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Abstract	With the urgency to accelerate efforts towards achieving inclusivity, the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan defines how CEA-FIRST and the IRC should conduct and implement FNSSA Research and Innovation and AR4D projects and programs to engage youth and promote gender equity. Through the CEA-FIRST project, this strategy responds to the global call to achieve gender equality in transitioning to a sustainable food system. Fundamental focus areas include climate and nutrition innovative technologies, investment in agribusiness, advancing scientific leadership of women and youth, inclusive governance structures, and gender-responsive monitoring, evaluation, and communication. This will contribute to a database of gender-smart technologies, including youth and women in the research, design, and development of technologies, increased investments in women and youth-led agribusinesses, and enhanced gender-based reporting and communication. The Strategy and Action Plan is based on a strong foundation of rigorous methods, including a desk review to explore existing frameworks related to gender and youth, identify gaps in Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) practices, and analyze strategies from member institutions to evaluate how well they integrate gender and youth considerations. Additionally, consultations and interviews with key informants and experts helped to uncover priorities, address challenges, and develop actionable pathways. This comprehensive approach ensures the Strategy is evidence-based, inclusive, and tailored to drive transformative outcomes for all stakeholders.
Keywords	Stakeholder engagement, climate and nutrition-smart, strengthened collaboration, increased investments, scaling innovations, Inclusivity, capacity building.

Glossary of Abbreviations

Acronym	Meaning	Acronym	Meaning
AEA	Agricultural Extension Agent	KPI	Key Performance Indicators
AEAS	Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services	LMICs	Low-and Middle-Income Countries
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services	MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
ARD	Agricultural Research and Development	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
AUC	African Union Commission	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa	MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget	MITA	Marché des Innovations et Technologies Agricoles
CABI	The Centre for Biosciences and Agriculture International	MOV	Means of verification
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Programme	NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women	NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
CF	Country Forum	NEET	Youth not in Employment, Education, or Training
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research	NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for African Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	NGO	Nongovernment Organization
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development	PANAP	Pan-African Network for Economic Analysis of Policies
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture	PDO	Project Development Objective
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	PIU	Project Implementation Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organizations	PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
DEC	Dissemination Exploitation and Communication Plan	R&I	Research and Innovation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic Social Council	SDGE	African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
EDC	Equality and Diversity Committee	SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
FAAP	Framework for African Agricultural Productivity	SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization	SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research	SRO	Sub Regional Organization
FBO	Farmer Based Organization	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
FNSSA	Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture	STI	Science and Technology Innovation
GDA	Gender Disaggregated Data	STISA	Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services	TAAT	Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation
GIZ	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH	ToC	Theory of Change
GM	Gender Mainstreaming		

HLPD	High-Level Policy Dialogue		
IDRC	International Development Research Centre	WAAPP	West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program
ILO	International Labour Organization	WBG	World Bank Group
IFPRI	International Food Policy research Institute	WG	Working Group
IP	Innovation Platform	WID	Women in Development
KEOPS	Knowledge Extract Or Pipeline System	YPII	Youth Plug-In Initiative

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Programme Overview (Description Context and Background)

Strengthening resilience in food and nutrition security in Africa is one of the priorities for African leaders. This is evidenced by the just launched Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2035, which emphasizes sustainable food production, inclusivity, and resilient agri-food systems. Leaders proposed investing in agri-food systems, exploiting the continent's arable land, and revising partnerships by focusing on concrete mega projects. Therefore, deliberate efforts are required to enhance inclusivity at all levels, including research and innovation.

For instance, agricultural research has traditionally focused on specific commodities and technical production issues, with a linear approach where technologies are developed by researchers and then delivered to farmers via extension agencies. However, there is a growing recognition that farmers need to be actively involved in the research process of the entire value chain. Agricultural research and development (ARD) in Africa must be responsive to the broader context of rural communities, potentially requiring collaboration with social and communication scientists and other sectors beyond agriculture. Similarly, recognizing gender differences in research and innovation will enable policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers to help marginalized groups gain equitable access to information and resources. This, in turn, empowers them to make better decisions for food security in the households.

The aspirations of the new CAADP strategy, therefore, hinges on the International Research Consortium (IRC), which was launched as the new bi-continental platform for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). One of the AU-EU long-term platform's cornerstones is to address the fragmentation of research actions and investments that have led to the low impact of research outcomes. Likewise, integrating gender and youth in agricultural research actions is essential for strengthening research's impact and inclusiveness and achieving equity in economic and social outcomes in the agricultural sector.

The integration of gender and youth is more critical in Africa due to the prevalence of exclusive gender and age norms that undermine the role of women and youth in the food systems. Given that agriculture is acknowledged as the leading growth driver for Africa, the potential of the sector's contribution to growth and development has been underexploited. With Agriculture as the backbone of Africa's economy, it has the potential to overcome a myriad of challenges by fostering food security, promoting inclusive growth, and reducing poverty (AfDB 2017). There is, therefore, an increased recognition among the research and development community that effective gender and youth integration in Research and Innovation (R&I) would help increase the adoption of products, services, and processes of R & I (Yami et al. 2024).

The European Union funded the Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation (CEA-FIRST) with the key objective of setting the change process towards the IRC functioning in motion, leading its direction, and facilitating the setting up of the IRC structures and services. A significant output is to develop a joint gender and youth strategy and action plan that aims to ensure the CEA-FIRST project and the IRC work are youth and gender-sensitive by being co-created and co-implemented with women, youth and marginalized stakeholders. The gender and youth strategy draws from existing gender and youth strategies of participating organizations, and best practices from partner organizations.

With more than half the world's poorest being women, whereby most of them are in situ in rural subsistent agricultural practices. Most poor people are on the African continent (African Partnership Forum, 2007). Situating women in the growth agenda along food systems with policy concerns in Africa is fundamental to poverty reduction, food security, and well-being. Within the Agricultural systems, women face critical challenges different from men (Akeredolu & Asinobi, 2007). Critical agricultural and productive assets and inputs are mostly unequally distributed between men and women (Abdulsalam-Saghir et al., 2012). For empowerment to happen, the processes through which women gain access to resources should be empowering, and the impacts of these processes should lead to broader changes in gender relations and norm. Similarly, most young people in especially, Africa have not been given the opportunity in the agricultural sector to actively participate due to factors such as limited access to land, inadequate access to capital, inadequate training, inadequate access to modern technology, negative perception about farming as well as attraction to non-existing opportunities in the urban areas. These call for urgent policy initiative to attract young people to the agricultural sector for sustainable development.

Africa's growth and development agenda can only succeed if the continent is able to draw on all its resources and talents and if women and the youth can participate fully in economic, social, and political life. This will require intensified efforts to eliminate discrimination and promote equal rights in all spheres, including research and innovation. The strong commitment to gender-responsive programmes that African governments have demonstrated needs to be complemented by strong support from the wider international community within the framework of a clear allocation of responsibilities and the clear mapping out of specific steps and measures.

Incidentally, in European agriculture, key challenges related to gender and youth development include: a significant underrepresentation of women in farm ownership and decision-making roles, limited access to resources and training for young farmers, an aging farming population, traditional gender norms perpetuating male dominance in the sector, and a lack of awareness regarding the vital contributions women make to agriculture; all of which hinder innovation and sustainability in the industry. For instance, a number of women farmholders, i.e., around 1/3 of the head of holding in the European Union (EU), are female. However, in many cases, they are less formally educated and trained than their male counterparts, despite the fact that across other sectors, they consistently achieve higher qualifications (EU, 2019).

With this background, a review was carried out for gender strategies of CEA-FIRST implementing institutions to gain a deeper understanding of the priorities, commonalities, synergies, and gaps. The most important thing was to examine the status of gender and youth inclusivity among key stakeholders such as women and youth associations and gain insights on how the strategy will reflect the needs of various groups often marginalized in research and innovation interventions.

As such, the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy has been developed to set a blueprint for how CEA-FIRST and IRC should conduct and implement research and innovation, AR4D projects, and programs by considering gender and youth concerns in their engagements. It outlines the inclusion of gender and youth in research, design, and development of technologies, considering the different needs and capabilities through focused activities aimed at generating substantial benefits for women, men, and youth.

1.2. Global Perspective on Gender and Youth Integration

Internationally, the concept of mainstreaming gender issues into development programmes was established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality in the Platform for Action adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, in 1995. Gender equality is stated by the international community as a human right and is central to any development objective; it could enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representative (WDR 2012).

The World Bank defines gender as the social meaning given to males and females by societies- i.e. the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as their relationships with each other.

The term “youth” is typically considered to encompass the age group of 15 to 24 years old, with “adults” supposed to be those aged 25 and over. However, when possible, the discussion is expanded to cover the broader age range of 15 to 29 years old (ILO 2024). Significant variations exist between global definitions of “youth” and the age ranges established by national youth laws and policies across different countries (Arulingam et al., 2019).

In global agricultural research and development, gender and youth are increasingly recognized as crucial demographic factors, with a growing understanding that addressing their specific needs and challenges is critical for achieving sustainable and equitable food systems; this is supported by research from organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) which highlight the need to integrate gender and youth perspectives into research and development initiatives to maximize.

According to the World Bank Group (WBG), integrating gender and youth into agricultural research and innovation (R&I) makes research more inclusive and impactful. It creates sustainable rural livelihoods by increasing the skills, capacity, and talent of women and men.

In the Paris Agreement, Article 7 (3) of the Agreement adopted by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015 acknowledges that “adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems and should be based and guided by the best available science, and as appropriate, traditional, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions where appropriate” (United Nations, 2015: 9).

1.3. European Perspective on Gender and Youth Integration

The European Commission deems gender equality an important lever to increase fairness in society, boost the innovation performance of organizations, and trigger economic growth. Although some progress has been achieved in gender equality in R & I over the last few years, She Figures 2021 reported that there are still considerable gender gaps in Research and Innovation (R & I). The Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in R&I by

making it a cross-cutting priority and introducing strengthened provisions. The goal is to improve the European research and innovation system, create gender-equal working environments where all talents can thrive, and better integrate the gender dimension in projects to improve research quality as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies, and innovations produced (The *European Commission Gender Equality Strategy*, 2020-2025).

In the field of agricultural research, the EU's agriculture sector faces pressing challenges, among which gender and age gaps are critical. The challenge of attracting more young people and more females to the agriculture sector, in particular, is a significant global issue requiring research, investment, and strategic action plans to overcome. A report, *The Changing Face of Agriculture, focusing on gender, youth, and technology report, 2023*, identified the generational gap as a major challenge. The report highlights that gender equity, as well as generational replacement, are a must to guarantee the future of the EU's farming sector and its leading role in the global market. It is recommended that priority must be given to launching initiatives that efficiently promote work opportunities for the youth, demonstrate how agriculture is using and benefiting from technology, digital tools, and science, and create leading roles for women in the farming sector. It also identified education, training, and public investment (infrastructures, connectivity, funds, policies) as key to accelerating and ensuring the successful future of the EU's agriculture sector.

1.4. Africa Perspective of Gender and Youth Integration

In Africa, the relevance of gender and youth integration for sustainable agricultural systems aligns with international frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) 5 gender equality, SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that underlines on empowerment of women in social and economic activities. Regional frameworks such as the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the Agenda 2063 also emphasize the need for gender equality to realize development in Africa.

Africa is the world's youngest continent, with 600 million people, 65% of its population aged below 25 years. While there has been strong economic growth averaging 5.03% between 2004 and 2014, this growth has not always been pro-poor, nor has it led to a commensurate increase in jobs. With the rising population of youth, 11 million of whom join the labor market each year, and job creation that cannot absorb this supply, Africa now faces the problem of a "double employment crisis" (Ameyaw & Maiga, 2015).

