valued as an economic contributor and is involved in household decision making. This represents a huge change in her life.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

- A baseline survey was conducted at community, household, and individual levels. This included both control and treatment groups, which will enable an impact evaluation at the end of the programme. At the household level, the study engaged 600 households through three distinct survey modules: the Food Insecurity Expenditure Scale, Food Expenditure Share, and Project-level Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Pro-WEAI). These tools evaluated food insecurity levels, the role of women in agricultural decision-making, and the extent of women's empowerment within the agricultural context. Twenty local community leaders participated in the Climate Capacity Score survey, providing insights into their knowledge, and understanding of climate change impacts on agriculture. This assessment served as an important tool in gauging community preparedness and awareness regarding climatic challenges in the agricultural sector. Individual assessments engaged 1,000 participants, comprising 600 women and 400 men. They were engaged in survey modules that included the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women, Employment and Business Activity, Individual Food Insecurity Experience Scale, Agricultural Production Scale, and Individual Pro-WEAI. These modules were designed to measure critical aspects such as dietary diversity, employment trends, experiences of food insecurity, agricultural productivity, and gender-specific empowerment parameters. Based on the findings of the study, the results framework was updated with baselines and annual targets for all indicators. Some of the key recommendations from the baseline study are as follows:
 - i. The programme should also aim to improve women's awareness regarding domestic violence and collaborate with local organizations and stakeholders to create safe spaces for women.
 - ii. Increasing women's involvement in diversified livelihood opportunities is important to reducing the disproportionate burden of unpaid work among women and to enhancing their economic independence.
 - iii. Farmers' groups can facilitate knowledge sharing, access to resources and improved market opportunities, leading to increased income and empowerment among women farmers. Thus, forming farmers' groups with representation of both men and women in active roles is recommended.
 - iv. Activities aiming to improve dietary diversity and nutrition awareness among women are a must. Improving access to nutritious food sources is important, as is providing support to establish kitchen gardens that can promote overall health and well-being.
 - v. Climate resilience and disaster preparedness training, with a specific focus on educating women, should be incorporated into the plan. Women's active participation should be encouraged in community resilience and adaptation efforts.
 - vi. Quantitative research provided by this baseline survey should be complemented with focus group discussions and key informant interviews with households, women and communities. Qualitative research will explore the role that social norms and other challenges play in disempowering women.
- A simple Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was conducted to screen potential negative impacts of the programme activities on the targeted population. The assessment identified opportunities to mitigate risks and ensure no harm is done by the programme. The programme activities were screened by the PUNOs using their respective Environment and Social Impact

frameworks. The assessment identified several potential negative impacts, including increased use of agrochemicals, synthetic plastics, conflicts over resource allocation, and disruptions to natural resource flows. To address these risks, each PUNO will identify, monitor, and implement mitigation actions for environmental and social risks related to their activities. The following mitigation actions were identified:

- Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, including minimum tillage, maximum use of compost fertilizers, organic pesticides, integrated pest and production management techniques, sustainable soil management practices, and ecological practices.
 - Investment in enhancing the knowledge and capacity of farmers, agro-vets, agriculture technicians, and local government officials on the safer use of insecticides and the safe disposal of residues.
 - Engagement in cash assistance for assets activities to support beneficiaries who lack land or are land poor and vulnerable to shocks, ensuring compliance with national labor laws in contractual obligations.
 - Engagement of men, including husbands of programme participants, boys, local inter-faith leaders, political leaders, and local elected leaders through participatory approaches and methodologies.
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- A participatory assessment and mapping exercise, "Assessment and Mapping of Adaptation Status and Capacity Gaps of Rural Women," was carried out in five local authority areas. The assessment evaluated the existing vulnerabilities of rural women to climate change and examined their coping strategies. It also assessed the capacities and strategic priorities of local governments in strengthening climate resilience. The findings are intended to inform and guide local governments in the formulation of targeted adaptation pathways.
 - An assessment of gender social care infrastructure was initiated to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current situation regarding women farmers in the project locations. The findings will be available in the first quarter of 2024 and will inform the design of interventions relating to rural women's decent work and social protection.

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

Some of the activities planned in 2023 were moved to 2024 due to implementation delays.

V. Resources (Optional)

A National Coordinator was recruited to the programme by the lead agency, UN Women. All PUNOs have onboarded their local partners for the implementation of the programme.