Women constitute about 50 percent of the agricultural labor force in Africa, yet they often face significant barriers, including limited access to land, credit, and technology. Closing the gender gap in agriculture could increase yields on women's farms by 20 - 30 percent, potentially reducing the number of hungry people in the world by 100-150 million. Additionally, with youth unemployment in Africa standing at 14 percent, agriculture offers a promising avenue for job creation. Initiatives like agribusiness incubation centers and youth-focused agricultural programs can engage young people in innovative agricultural practices, helping to alleviate the unemployment crisis. The FAO estimates that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent.

In Africa, raising yields and productivity of the farmlands in a sustainable manner requires robust Research Innovation, Development, Dissemination, and Adoption of technology by farmers and other value chain actors. However, in the field of agricultural Research, Innovation, and Technology Dissemination, significant gender and youth challenges exist, including limited access to information and resources, unequal land ownership, lack of representation in decision-making roles, gendered social norms hindering participation, inadequate training opportunities tailored to their needs, and limited access to funding and markets, ultimately impacting their ability to contribute to and benefit from agricultural advancements; with women often facing additional barriers related to traditional gender roles and limited mobility. Meeting the growing demand for food and entrepreneurship requires raising yields and productivity of the farmlands in a sustainable manner (AGRA [2015](#)).

The inclusion of women and youth has been and continues to be important to the African Union not just because it is part of its Constitutive Act but also because it is a fundamental human right that is integral to the accelerated economic growth and social development of the continent as a whole. However, for decades, African women and youth have been trapped in cycles of poverty due to several underlying factors, including unequal access to education, factors of production, restricted market access, underpaid or unpaid labour; harmful cultural practices, violence against women and girls and limited legal protection from gender inequality practices entrenched in the society amongst others.

1.5. CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy Objectives

Objectives of the Gender and Youth Strategy

The strategy ensures that the CEA-FIRST project and the IRC work are youth- and gender-sensitive by co-creating and co-implementing with the youth and gender-related stakeholders. More specifically, the strategy aims to;

- a. Describe and establish the state of gender sensitivity by reviewing gender strategies from CEA-FIRST implementing institutions.
- b. Identify best practices, gaps, and actions/solutions needed to bridge the gaps and achieve the co-envisioned state of gender sensitivity, working methods, and parameters required for gender and youth integration.
- c. Package actions, a code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures, responsible actors, institutional mechanisms, and implementation arrangements for gender and youth-responsive interventions.
- d. Develop key actions for implementation and establish key indicators to track progress toward achieving gender equality and equity under the CEA-FIRST initiative.

SECTION 2: RATIONALE

The need for strong priority to Gender and Youth sensitive issues in CEA-FIRST activities resonates with the goal of Task 1.5 of CEA-FIRST, and it is to ensure the project and the IRC work are youth and gender-sensitive by being co-created and co-implemented with the youth and gender-related stakeholders. Aspects of this Gender and Youth Strategy cuts across all work packages and activities, and include a code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures, description of gender and youth inclusion in governance structures. The strategy is also instrumental in providing guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of gender

and youth indicators, generational renewal processes, working group composition, working methods, and parameters required for gender and youth responses to IRC calls for funding.

It emphasizes the need to put measures in place to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action and, where applicable, in line with the gender equality plan. Integrating gender and youth concerns in research and innovation, particularly in Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D), is very important because it leads to more relevant, impactful research by incorporating diverse perspectives, experiences, and needs, ultimately contributing to more equitable and sustainable development outcomes, especially in areas like food security and climate change adaptation; this includes providing opportunities for women and young people to actively participate in shaping solutions that directly affect their lives, fostering local ownership and innovation.

2.1 The Case for Gender and Youth Involvement in Research and Innovation and AR4D

2.1.1 Gender Consideration in Research and Innovation and AR4D

Globally, 36 percent of working women are employed by agrifood systems, and these women account for 43 percent of the total agrifood system labor force in low- and middle-income countries (2030 Research and Innovation Strategy 2021; FAO 2023). Despite this, the working conditions for men and women in agrifood systems, and the returns for their participation, are often not equal.

Again, more than 1 billion of the world's 1.2 billion youth (aged 15 to 24 years) live in low- and middle-income countries, where many face limited employment opportunities and substandard working conditions. CGIAR recognizes that achieving more resilient, equitable, and sustainable agrifood systems requires gender equality, youth empowerment, and socioeconomic inclusion. As such, CGIAR is committed to closing the gender gap and enhancing opportunities for youth in food, land, and water systems.

The neglect of women's concerns in agricultural Research, innovation, technology development, dissemination, and adoption cannot be overlooked. Gender inequality in agriculture is systemic and varies according to contexts and culture, amongst other factors (FAO, 2023). Agriculture accounts for up to 66% of women's employment in Sub-Saharan Africa compared to 60% for men. Globally, women earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by men in agriculture, and the gender gap in agricultural productivity between men and five women is 24% (FAO, 2023). The report¹ by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) titled "The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems" reveals that though globally, 36% of working women are employed in agrifood systems, along with 38% of working men, women's roles, however, tend to be marginalized, and alongside the gender inequalities and discriminations, result in a 24% gender gap in productivity.

Again, most institutional cultures, including University cultures, are not friendly to women and students from disadvantaged regions. The expression of gender stereotypes and biases are often reflected in institutional behavior, attitudes, and language used by students and staff, which can marginalize women in agricultural training programs (Ibid.).

Integrating gender and youth perspectives in Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) is crucial because it leads to more inclusive, impactful research that better addresses the needs of diverse communities, improves adoption rates of innovations, and promotes equitable

development by ensuring women and young people are not left behind in the decision-making process and benefit equally from advancements in agriculture (CABI Agric Biosci, 2024). The integration of gender and youth in agriculture can help create a more inclusive and productive agricultural sector and can also help achieve equal economic and social outcomes.

In doing so, CGIAR Strategy developed two collective global targets for Gender Equality, Youth, and Social Inclusion, namely:

- Close the gender gap in rights to economic resources, access to ownership, and control over land and natural resources for over 500 million women who work in food, land, and water systems.
- Offer rewarding opportunities to 267 million young people who are not in employment, education, or training.

2.1.2 Youth Involvement in Research and Innovation and AR4D

Youth is recognized as a key demographic in international agricultural and rural development. Although urbanization may absorb some of the youth population, agrifood systems will provide significant employment in the foreseeable future, notably in rural and peri-urban areas (Girard, 2023; Dolislager et al., 2021).

The term “youth” is typically considered to encompass the age group of 15 to 24 years old, with “adults” supposed to be those aged 25 and over. However, when possible, the discussion is expanded to cover the broader age range of 15 to 29 years old (ILO 2024).

Furthermore, it has been noted that in policy discussions, the youth are sometimes depicted as a potential source of instability or threat. Government authorities and policymakers are often aware of the frustration and anger experienced by a generation that faces significant barriers to achieving its material and social aspirations (World Bank, 2011; Richards, 2005).

The rapid growth of the youth population is one of the key reasons for prioritizing youth in development strategies. Official reports emphasize the “unprecedented numbers” of young people entering labor markets, highlighting the need for quality jobs and livelihood opportunities (Dolislager et al., 2021; Sumberg et al., 2021). Furthermore, factors such as gender and the diverse identities arising from geographical location, social class, caste, race, ethnicity, and religion intersect to create unequal opportunities for young people (Huijsmans et al., 2021).

In Europe, in relation to young people’s labour market situation, the situation is recounted as follows: the youth unemployment rate has consistently remained around twice as high as the general unemployment rate (15-74 year-olds); it takes longer to integrate a stable labour market in the face of many job-to-job transitions and spells of precarious work. Also, vulnerable groups, such as youth from minority ethnic backgrounds or young people with disabilities, continue to be disadvantaged, while youth inactivity remains stable and high in these groups and does not decrease much when general youth unemployment decreases (European Commission, 2023). Thus, the proper integration of young people into the labour market in Europe is also of critical importance.

The social group of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) underlines the social exclusion and marginalization that many face in labor markets (Cieslik, Barford, and

Vira, 2022; Liepmann, 2020). And the need to reduce the number of NEETs is one of the emphasis of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, specifically Target 8.6 (Cieslik, Barford, and Vira, 2022; Kiss, Fotheringham, and Quinlan-Davidson, 2022). Since the "youth dividend" has the potential to drive economic growth in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), it is imperative to view the youthful demographics of societies in Africa as a potential advantage rather than focus solely on the risks of exclusion and instability.

In the discourse on job creation for the youth, agriculture and food value chains have been identified as key sectors where growth might be stimulated to create decent jobs, as well as attractive business opportunities, for youth in both rural and urban areas (Galiè and Farnworth 2019; Huijsmans et al. 2021; Filmer and Fox 2014). The focus on food systems extends decisively beyond farms, partly because many analysts doubt whether young people are interested in working on farms (e.g., Alrawashdeh et al. 2022) and thus the rationale for the consideration of a youth-sensitive strategy for the CEA-FIRST and IRC.

Viewed from perspectives of justice and equity, youth are entitled to be involved and included in AR4D strategies and programs and to benefit from investments in AR4D. If AR4D is to be effective in leading and facilitating a sustainable transformation of agrifood systems, then working with and responding to youth seems essential. This is the essence of the CEA-FIRST/ IRC Gender and Youth Strategy.

2.1.3 Leveraging on Existing Constraints in Gender and Youth Mainstreaming in Agricultural R&I and Development for Stronger Integration

There is strong justification for giving Gender and Youth mainstreaming concerns in Agricultural Research, Innovation, and Development (ARID) a huge priority based on existing information from existing documents, publications, and reviews. Grounded on existing literature, specific gender and youth-based challenges within ARID and extension services reveal the under-listed constraints in participation, capacity, analysis, and access to innovation calling for Gender and youth inclusiveness in ARID:

AFAAS, in its Gender Mainstreaming Strategy document, 2015, revealed evidence of weaknesses in gender analysis capacity. Consequently, many continental, national, and organizational policy and programme documents (notably CAADP and Uganda's NAADS) have broad policy statements not backed by a thorough gender analysis that articulates the gender issues and their root causes. The frameworks used do not lead to an understanding of power relations between men and women at household, community, networks, and national levels and between farmers and RAS institutions, which would enable an understanding of the strategic needs and interests of women and inform the development of appropriate transformative goals, targets, strategies, indicators of progress, and interventions.

In the area of technology dissemination, there are also strong gender disparities in access to extension services and adoption of new technologies, with male farmers consistently reporting better access to extension information and higher rates of adoption of fertilizers, improved varieties, and other technologies promoted by extension providers. Traditional approaches to extension, such as visits from extension officers and training workshops, tend to reach men more easily than women, though some alternative approaches, such as radio and mobile phone, have fared better in reaching women as well. Farmers' willingness and ability to implement the recommendations of extension workers depend heavily on the resources that they have at their disposal. Female farmers, therefore often find it more difficult to adopt new technologies

or practices even when they are able to access extension, as they tend to control fewer resources than their male counterparts (AFAAS, 2015)

A myriad of other factors also contribute to the success or otherwise of gender and youth integration in research and innovation in Africa. The success of gender and youth integration in R & I across *Long-term Europe-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership* for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (LEAP4FNSSA) projects for instance revealed that consideration of gender and youth analysis from the onset to the evaluation stages of the projects has been an enabling factor across projects. For example, crop variety improvements need a prior gender analysis to identify what is considered as men's, women's, or jointly done task in the community and the time and labor requirements of the improved variety (Key informant interviews 1 & 8, July 2022). Again, research by INNOVAFRICA a multidisciplinary project that aims to improve food and nutrition security and adaptive capacity of smallholders to climate change revealed that factors including access to productive resources, control over income, labour allocation, and leadership skills influenced whether and how the R & I work of the INNOVAFRICA project contributes to the livelihood's improvement of women (Haug et al. 2019).

2.2. Cross-Cutting Gender and Food System Issues

2.2.1. Gendered social norms and expectations

Social gender norms are informal, contextually, and culturally specific and are strongly linked to women's empowerment (Eissler et al., 2020a, 2020b, 2021a; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019b; Bryan and Garner, 2022). Gendered social norms and expectations are crucial to consider in agricultural research and technology adoption because they significantly influence how men and women participate in farming activities, access information, make decisions about adopting new technologies, and ultimately impact the effectiveness of agricultural interventions, particularly regarding youth involvement, as these norms can limit women's agency and opportunities within the agricultural sector.

Emic understandings of an empowered woman and an empowered man vary but inform the understanding of cultural nuances and expectations of roles and responsibilities of women (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019b; Bryan and Garner, 2022). Men are generally considered household financial providers and decision-makers, whereas women are responsible for domestic chores, childcare, food preparation, and other unpaid care tasks. In rural agricultural settings, women may also provide household labor on their husbands' agricultural plots in addition to their domestic work, yet are not remunerated for this labor (Picchioni et al., 2020; Abate, 2018; Ghosh and Chopra, 2019). Recent evidence also suggests that patterns of male dominance in the household are linked to individuals' gender norms but are not necessarily correlated with intergenerational transfers of male dominance in intrahousehold decision-making (Leight, 2021).

2.2.2. Gender and Youth Access to and Control Over Resources, Services in Agricultural Technology Development and Dissemination

In discussing gender and youth access to and control over resources and services in agricultural technology development, dissemination, and adoption, it's crucial to acknowledge that women and young people often face significant barriers to accessing and fully **utilizing new technologies** due to societal norms, **limited land ownership**, lack of access to information and

training, and restricted decision-making power within their households and communities, hindering their ability to benefit from advancements in agriculture.

Land ownership

A large body of literature has examined differences in men's and women's access to, formal and informal ownership of, and control over resources in the food system (Johnson et al., 2016; Uduji et al., 2019; Perez et al., 2015; Gebre et al., 2019; Fisher and Carr, 2015; Lambrecht and Mahrt, 2019; Theis et al., 2018). Evidence indicates that perceived or effective ownership of resources may be more important than actual ownership for women's empowerment and nutrition outcomes (Eissler et al., 2020b). For example, Eissler et al. (2020b) found that regardless of ownership, men had effective control over sales decisions for their and their wives' poultry flock in Burkina Faso, but women did not share that same control. When women's previously less-lucrative or lower-valued activities begin to rise in value or earn higher incomes, control over the activity or resource may be transferred from women to men (Mwaseba and Kaarhus, 2015).

Women's weaker land rights limit their options to increase nature-positive agricultural production or mitigate risk to climate change (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019a; Doss et al., 2015; Perez et al., 2015; Pradhan et al., 2019). Pradhan et al. (2019) found that household structure and relations are most important for understanding land rights in Nepal, and that women's claim to property rights shifts over the life cycle. Yokying and Lambrecht (2020) found that landownership is positively associated with household decision-making influence on agriculture. However, women's landownership did not necessarily increase women's autonomy in using agricultural income, decrease women's workloads, or increase women's participation in cultivation-specific decisions in Northern Ghana.

Technology, information, and services

Existing literature shows that women face social, cultural, and institutional barriers to accessing and adopting agricultural technologies, information, and services (Peterman et al., 2011, 2014; Perez et al., 2015; Mudege et al., 2017; Ragasa et al., 2013; Theis et al., 2018; Raghunathan et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2020). Men and women have different needs for and access to information and technologies; gender analyses are, therefore, needed to tailor communication strategies to ensure that information and dissemination are adequately targeted to men and women (Tall et al., 2014; Peterman et al., 2014; Diouf et al., 2019; Ragasa et al., 2013; Jost et al., 2016; Mudege et al., 2017; Duffy et al., 2020).

Time and labor: Women's unpaid care and agricultural labor burdens

Interventions to benefit or empower women may overlook the time trade-offs required for women's participation or for intended outcomes (Picchioni et al., 2020; Komatsu et al., 2018; van den Bold et al., 2021). Komatsu et al. (2018) found that women's time in domestic work was positively associated with diverse diets in Cambodia, Ghana, Bangladesh, Mozambique and Nepal.

In contrast, in India and Nepal, Picchioni et al. (2020) found that women and men participate equally in productive agricultural work that requires high levels of energy, but women shoulder most of the reproductive work at the expense of leisure opportunities. Nature-positive production practices – such as climate smart agriculture (CSA) or sustainable intensification practices – often require higher labor and time inputs that make adoption of such practices difficult for women and resource poor producers (Montt and Luu, 2020).

Finally, and importantly, measuring time use itself does not address women's agency over their time use or the intrahousehold decision-making surrounding how and on what activities women may spend their time (Eissler et al., 2021b). There is little research showing how women may control their time use or how interventions can support women in managing their own time to advance their strategic choices in food systems.

Food systems level

With regard to gender at the food systems level, increasing women's voices and integrating their preferences into agricultural solutions, including technology design and implementation, is an under-researched pathway to empowerment and gender equality in food systems. There is limited evidence that technology development (including crop breeding) incorporates women's different preferences and needs into design (Tufan et al., 2018; Marimo et al., 2020). Women may have different preferences than men with regard to crop varieties (Gilligan et al., 2020; Teeken et al., 2018), but breeders may not consider these preferences in varietal design and profiles (Tufan et al., 2018; Marimo et al., 2020). Indeed, Marimo et al. (2020) recently conducted a review of the gray and published literature on gender and trait preferences in sub-Saharan Africa and found only four studies that addressed differences in trait preferences. Increasing attention to gender equality in breeding and seed systems research is a priority of the CGIAR; for reviews, see Polar et al. (2021) and Puskur et al. (2021). Within food systems organizations, women's leadership is extremely low. A study of selected food systems organizations showed only six percent of CEO and Chairs of Boards of global food systems organizations are women from low- and middle-income countries (IFPRI and Global Health 5050, 2021).

This Gender and Youth Strategy within the CEA-FIRST project ensures equitable participation and benefits women and youth in agricultural research and innovation activities. The strategy promotes gender equality and youth empowerment within the food security and sustainable agriculture landscape in Africa and Europe. This is done by actively integrating gender and youth considerations into all project phases, from research design to knowledge dissemination, through targeted interventions and capacity-building initiatives.

SECTION 3: KEY GENDER AND YOUTH GAPS AND ACTIONS IN THE RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION SPACE

3.1. The CEA-FIRST in the AU-EU Research and Innovation Space

Within the CEA-FIRST initiative in the AU-EU Research and Innovation Space, key gender and youth concerns broadly include limited participation of women and youth in research and innovation activities. These gaps are related to food security and sustainable agriculture, inadequate access to funding and training opportunities for young researchers, and a lack of consideration for gender-specific needs and challenges in research design and implementation. They highlight the need to actively integrate gender and youth perspectives into the project to ensure equitable and impactful outcomes.

3.1.1. The AU-EU Innovation Agenda

Enhancing Research and Innovation (R&I) cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) is a top priority, as R&I plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable and inclusive development, driving economic growth, creating jobs, and reducing poverty and inequalities. This commitment is reflected in key policy frameworks, including the United

Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2022), the African Union's Agenda 2063 (AUC, 2013), the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024), the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035), the AUC Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa 2020-2030 (AUC, 2020), and the European Union's communications on the 'Comprehensive Strategy with Africa' (EC, 2020), the 'Global Approach to Research and Innovation' (EC, 2021), and the Global Gateway (EC, 2021).

Gaps Identified and the Objectives of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda

A joint working group of the AU-EU High-Level Political Dialogue (HLPD) on Science and Technology Innovation (STI) took stock of previous and ongoing joint R&I activities (pilot projects on partnerships, discussions at ministerial, identified gaps and needs in the related fields). Consequently, a number of innovation cooperation needs and gaps were identified and used to elaborate a distinct set of objectives for the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, taking into account the different conditions between continents and countries (European Union & African Union, 2023)

The objectives of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda are based on the principles of co-creation and co-ownership, sustainability, and openness. Aspiring to a systemic approach, these objectives aim to be complementary with each other and are shaped according to the UN SDGs and the principles and values of international cooperation in research and innovation:

1. *Translate innovative capacities and achievements* of AU and EU researchers and innovators across sectors (e.g. public, private, non-profit entities, civil society organisations, and individuals).
2. *Foster and/or strengthen innovation ecosystems to enhance the socio-economic impact* on the ground through the exchange of knowledge, technology, competencies, human resources, and experience between and within AU and EU countries.
3. *Develop sustainable, long-lasting, mutually beneficial higher education, research, and innovation partnerships* between AU and EU countries as foundations for resilient knowledge economies and societies.
4. *Scale-up instruments that can take forward existing successful bilateral or multilateral programmes and projects between AU and EU partners*, enable and/or strengthen the knowledge triangle of education, research, and innovation, and place special focus on public participation, transparency, and inclusion, mainly through capacity empowerment, particularly for the youth, women and vulnerable groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, persons from the disadvantaged socio-economic background, refugees, etc.), advancing knowledge and fostering entrepreneurship and co-creation, to limit and counteract talent drain. (EU & AU, (2023).

3.1.2 The Innovation Ecosystem

The needs and gaps identified by AU and EU policymakers and the innovation communities reflect a strong justification that emphasizes gender and youth at the centre of the innovation ecosystem and human capacity development. The **Innovation Ecosystem** refers to the network of institutions, organizations, and individuals that support the creation and commercialization of new ideas, including research centers, universities, businesses, and government agencies.

- In the **innovation ecosystem**, the need to ensure **gender equality and empower women, youth, and vulnerable groups** (e.g., persons from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and/or persons with disabilities and/or refugees and/or stigmatized/discriminated groups of people) and their entrepreneurship throughout R&I processes need to be given strong attention.
- Need for engaging **grass root communities in consultations** on and implementation of R&I initiatives, throughout the stages of Project Cycle Management of R&I initiatives, including, though not limited to, the initial crucial steps of programming, identification, and formulation, to ensure the expected outputs and outcomes do actually fulfill unmet needs on the ground for especially women and youth.
- The need to integrate the knowledge triangle concept across strategic alliances and partnerships between existing and future AU and EU R&I cooperation programs, including the need to integrate **women and youth in STEM actions**, could significantly contribute to sustainable growth and jobs.
- Need to reduce/reverse the **talent drain of young, talented African researchers and innovators** who carry out their studies or training abroad and, for instance, due to a lack of performing research infrastructures, do not have the opportunity to continue their research in their home settings. In this context, how major emerging countries transformed the brain drain into a brain gain has important lessons for the AU.
- Need to strengthen human resources capacities, for instance, with regard to specialist jobs and governmental structures, dedicated to translating technological know-how into market valorization (from the lab to the market).
- Human Capacity Development, therefore, focuses on building the skills and expertise of African researchers and innovators through training and education programs.
- To this end, in the area of **Human capacity development**, the need to consider agricultural and agricultural value chain employment as an entry point of public policies and development programs that aim at improving household livelihoods and food security, upgrading agriculture–environment relations, food systems sustainability and at fostering structural changes.
- **Job attractiveness for youth and empowerment of women** are deemed as key points in these regards, considering youth aspirations regarding income, working conditions, and/or contractual relations to make women's work visible and recognized, with equitable access to resources.
- **Human capacity development** should consciously include developing African institutions and citizens' capacities in NewSpace (smallsats, space service delivery, etc.). and training and capacity building outside academia and Higher Education Institutions to include the entire innovation value chain, encompassing basic educational and vocational programs, civil society and local communities.

3.1.3 Innovation-Based Youth Engagement within AU-EU

Efforts to engage youth in the Africa-Europe partnership have increasingly focused on innovation-driven approaches that amplify young people's voices, empower them with skills and opportunities, and foster meaningful connections across continents. Two key initiatives illustrate this commitment:

1. The EU Youth Action Plan (2022-2027)

The European Union launched the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action (2022-2027) as its first policy framework dedicated to strengthening global partnerships with young people. This plan aligns with international commitments, including the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, and prioritizes youth participation in shaping inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies.

The plan is structured around three key pillars:

- **Engage:** Enhancing youth participation in policy and decision-making at all levels, including domestic governance, multilateral forums, and EU policymaking. Special emphasis is placed on amplifying the voices of young women, youth activists, and youth-led organizations.
- **Empower:** Addressing inequalities and equipping young people with skills and tools to thrive. This includes investments in education, economic opportunities, and health, with particular attention to youth in conflict settings and vulnerable communities.
- **Connect:** Creating opportunities for youth mobility, networking, and knowledge exchange, ensuring inclusivity while tackling social and economic barriers, digital divides, and disinformation risks.

The Youth Action Plan will reinforce existing initiatives and introduce new ones, including:

The Youth and Women in Democracy Initiative (€40 million): Strengthening youth and women's leadership in democratic governance, human rights advocacy, and political participation.

The Youth Empowerment Fund (€10 million): Providing direct financial support to youth-led initiatives that advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in climate action and the inclusion of marginalized youth.

The Africa-Europe Youth Academy (€50 million): Facilitating formal and informal learning opportunities, leadership development, and networking for young changemakers in Africa. This initiative contributes to the broader objectives of the European Year of Youth 2022, highlighting the role of young people in building a greener, more inclusive, and digitally connected future.

2. The AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub

The AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub is a pioneering initiative that brought together 42 young leaders from Africa, Europe, and the Diaspora to collaborate with the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU). These youth representatives worked alongside policymakers and stakeholders to design and implement innovative pilot projects across six thematic areas:

- Business, job creation, and entrepreneurship
- Culture, sports, and arts
- Education and skills development
- Environmental sustainability and climate action
- Governance, political inclusion, and activism
- Peace and security, including countering violent extremism

This initiative builds on the AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative (YPIN), which led to the creation of the AU-EU Youth Agenda, presented at the 5th AU-EU Summit in 2017. The YPIN itself was inspired by the Abidjan Youth Declaration from the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit, emphasizing the need for youth-led solutions in development cooperation.

By actively engaging young people in decision-making and program implementation, the AU and EU reaffirm their commitment to turning the Youth Agenda into action. This approach ensures that African and European youth remain at the forefront of shaping the future of the Africa-EU partnership through innovation and collaboration.

3.2. The Motivation for the CEA-FIRST/IRC Gender and Youth Strategy

Research and innovation (R&I) systems that fail to take into account gender norms, women's agency, and the local structures that influence access to and control over resources risk exacerbating gender inequality (Petesch et al., 2017; Witinok-Huber et al., 2021). Moreover, when these systems do not adopt inclusive approaches, emerging opportunities can be captured by elites, who are more capable of managing the risks associated with adopting new technologies (Woodhill et al., 2022). To mitigate the potential for innovations to worsen inequality, it is crucial to implement inclusive strategies (Schillo and Robinson, 2017).

3.2.1. The Shared Outlook of the CEA-FIRST Consortium Member Institutions

During the program design, the CEA-FIRST consortium member organizations agreed upon the importance of reducing existing inequalities in agrifood systems, especially those related to gender and age. The discussions indicated the importance of gender norms, women's agency, and local structures that define access to and control over resources. R&I systems that do not take these factors into consideration may end up exacerbating inequalities.

Additionally, a lack of inclusive approaches in R&I systems could lead to elite capture of emerging opportunities due to their ability to take the risks of adopting new technologies. It is important to reduce the negative impact of innovations in aggravating inequality, which could be done through inclusive approaches.

Since R&I contributes to sustainable and inclusive development, economic growth, and job generation, thereby reducing poverty and inequalities, strengthening Research and Innovation (R&I) cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) is a key priority. (European Commission, 2020). It is important to note that among the main current needs and gaps identified by AU and EU policymakers and the innovation communities- in the context of the innovation ecosystem is the need to ensure gender equality and empower women, youth, and vulnerable groups (e.g. persons from disadvantaged socio-economic background and/or persons with disabilities and/or refugees and/or stigmatised/discriminated groups of people) and their entrepreneurship throughout R&I processes (European Commission, 2020). Thus, the CEA-FIRST IRC Gender and Youth Strategy will therefore outline responses to address the need to adopt transformative approaches that aim to address the root causes of gender inequality at a structural level.

The assumptions of the strategy are as follows:

- The creation of mentorship, guidance, and counseling mechanisms in project development will lead to increased participation of youth in IR4D;

- The collaboration among Consortium Member Institutions of the CEA-FIRST/IRC Project will lead to increased engagement of Africa's youth in AR4D;
- The different parties see the need and are willing to collaborate, and their strategic objective is clearly articulated, especially if the partnership involves youth-focused interventions;
- The suggested framework will be non-discriminatory and, therefore, address the needs of both young males and females equally.

In the discussions on the integration of Gender and Youth in R&I in the context of the CEA-FIRST/IRC, the following were underscored:

- It would be imperative to develop a theory of change for the Gender and Youth Strategy in alignment with the IRC's theory of change;
- It would be important to consider the inclusion of intersectional identities- viewing youth and gender as heterogeneous groups- encompassing people living with disabilities, rural/urban youth, and refugees, among other types of human diversity. However, the strategy should specify the level of vulnerability it covers;
- On the purposive ratio of male to female in the discourse on gender inclusivity, it was pointed out that it would be useful to handle this on the uniqueness of each case, while defining the different categories and how the ratios apply.

Additionally, aside from the strategy documents compiled by the Drafting Committee, it was suggested that the links be made with other gender and youth strategies that have been developed at the policy level, e.g., considering ideas from the AU and EU.

Further, the following should be adhered to:

- Compliance with gender-responsive management and workplace: promote gender diversity, comply with maternity and paternity leave according to national legislation, and comply with code of conduct to prevent and mitigate Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse /Sexual Harassment;
- Gender accountability framework (set responsibilities for institutions and stakeholders involved in the implementation of the gender and youth strategy).

SECTION 4: METHODOLOGY AND SUPPORTING FRAMEWORKS

4.1. Methodology

Three research phases informed the review of the gender strategies. The first involved a desk review of EU-AU research and innovation documents from June 2020 to June 2024 to determine the degree to which the strategic priorities of the CEA-FIRST implementing institutions are reflected in region-specific food system outcomes. Documents reviewed include;

1. The collection of gender strategies from CEA-FIRST implementing institutions was used to assess areas of commonalities, strengths, weaknesses, and gap areas to be addressed by a joint youth and gender strategy.
2. Relevant research literature and publications related to initiatives implemented to address similar issues concerning gender diversity and the inclusion of the sex/gender dimension in research. This includes analysis of secondary data related to Africa-Europe joint actions and drawn from other multi-stakeholder and inter-continental initiatives.
3. Frameworks on gendered food systems transition provide guidance to a comparative analysis drawn from existing gender and youth strategies from CEA-FIRST implementing

institutions to examine best practices to be adopted in developing the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan.

Following the desk review, a consultative meeting was convened on May 31, 2024, to present the draft outline of the gender and youth strategy drawn from existing strategies. Discussion on the limitations encountered during the review process, reflections, and recommendations to contribute towards developing the IRC gender and youth strategy were carried out. The discussions also reflected on the context of the CEA-FIRST/IRC Gender and Youth Strategy and explored shared vision and principles based on gaps identified. Most critical was identifying key focus areas for gender and youth integration, prioritization of activities and initiatives, and opportunities for collaborative initiatives and synergies. The consultative meeting explored potential partnerships and resource-sharing mechanisms and outlined critical takeaways and follow-up actions (based on the institutions' interests).

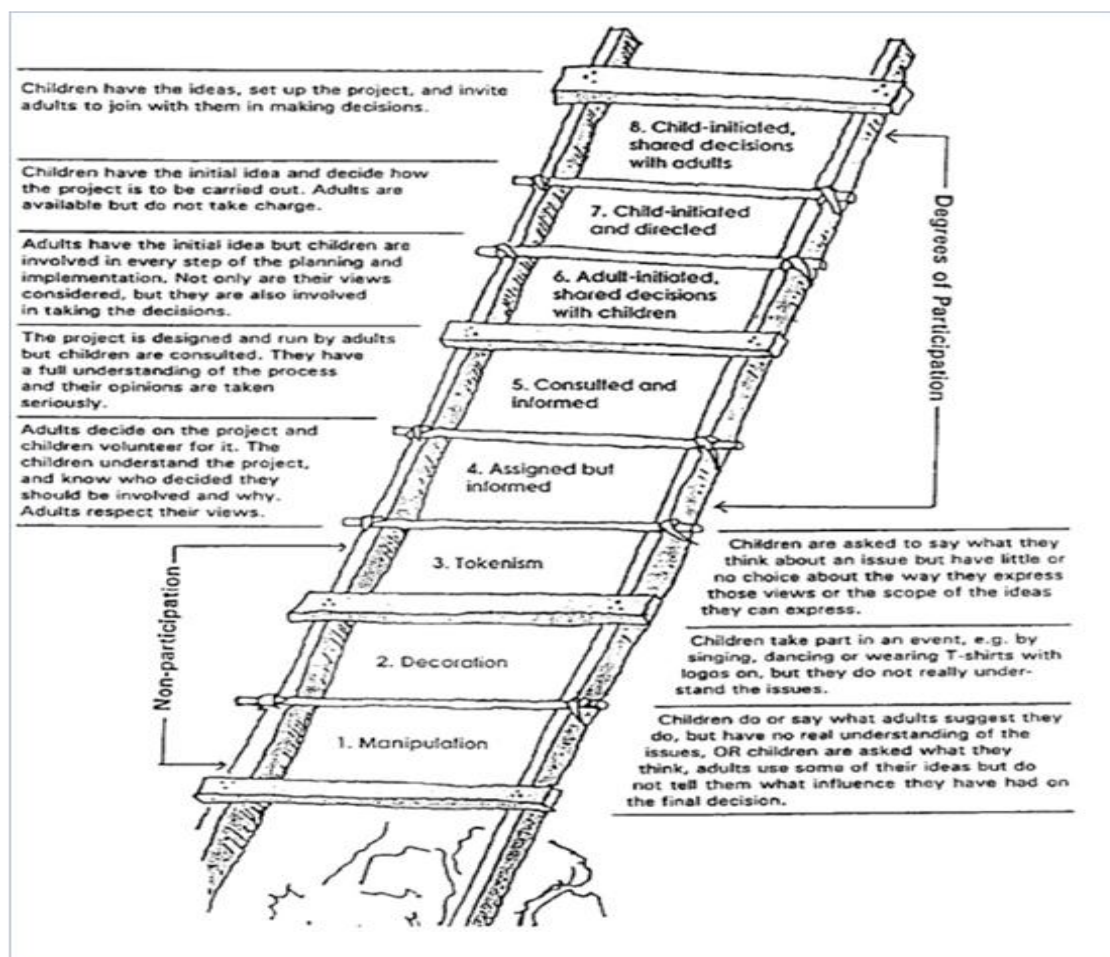
Informal interviews and surveys were conducted with CEA-FIRST implementing partners, including those representing gender and youth in various capacities within the project, to expand on the initial findings identified in the text-based analysis. Interviews were also conducted with women and youth-led associations, private sector partners, farmer-based organizations, and civil societies engaged in the roadmap of Europe-Africa Food and Nutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa. The aim of engaging a wider network of stakeholders was to gain insights and get their perspective on how EU-AU joint actions impact their work and could potentially be strengthened.

4.2 Conceptual Reinforcement

Roger Hart's ladder of participation (Hart, 2013) for the equal engagement of adults and youth was an influential factor in charting the change pathway envisioned. The ladder of participation (Hart, 2013) serves as a beginning typology for thinking about young people's participation in projects, their nature, and purpose.

Hart's (1992; 2008) landmark model (in the figure below) describes and categorizes children's and youth's participation in formal community programming. It was intended to raise discussion on effective ways to involve children and youth in research, planning, and design of children's environments. The model outlines eight stepladders illustrating meaningful participation and non-participation. Five steps represent meaningful participation: (i) children/youth assigned roles, but kept informed; (ii) children/youth consulted and informed; (iii) adult-initiated and shared child-adult decisions; (iv) youth/child-initiated and directed; and (e) youth/child initiated and shared youth/child-adult directed participation. Hart (1992) also included three rungs for non-participation: manipulation, decoration, and tokenism. In tokenistic roles, children and youth appear to have meaningful participation but actually do not have any opportunity to express their opinions, or their opinions have no influence.

Figure 1. Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation



4.3. Framework for Gendered Agrifood Systems

The Gender and Food Systems Framework [(Njuki et al. 2022 & De Brauw et al. (2019))] is the starting point for analyzing relationships between gender equality and food systems transformation. The framework is expanded to include nutrition and food security outcomes along with dietary outcomes and make the interconnected relationships between the five food systems outcomes more explicit explanation. In this framework, gender is conceptualized as an important lever for progress across all aspects of food systems. This framework supports and lends credence to the importance of gender as one of the key drivers in food system key actors in food systems as producers, wage workers/ research and development, processors, traders, and consumers, despite facing many constraints and limitations, including lower access to opportunities, technologies, finance and other productive resources, and weak tenure and resource rights.

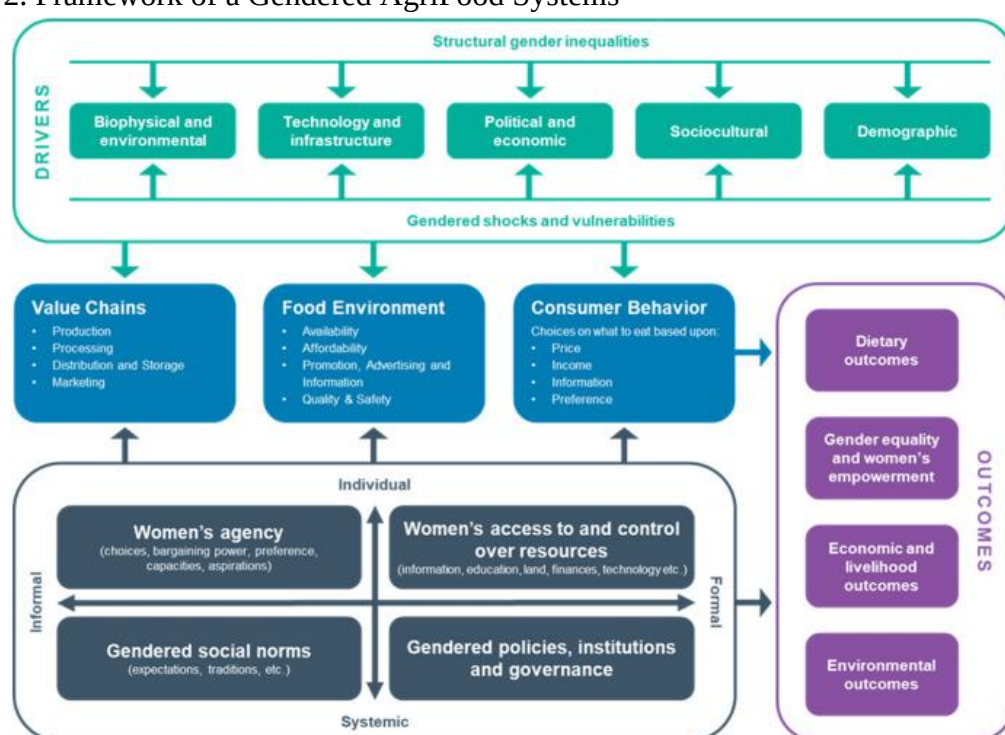
follows;

- Food system drivers are anchored in a gendered social, political, institutional, and economic system with structural gender inequalities.
- Because of these underlying inequalities, risks, shocks, and stressors to this system influence men and women differently, resulting in differential vulnerabilities to disturbances and determining the extent to which they can adapt.
- These drivers, in turn, influence the three main components of food systems—value chains, food environments, and consumer behavior—and their outcomes.
- Components of the food system interact with gender equality/inequality: individual, systemic, formal, and informal.

- Details about the various components of food systems and Women's agency (choices, bargaining power, preferences, capacities, aspirations).
- Transforming food systems in equitable ways requires changes in gender equality at all levels.
- The concept focuses on key food systems outcomes and uses the framework to answer our two questions:
 - *Can women's empowerment and gender equality lead to better outcomes in the food system and*
 - *Can food systems transformation catalyze transformation toward gender equality and women's empowerment?*

To overcome these challenges, a thematic analysis was conducted. The thematic analysis was guided by (Njuki et al. 2022) a framework for gendered agrifood systems.

Figure 2. Framework of a Gendered AgriFood Systems



Source: (Njuki et al. 2022), a framework for gendered agrifood systems

The framework highlights that food system drivers are anchored in a gendered social, political, institutional, and economic system with structural gender inequalities. In turn, these drivers influence value chains, food environments, consumer behavior, and outcomes. Subsequently, the three components interact with gender equality/inequality in the individual, systemic, formal, and informal spaces.

This framework allowed for identifying common themes and patterns across different institutions and recognizing unique approaches that could contribute to a more holistic joint strategy. Therefore, the analysis focused on the following key themes and components within the food system:

1. **Biophysical and Environment:** Fostering scaling approach of gender, climate, and nutrition smart technologies to address hunger, malnutrition, and shocks.
2. **Technology and Infrastructure:** Scaling gender-responsive actions for protection from and resilience to climate change impacts.
3. **Political and Economic:** Promoting investments in agribusiness at scale for youth and women empowerment and advancing gender-sensitive policies and practices.
4. **Sociocultural and Political:** Improving protection from and resilience to the impacts of pandemics and political instability.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation and Demographic:** Enhancing data accuracy to advance scientific and leadership capacity development for women and youth in Agricultural Research and Innovation and Extension systems.

Most important to note is that transitioning to a sustainable and inclusive food system requires changes in gender equality at all levels. Differences in access to and control over resources, gendered social norms, and existing policies and governance influence how men and women, both young and old, can participate in and benefit from food system interventions, leading to differences in overall outcomes.

4.4. Analyzing Institutional Strategies

Only 17 of the 21 implementing institutions provided their strategic documents for review. These institutions include both European and African-based organizations, as well as international and national entities. The analysis of the strategy and policy documents of the implementing institutions is appended.

The institutions that participated in the review process represent a broad spectrum of organizations with diverse mandates and operational focuses. This diversity spans across geographical regions, organizational scales, and specific areas of focus within gender and youth strategies. This variety adds depth to the potential for a comprehensive joint strategy but also presents challenges in terms of aligning different approaches and priorities.

Given the varied nature and mandates of these institutions, conducting a straightforward comparative analysis was not feasible. The differences in organizational goals, target populations, and strategic approaches meant that a direct comparison would not yield meaningful insights. Each institution's strategy is tailored to its unique context and operational framework, making it difficult to draw direct parallels.

4.5. Shared Vision and Principles

While discussing the shared interest of the Gender and Youth Strategy, the CEA-FIRST/IRC participating institutions proposed a shared vision featuring equity, inhibition of exploitation, and enabling Youth and Women leadership.

Key focus areas for gender and youth integration- prioritization of activities and initiatives (including potential partnerships and resource-sharing mechanisms)

The sustainability of the CEA-FIRST depends on the valuable services it provides to the members. These will encourage the members to meaningfully contribute their part- thus

making it functionally and operationally sustainable. As part of the activities and initiatives that the strategy should prioritize, the participants suggested:

- a. Fellowship for early career researchers from diverse backgrounds as they are placed in the various IRC member institutions. This should involve mentorship.
- b. Investment in the development of youth and women leadership.
- c. Innovation fund to support scaling and adoption of proven technologies and innovations with significant impact on youth and women.

4.6. The Theory of Change for the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy

The CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy adopts a relational intersectional and generational approach considering the navigation of young people through the life stages of youth. To operationalize this Gender and Youth Strategy, the Consortium considers youth inclusion (participation); youth sensitivity; as well as orientation. This resonates with recommendations from GENDER Impact Platform Background Paper (Thorsen et al. 2024) recommending principles and approaches for implementing a youth inclusion agenda in agricultural research for development. This section outlines the key indicators for measuring the impact of youth and gender inclusion.

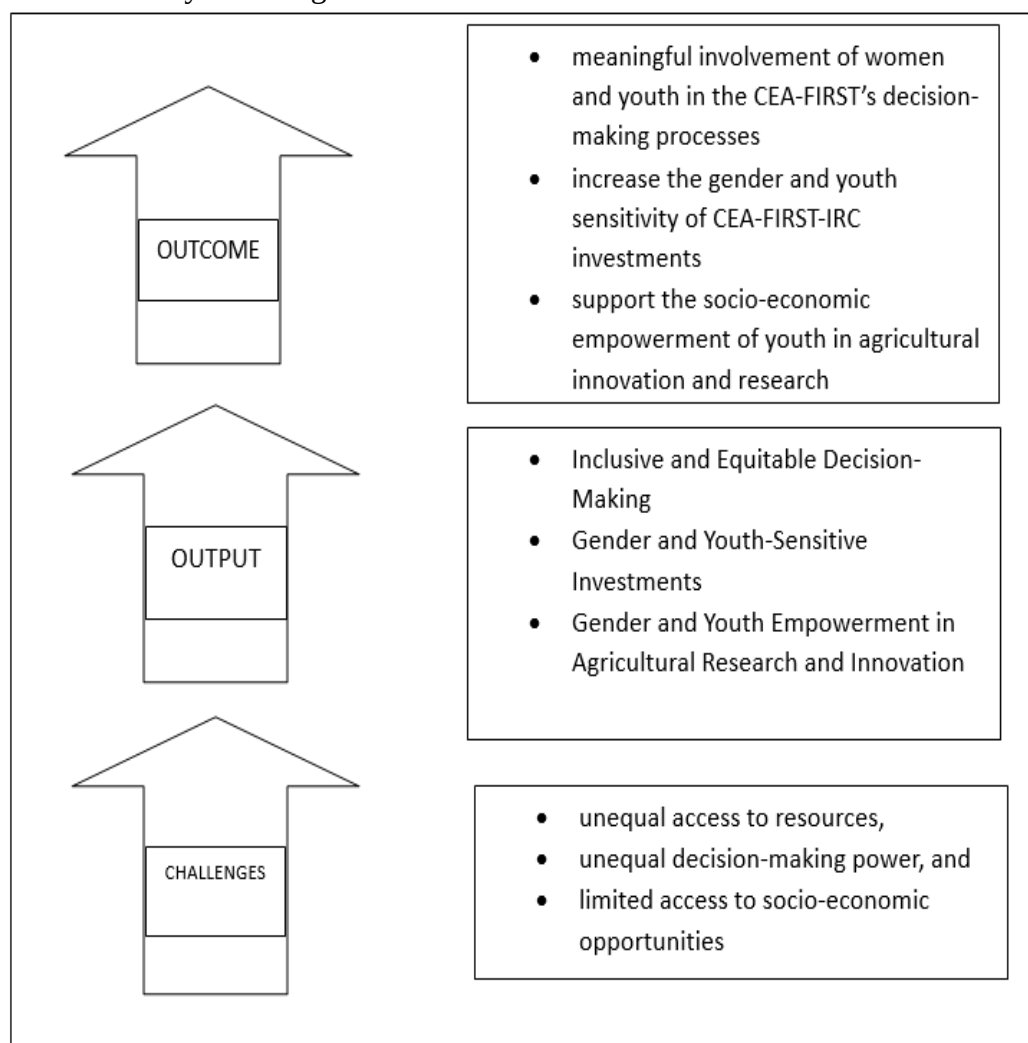
These recommendations incorporate methodologies that capture young people's dynamic and complex experiences while harnessing their ability to voice their aspirations. These comprise youth inclusion; youth sensitivity; and accountability to the youth with a focus on addressing gender-specific experience and challenge. The indicators of process and outcome subsequently feature:

- Representation of diverse youth predicaments and situations considering gender-based differences in challenges faced by youth;
- The youth opportunity landscapes with sensitivity to context and heterogeneity and gender;
- The youth's capabilities and agency to improve their social and economic position entailing a focus on the influence of gender on how youth leverage skills and capacities for their advancement;
- The youth's agency to negotiate their positions in networks and structures of society and economy.
- Also, the strategy demonstrates:
- Promotion of gender and youth inclusion and participation in program design, delivery, and evaluation;
- Presenting youth as a heterogeneous group paying attention to gender intersections;
- Accountability to the youth while being responsive to all genders, gender groupings, and minorities.

The theory of change for this builds on the commitment to make effective and efficient contributions to ensuring that the CEA-FIRST project and the IRC work are youth and gender-sensitive by being co-created and co-implemented with the youth and gender-related stakeholders. As illustrated in the figure below, the challenges of participating organisations are:

- i. Unequal access to resources,
- ii. Unequal decision-making power, and
- iii. Limited access to socio-economic opportunities.

Figure 3: The Theory of Change



Efficient gender and youth engagement in this context would lead to the effective involvement of women and youth in the CEA-FIRST's decision-making processes while increasing the gender and youth sensitivity of CEA-FIRST-IRC investments. It also supports the socio-economic empowerment of youth in agricultural innovation and research, as a key outcome of the CEA-FIRST Project and IRC.

SECTION 5: CEA-FIRST PRIORITY AREAS FOR GENDER EQUITY, WOMEN, AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

To move forward with the results of the investigation on the Gender and Youth Strategy, the CEA-FIRST consortium and IRC will form a Gender and Youth Working Group. This working group will act on the Strategic Priorities and Gaps Identified by the literature review, analysis of the participating institutions' strategies, and the consultation and key informant interviews.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

While we recognize that past efforts have yielded insufficient results, we remain dedicated to addressing these inequalities head-on. This framework will be regularly reviewed and refined based on emerging insights, lessons learned, and feedback from women and youth stakeholders. By doing so, we aim to foster a culture of inclusivity, equity, and respect that empowers all individuals, especially women and youth, in the agri-food system.

Strategy Alignment

The Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan is subject to the Overall CEA-FIRST Strategy and Ethics Reports.

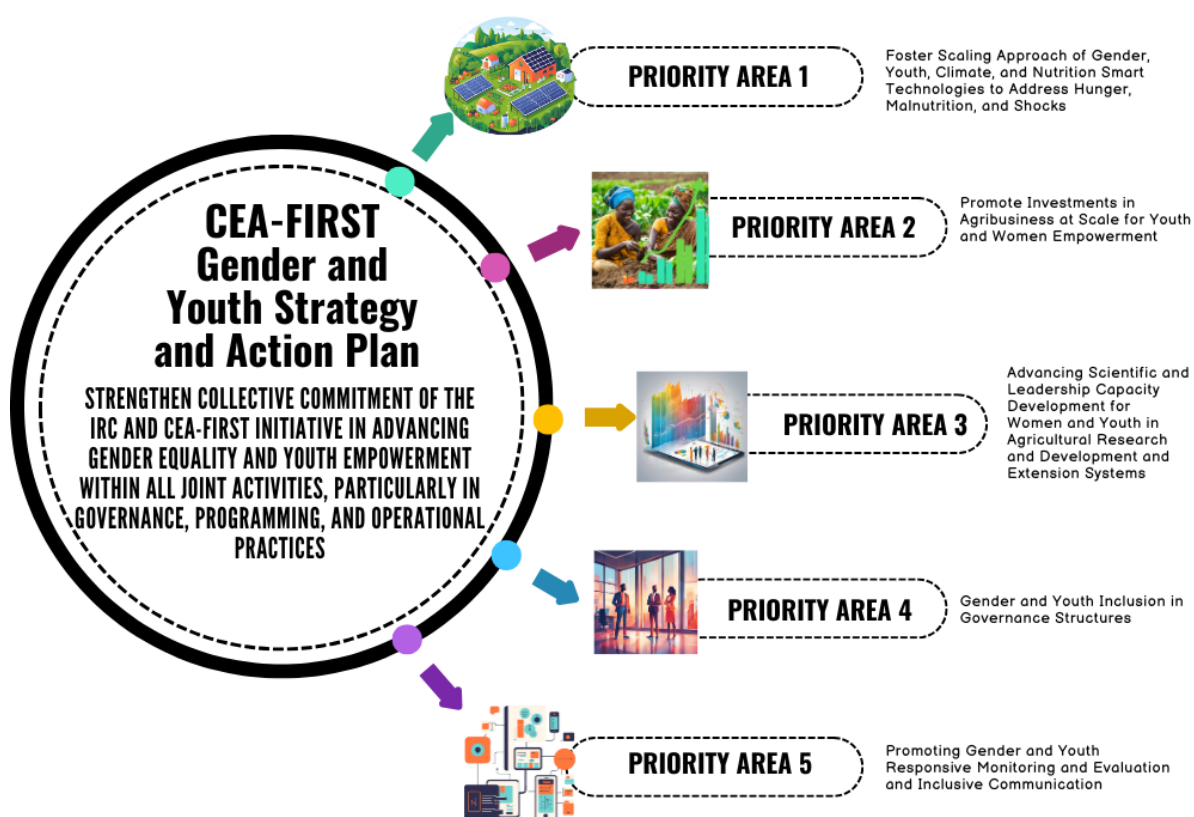
Purpose and Vision

This Strategy and Action Plan sets forth the collective commitment of the IRC and CEA-FIRST participating partners to advancing gender equality and youth empowerment within all our joint activities, particularly in governance, programming, and operational practices. Despite past efforts on our respective fronts, progress on gender and youth issues has shown insufficient results, with gender-based disparities persisting, especially in the research and innovation spaces. These persistent inequalities, including women and youth's underrepresentation and adverse outcomes like worse nutrition policies, demonstrate the urgent need for more targeted action.

In light of this, all members of the IRC and participating organizations in the CEA-FIRST project commit to enthusiastically supporting the empowerment of women and youth in the agri-food system, with a particular focus on the following actions:

- Priority Area 1: Foster Scaling Approach of Gender, Youth, Climate, and Nutrition Smart Technologies to Address Hunger, Malnutrition, and Shocks
- Priority Area 2: Promote Investments in Agribusiness at Scale for Youth and Women Empowerment
- Priority Area 3: Advancing Scientific and Leadership Capacity Development for Women and Youth in Agricultural Research and Development and Extension Systems
- Priority Area 4: Gender and Youth Inclusion in Governance Structures
- Priority Area 5: Promoting Gender and Youth Responsive Monitoring and Evaluation and Inclusive Communication

Figure 4. Diagram Representation of the Five Priority Areas of the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan



5.1. Priority Area 1

Foster Scaling Approach of Gender, Youth, Climate, and Nutrition Smart Technologies to Address Hunger, Malnutrition, and Shocks

Climate-smart technologies, gender, and youth-friendly technologies, and climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive technologies are prominent in addressing hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty and can therefore play a critical role in achieving sustainable food and nutrition security in CEA-FIRST implementing regions. In addition to their prominent role in enhancing food productivity to improve the food and nutrition security status of populations, access and adoption of these technologies along the value chains present great potential in terms of jobs and wealth generation with agribusiness development for women and youth empowerment.

Database of gender smart (low-cost labour-saving technologies), climate smart (drought tolerant and resilient technologies), and nutrition sensitive technologies (biofortified food technologies) ¹ was developed across programs including the West Africa Productivity Program (WAAPP) from CORAF (MITA: Marché des Innovations et Technologies Agricoles), and TAAT for stakeholders and development partners to push forward the transformation of agriculture in the region. CEA-FIRST will address this regional priority by

¹ Gender smart or sensitive technologies are technologies that meet women's needs, are labor-saving, cost-effective and simple to operate by non-educated women, girls, and youth.

promoting the needed interventions to upscale the dissemination, access, and adoption of women, youth, climate, and nutrition-sensitive technologies across the various projects, with Innovations Platforms being instrumental in the scaling activities².

CEA-FIRST acknowledges partnership with the private sector as key to putting the technologies at scale, but also provides room for young entrepreneurs to create businesses with start-ups to produce the agri-input technologies. CEA-FIRST supports technology scaling approach that presents great potential in terms of jobs and wealth creation for women and youth in the entire seed value chain, with business development around quality seed production, seed processing and seed trading.

The technologies scaling approach with digital access is key and should be inclusive enough. Therefore, CEA-FIRST will consider the following actions: (i) capacity building around the scaling of technologies with digital will target as much as women and youth from institutions and extension services; (ii) capacity building of women and youth especially the underprivileged along the value chain on the use of smartphone to access and adopt the technologies to run their Agri businesses, and to get access to extension services, agricultural information, and climate information.

5.1.1. Scale Gender-Responsive Actions for Protection from and Resilience to Climate Change Impacts

CEA-FIRST will promote scaling of gender-responsive actions for protection from and resilience to climate change impacts for socially marginalized groups such as women, youth, and resource-poor farmers, with the CGIAR – CCAFS Climate-Smart Villages Model³, known as strategic to upscale sustainable climate-smart agriculture practices to build farmers' resilience to climate change, to increase their productivity and incomes, while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. CEA-FIRST will promote climate justice with women and youth access to climate-smart technologies and climate information services, along with climate finance, and make sure women's and youth's local climatic knowledge is considered and their voices heard in the climate-smart villages in climate policies, projects, and programs.

² **Innovation Platform Approach Attracts More Women and youth** : The IPs serve as spaces for the informal exchange, learning, sharing, and adoption of agricultural technologies, innovations, and best practices among the major food chain players in a given community. They provide opportunities to women and youth participating in these platforms to gain knowledge and the know-how to use the technologies or begin start-ups through these spaces. This also explains why these platforms are critical to approach of reaching out to more women going forward.

³ Climate-Smart Villages are sites where local communities work with researchers, policymakers, scientists, and NGOs to develop a strategic approach to sustainable agriculture through climate-smart agriculture practices and technologies. Climate-smart agriculture works to build farmers' resilience to climate change, increase their productivity and incomes, while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.

5.2. Priority Area 2

Promote Investments in Agribusiness at Scale for Youth and Women Empowerment

CEA-FIRST acknowledges the agricultural sector's potential to serve as a source of opportunities for livelihood generation and socio-economic empowerment for women and youth. It requires substantial investments in gender-responsive agribusiness with a guiding framework and strategy to empower women and youth in agribusiness through incubation centers and training in transformational leadership in agriculture. Investing in the dissemination and adoption of women and youth-friendly technologies, climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive technologies along the value chains, as well as business model innovations for women and youth, would help to close the gender gaps in food systems. This requires specific support programs that enable private sector engagement and delivery.

CEA-FIRST acknowledges the gender gap in access to agricultural credit for sustainable agribusiness development for women and youth (individuals, groups, women, and youth-led agribusiness SMEs) and will give specific attention to needed actions to facilitate access to finance within the Innovation Platforms by linking women and youth with Financial Institutions; and will advocate for the provision of matching grants to these underprivileged faced with challenges to access commercial banks loans.

5.3. Priority Area 3

Advancing Scientific and Leadership Capacity Development for Women and Youth in Agricultural Research and Development and Extension Systems

CEA-FIRST sees women and youth as catalysts of innovation. Therefore, empowering women to lead the discoveries, inventions, and research is key for building an inclusive critical mass of African scientists to lead advances and innovations in agricultural Research and Development and the way to generate research that meets the needs of men, women, boys, and girls of the continent. CEA-FIRST will make the training of the next generation of agricultural researchers a central priority, with specific attention given to female and young researchers, as well as extension officers.

CEA-FIRST will encourage investments to close the gender gaps in access to agricultural science education in the regions. Female and young researchers will benefit from MSc and PhD scholarships in agricultural science education across projects and benefit as well from leadership capacity development to facilitate their access to decision-making positions in ARD systems. This inclusive capacity development scheme will, therefore, help to empower women and young researchers but also to respond to challenges around the aging of research personnel, which is jeopardizing efforts for sustainable agricultural growth in Africa.

5.4. Priority Area 4

Gender and Youth Inclusion in Governance Structures

The governance structures shall be intentionally designed to ensure a balanced representation of gender and youth. This includes maintaining a minimum of 50% gender parity in decision-making positions and ensuring that at least 30% of leadership and governance roles are held by

youth aged 18 to 35. To support this vision, ongoing training and mentorship programs will be implemented to foster gender-sensitive and youth-inclusive leadership.

Recognizing the importance of generational renewal, initiatives will prioritize initiatives that amplify young voices in leadership. Mentorship programs will be established to cultivate the next generation of leaders, and periodic recruitment of young individuals into key decision-making positions will be encouraged. Additionally, governance structures will incorporate term limits to promote continuous generational renewal and leadership transition.

To ensure diversity and inclusivity within working groups, gender and youth experts must be included in each team. Decision-making processes should be informed through consultations with women and youth stakeholders, and inclusive, participatory methods to be adopted to ensure all voices are heard and valued.

In the context of funding opportunities, gender and youth considerations will be integrated into every project proposal. A dedicated portion of the budget is to be allocated to gender-responsive capacity-building initiatives, and specific, measurable outcomes related to gender and youth must be defined to align with funding criteria.

5.5. Priority Area 5

Promoting Gender and Youth Responsive Monitoring and Evaluation and Inclusive Communication

5.5.1. Gender and Youth Responsive Monitoring and Evaluation

For the monitoring and evaluation process to provide a true picture of the effectiveness of the CEA-FIRST program, it is necessary for this work to be carried out in a gender and youth-sensitive manner. CEA-FIRST, being an international organization, works with a number of institutions in Europe, Africa, and other international organizations. It is very significant to carry out gender-based Monitoring and evaluation with clearly spelled indicators to inform the impact of CEA-FIRST Gender/youth responsive-based interventions. The CEA-FIRST project will strengthen its Monitoring and Evaluation system, by adding, gender and sex-and-youth disaggregated indicators in the projects Results Framework to measure progress and impacts in closing specific gender gaps in Agricultural Research Innovation and Development. Sex-disaggregated indicators include inputs, such as the number of women taking part in project activities, as well as benefits and impacts of activities.

Gender and youth disaggregated data is essential to any gender/youth sensitive monitoring and evaluation. It is needed not just at the impact level but also at the output level, and monitoring and evaluation activities should be planned with this in mind. The analysis should not only consider disaggregated data but also examine these data in the light of differing gender roles and divisions, access to resources, information etc., power relations within a household, literacy and education levels, etc. This analysis should be particularly useful in the integration of gender mainstreaming into any agricultural innovative system and ensuring its sustainability in the long term.

Assessment will be carried out to ascertain the results of project and programme implementation with significant reference to the project's gender and youth action plans in participating institutions at least twice annually per year. Field visits will be carried out to provide the needed gender and youth-responsive technical support to the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) and the Projects Implementation Units to meet the objectives of the projects' gender action plans. Gender-sensitive reports will be generated, and impact assessments will be carried out to ascertain project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability with youth and gender KPIs.

The development of an inbuilt and robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning strategy that will be aligned with the gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation strategies of CEA-FIRST is also proposed. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) activities will increase the analytical capacities of the program to empower them to question and become proactive in the development of all initiatives undertaken to ensure an impact. This process will build commitment to implement any recommended corrective actions. It is recommended that key M&E positions for women and youth be considered, and, by so doing, stakeholders' capacity for analysis, problem-solving, and reporting should be built.

5.5.2. Promoting Inclusive Communication

Promoting inclusive communication is essential for creating environments where both youth and women can fully participate in the decision-making processes that shape policies and research. By focusing on gender-based and culturally sensitive communication and incorporating the recommendations for improving youth and gender inclusion, organizations can foster more inclusive, participatory, and impactful dialogues and outcomes.

The informant interview gathered approaches to inclusive communication, including Promoting Gender-Based Communication, Promoting Culturally Sensitive Communication, and Recommendations for Improving Inclusive Communication.

1. Promoting Gender- and Youth-Based Communication

Gender-based communication is essential for ensuring equitable participation and representation of women and men, as well as youth in conferences, policy dialogues, and decision-making spaces.

Several organizations highlight the importance of inviting and sponsoring young people, especially youth and young girls, to participate in conferences. For example, during the Tropical Summit in Lisbon, two youth members were specifically invited and sponsored, which illustrates a commitment to inclusivity. This approach is also seen in the equitable representation of men and women in conference delegations. Notably, the emphasis is on youth inclusion, as seen in the deliberate effort to ensure youth participation at large conferences. As one interviewee notes: "We have to see how we can include youth in conferences and meetings and ensure they are represented."

Therefore, it is important to avoid segregating women and youth into isolated spaces, as one participant emphasized: "You wouldn't think of putting all the women in a separate room... the voice of the future is really important." This highlights the importance of gender-based communication that keeps women and youth actively engaged in the main discussions.

Additionally, institutions should provide training on how gender can be integrated into research protocols and outcomes. For instance, a previous initiative under the *Gender Smart* project emphasized teaching researchers how gender and youth considerations can add value to research, even in areas like olive tree cultivation or honey production, where the link may not be immediately obvious.

2. Promoting Culturally Sensitive Communication

Effective communication must also be sensitive to cultural contexts, acknowledging different values and social norms around gender and youth, particularly in diverse regions.

Different cultural settings may have varying attitudes toward youth and gender roles. As one interviewee noted, “If you put all the women in a separate room in the Netherlands, I think you will be lynched,” stressing that what works in one culture may not work in another. It is crucial to consider these cultural differences when promoting gender and youth inclusion.

Similarly, when engaging with policymakers, it’s essential to tailor messages and formats to be culturally appropriate. This involves ensuring that youth and gender components are not treated as an afterthought but integrated into the core of policy dialogues. As one organization highlights, they ensure that in policy briefs and dialogues, youth, and gender components are discussed in relation to issues like biotechnology and other cross-cutting topics, keeping cultural relevance in mind.

Researchers should be encouraged to consider gender and youth impacts based on regional contexts. For instance, while the role of youth and gender may not be immediately obvious in research on Mediterranean flies or olive trees, it is more apparent in studies on food products like jam or cheese, which involve women and youth in the production process. This regional and culturally sensitive communication ensures that gender and youth components are recognized where they are most relevant.

5.6. Operationalizing the Gender and Youth Strategy

The CEA-FIRST gender and youth equity policy will be implemented using the gender institutionalization approach and tools. The need for establishing a Gender Equity Policy under CE-FIRST organizational culture is to remain committed to the Gender in Policy and Planning for CEA-FIRST and its allied institution aims to facilitate gender analysis and assessment of key elements of R&I agricultural development policy and planning, project and program, governance, and management system: the organization structure and culture, the gender profile of the organization, human resource management, communication strategy, and the accountability framework. The ‘Gender web of institutionalization’ tool will be used as key tool to facilitate the implementation of CEA-FIRST gender equity policy, as it fosters a more systemic and systematic analysis of what is needed to integrate gender dimensions in an organization’s operations, for impacts. CEA-FIRST will identifies a combination of approaches as being keys to a successful implementation of the gender equity policy

5.6.1. Gender Compliance of Projects

The CEA-FIRST project will all levels be screened for compliance at inception for gender and youth inclusivity before implementation. The gender screening of the projects aims to (i) identify relevant gaps between men and women, boys, and girls in access to and control over resources, services, and opportunities in the agriculture sector, it involves gender analysis of project objectives, activities, methodology, results framework, and impacts; (ii) formulate corrective actions to close the gender gaps identified during analysis; and to (iii) link the actions to gender indicators in the results framework to track the gender performance during project implementation and for gender impacts assessment. The gender screening of projects identifies interventions that are critical to closing key gender gaps in agriculture. The CEA-FIRST project will put measures in place to address the needs, priorities and expectations of men, women, youth especially the disadvantaged in agricultural Research, Innovation and technology Development through the promotion of Youth and Gender responsive budgeting in project activity planning and implementation for it implementing partner institutions projects. Projects' budgets will allocate resources to support the implementation of projects gender and youth Annual Work Plan and budget for implementation.

5.6.2. Targeted Support and Priority to the Real Needs of Women and Youth Beneficiaries of the Projects

The CEA-FIRST project will consciously target the most underprivileged and vulnerable groups within the agricultural value chain across the various project interventions, using a distinct systems and mechanism by deliberately targeting underprivileged and vulnerable smallholder farmers, women, youth and other including migrants, climate refugees, conflicts refugees, people living with disabilities, and the elderly in terms of access to agricultural productive resources such as improved technologies and innovations, land, extension services, agri-inputs technologies along the value chain, infrastructural development capacity building trainings, equipment, agricultural-financing, markets; and advocate for inclusive land reform programs, to ensure that women and youth have increased land tenure security within CEA-FIRST catchment area in AU-EU. The felt-needs of the most underprivileged/vulnerable groups in terms of access and control over agricultural resources, opportunities, participation and other benefits will be high on the agenda by targeting 40/50% women target, and 30% youth beneficiaries of CEA_FIRST initiatives.

5.6.3. Gendered Capacity Building

Capacity building for vulnerable individual and groups in agricultural research and development is very essential. The provision of knowledge, skills, and resources needed to actively participate in and benefit from agricultural research and development initiatives, will empower women and youth to improve their research, livelihoods and food security through better farming practices and access to relevant technologies along the value chain. Capacity building will be an essential requirement under CEA-FIRST gender and youth strategy. The project will facilitate gender trainings for its staff, key stakeholders, partners to provide them with knowledge, skills and the requisite tools and equipment and working environment to mainstream gender and youth dimensions into any CEA-FIRST interventions. The gender and youth trainings will use the Gender Institutionalization methodology and tools, for the trainees

to learn on the ways to mainstream gender aspects into Agricultural Research, innovation and Development policies, projects and programs, M&E, communication, and the overall governance system.

Capacity building activities will further consider gender transformative approach needed to address socio-cultural challenges that may endanger efforts towards gender mainstreaming in project implementation. Additionally, women's and youth will be mentored and trained in leadership, advocacy and group dynamics to operate effectively and efficiently leaders in research teams, FBO, NGOs etc. to play a more active role as women and youth leaders in decision-making positions in key local, national, and regional agricultural governance structures. The idea is to increase their ability to influence and benefit from agricultural policies and programs. Functional literacy and gender informed extension services will be exposed to extensionists, youth and women NGO/FBO executive to upgrade researchers, women and young farmers along the value chain for innovation and technology adoption.

5.6.4. Gender Responsive Communication Strategy

CEA-FIRST will create a learning environment, including communication channels, to support multi stakeholder networks and to strengthen R&I coordination. CEA-FIRST will promote the use of gender responsive communication tools such as radio broadcasts, Video Based Gender Sensitive Extension Services, outreach activities to disseminate technologies with translation of information into local languages whenever appropriate, to enable the socially marginalized groups as the unschooled and people living in vulnerable and remote rural areas to get access and to adopt the innovations and technologies.

CEA-FIRST will give special attention to gender research and gender knowledge generation with development of gender policy-briefs, journal papers, flyers, and videos on success stories, in collaboration with CEA-FIRST communication team; and will consider gender informed communication for development (C4D), to show case projects impacts in alleviating hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty in the regions. Any communication or dissemination activity related to the action must use factually accurate information. Public imaging and branding of CEA-FIRST, and the National Agricultural Research Systems will be gender smart enough i.e., they will not contribute to increase the existing gender gap in agriculture, or promote images on gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and child labor in agriculture, but to close the gap. CEA-FIRST will ensure the use non-sensitive information relating to the action and materials and documents that are non-discriminatory to beneficiaries (publication, deliverables, pictures or audio-visual material, print or electronic) for policy information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes.

5.6.5. Gender-Responsive Management and Workplace

CEA-FIRST will give special attention to gender diversity in the composition of the Steering Committee, and in staff recruitment to ensure that men, women and youth have equal access to available positions including senior staff positions. CEA-FIRST will be committed to effective family friendly workplace and life balance and enact or consolidate existing relevant legislation for compliance.

Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines

All staff, volunteers, and stakeholders working on the CEA-FIRST and IRC are expected to adhere to ethical standards promoting respect, inclusivity, and equity. This includes:

- Upholding gender and youth rights in all organizational activities.
- Addressing discrimination and ensuring equal access to opportunities.
- Practicing transparency and fairness in all decision-making processes.

Conflict Resolution and Safe Reporting Mechanisms

To ensure safe, transparent, and accessible grievance channels, we commit to:

- A dedicated officer trained in gender and youth-specific conflict resolution.
- A zero-tolerance policy towards retaliation for individuals who report grievances.
- Conflict resolution processes that are sensitive to the needs of women and youth participants.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The CEA-FIRST Consortium and IRC are committed to making bold progress on gender and youth in FNSSA. As such, this Strategy and there out resulting Action Plan represent the first action in this commitment. Over the following years of the CEA-FIRST, the consortium partners will implement the Action Plan through the Gender and Youth Working Group, collaborative laying out a work plan to implement the actions recommended by the Strategy and Action plan.

In the first action of the Gender and Youth Working Group, the CEA-FIRST member institutions will have the opportunity to give feedback on the Strategy and Action Plan. This revised Strategy and Action Plan will thus inform the group's collaboratively developed work plan but should also contribute to the future revisions of each member institution's Gender and Youth Strategies for a robust and comprehensive gender and youth transformation which reaches the institutional level of the consortium. At the conclusion of the CEA-FIRST consortium, the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan will thereby have resulted in consortium-, institutional, and individual level changes for progress on gender and youth inclusion in FNSSA.

6.1. Sustainability of Gender and Youth-Related Activities

There will be systems in place to ensure activities relating to gender and youth amongst CEA-FIRST implementing institutions, NGOs, FBOs, and other partner organization consciously integrate Gender and youth issues into their Annual Work Plans and Budget (AWPB). Gender and youth concerns should be integrated right from project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. There should be mandatory institutional Policies to make Gender based AWPB an integral part of programme/project planning beyond CEA-FIRST intervention period or project lifespan. Capacity building of relevant stakeholders, sensitization and advocacy of Gender sensitive issues, coupled with release of adequate funds will contribute and empower Gender and youth advocates to execute their mandates sustainably. Well thought-through policy formulation, integration, implementation and enforcement of gender and youth responsive practices, approaches and tools would lead to seamless release of technology for dissemination and adoption in a sustainable manner. CEA-FIRST Programme/Projects and institutions should leave 'No One Behind'

SECTION 7: ANNEXES

Annex 1: CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Plan of Action

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
Obj . 1	THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONSORTIUM ON FNSSA IS OPERATIONAL; INCLUDING THE NECESSARY GOVERNANCE BODIES, WORKING GROUPS, FUNDING MECHANISM AND LIAISON WITH THE HLPD PROCESS							
WP1	Project Coordination and Management	Task 1.1: Setting up the IRC Secretariat	<i>The aim is to facilitate the setting up process and services towards the Setting up the IRC Secretariat</i>					
1.1	To ensure the setting up of all governance structures, management and strategic plans to provide direction for the implementation of the IRC. (WP1).	♦ Establish IRC Governance Bodies (General Assembly (GA), Council, Advisory Group, Working Groups and the Secretariat) ♦ Prepare an elaborate IRC membership guidelines to outline the IRC Membership Charter / guidelines for migrating IRC signatories, validate regulations and criteria for IRC membership (WP6)	♦ Low number of qualified and dedicated women and youth in IRC Governance Bodies ♦ Weak Gender balance in leadership and decision-making to promote Gender and youth concerns (Low number of Women and youth in Management/leadership position)	• Enact policies to integrate youth/young scientist and women considerations from the project design phase • Create Platforms and quota system for the Youth and women to occupy Leadership position • Organize training and awareness programs (seminars and webinars) to incorporate gender and youth issues in research and policy-formulation regulations and guidelines.	50+ IRC Signatories/ members ♦ % of IRC members who are women and youth by the end of the project 100 IRC Members by end of the project • Number and % of men, women and youth in managerial positions in committees. • Number and % of women and youth in	PY1-2 (24 months) PY1-2 (24 months)	FARA Supported by: AGRINATUR A, CIRAD, WUR, ARC, UH).	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth TBD

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
					decision-making position			
		Task 1.2: Developing the IRC Strategy and operational plan	<i>Setting up a strong forward-looking strategy supported by pragmatic, practical and inclusive implementation arrangements for the IRC is to operate as a long-term bicontinental platform that advances the FNSSA Roadmap and Food system transformation sustainably</i>					
	To ensure a shared vision on IRC functions and services, validated by a wide community of IRC members. (WP1)	◊ <i>Establish a peer review mechanism involving intelligence gathering on funding needs</i>	◊ Weak gender balance in leadership and decision-making ◊ Low number of women and youth exposed to and involved intelligence gathering on funding needs	◊ Incorporate Gender expertise into peer-review processes and panels selection for intelligence gathering on funding needs ◊ Organise peer review sessions incorporating Gender and youth concerns	◊ No. of and type of policies or initiatives promoting gender and youth balance in leadership roles initiated	PY1-2 (24 months)	FARA/WUR Supported by CIRAD, Agrinatura, ARC, ACU, ASARECA	% of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		◊ <i>Conduct baseline studies including a situation analysis and Scenario mapping / foresight analysis of the IRC over a specified strategy planning period.</i>	◊ Low number of youth and women with technical expertise and experience to carry out baseline: situation analysis and Scenario mapping foresight analysis effectively and efficiently	◊ Organise targeted/tailor-made training specifically address knowledge gap in specialized areas for women and youth (situation analysis and Scenario mapping foresight analysis)	◊ % of women & youth benefiting from specialized training opportunities provided within their organizations	PY1-2 (24 months)		% of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		◊ <i>Organise Stakeholder consultations at different levels; continental, regional and national levels to interrogate emerging priorities and working modalities on R&I for food systems transformation. (development partners and</i>	◊ Low number of women and youth participants in high profile international conferences ◊ Weak capacity to interrogate emerging priorities and working modalities on R&I	◊ Develop comprehensive training programs for men, women, youth, to expose them to emerging priorities and working modalities on R&I for food systems transformation	At least 4 stakeholder consultations ◊ Number of stakeholder meetings organized ◊ No. of men, women, youth exposed and trained	PY1-2 (24 months)		TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth TB

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		<i>fundress of IRC partners/ stakeholders)</i>			♦ % of men, women, youth trained and participating in international conferences			
		Task 1.3: Setting up the dissemination and communication structures	<i>The aim is to facilitate the setting up of robust dissemination and communication structures</i>					
		♦ Develop a Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication (DEC) plan (inventory of the various stakeholder networks and platforms for dialogue)	Weak gender and you considerations in R&I and development in along Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication (DEC) channels	♦ Develop cross cutting DEC plan with women and youth involvement	50 Multi Actor Dialogues facilitated ♦ No. of Men, women and youth involved	PY1-2	<i>Agrinatura/ FARA, supported by: CORAF, COLEAD, UH, YPARD and SLU</i>	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth TB
		♦ Create a CEA-FIRST project identity for online and offline presentation- develop a logo, corporate design, templates for presentations, materials, brochures and banners to be used by all partners.	Neglect of Gender and youth inclusivity and sensitivity in cooperate	Incorporate Gender and youth sensitive concerns in the design of corporate products for all partners	♦ No and type of corporate Gender and youth sensitive products	PY1-2 (24 months)		TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		♦ Create a CEAFIRST newsletter dispatched on a quarterly basis through mailing lists (D-group) and on the website		♦	10,000 Subscriptions to the newsletter by	PY1-2 (24 months)		TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		♦ Provide a CEA-FIRST website and later create the IRC website hosted by the coordinating institution- FARA) to support public access to the Knowledge Management System and create linkages to	Low recruitment of Women and youth Limited awareness and training	♦ Develop Gender based Knowledge Management System and create linkages to other relevant websites and on-going portals	♦ 60% men, 40%women and 80%youth recruited in advertised positions	PY1-2		% of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		<i>other relevant websites and on-going portals (i.e. EU Commission/JRC),</i>						
		♦ Set up CEA-FIRST Social media channels in order to reach and engage with specific stakeholder groups, such as Mastodon/Twitter for decision makers and journalists, LinkedIn for professionals, Instagram/YouTube for youth and Research Gate for academia	Low recruitment of Women and youth Limited awareness and training	♦ Set up youth and women sensitive CEA-FIRST Social media channels in order to reach and engage with specific stakeholder groups	♦ 60% men, 40%women and 80%youth recruited in advertised positions ♦	PY1-2 (24 months)	Agrinatura/FARA, supported by: CORAF, COLEAD, UH, YPARD and SLU	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		♦ Produce a short video explaining the IRC to be added to the already existing brochures and presentations	Weak publicity of young people and women's achievement	♦ Promote Gender and youth role in R&D through short videos	♦	PY1-2 (24 months)	Agrinatura/FARA, supported by: CORAF, COLEAD, UH, YPARD and SLU	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Task 1.4: Setting up CEA-FIRST project Mgt. and Coordination arrangements	<i>To ensures that all preparatory administrative, financial and technical arrangements are put in place for effective implementation of the CEA-FIRST Grant Agreement requirements</i>					
		♦ Implement guidelines in line with the EC regulations and assist all partners to comply (technical and financial reporting schedules, financial guidelines, workflow analysis and transfer plan etc.)	To be Populated	♦	♦		FARA/ Agrinatura, supported by: all partners	

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)	
		◊ <i>Establish</i> cross-WPs actions/linkages to ensure coherence	To be Populated	◊	◊	PY1-2 (24 months)	<i>Agrinatura/FARA, supported by: CORAF, COLEAD, UH, YPARD and SLU</i>	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth	
		◊ Monitor the project start up activities the MEL and quality assurance tools will be developed	To be Populated	◊	◊				
		◊ Establish processes and channels for internal communication, data management and storage (Data Management Plan (DMP))	To be Populated	◊	◊				
		◊ Set up ethical controls and guidelines and define the ethics requirements	Inadequate guidelines Gender and Youth responsive for consideration on 'ethics requirements'	◊ Integrate Gender and Youth responsive guideline into 'ethics requirements' for a code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures etc. ◊ Train youth and women in the preparation of guidelines and define the ethics requirements	◊ No of Gender Responsive Strategies guidelines on 'ethics requirements' developed ◊ No of women and youth trained				
		CEA-FIRST/ IRC Gender and youth specific strategies	To ensure the CEA-FIRST project and the IRC work is youth and gender-sensitive by being co-created and co-implemented with the youth and gender related stakeholders						
		Aspects of the Gender and Youth Strategy will cut across all work packages and activities, and will include a code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures, description of gender and youth inclusion in governance structures, monitoring and evaluation of gender and youth indicators, generational renewal processes, working group composition							
		◊ Develop gender and youth strategies for the IRC by drawing from existing gender and youth strategies	◊ Weak enforcement of code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures, description	◊ Develop code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures, description of gender and youth inclusion in governance structures, clear	◊ No. of Gender and Youth strategies developed by CEA-FIRST institutions	PY1-2 (24 months)	YPARD/ CORAF supported by CSIR,	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth	

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		of participating organizations	of gender and youth inclusion in governance structures, clear monitoring and evaluation on gender lines	monitoring and evaluation of gender and youth indicators, generational renewal processes, working group composition	Number of Staff /stakeholders abreast with and using Strategy document based on - code of conduct, - ethical guidelines, - conflict resolution procedures, - description of gender and youth inclusion in governance structures, - clear monitoring and evaluation of gender and youth indicators, generational renewal processes, - working group composition		FARA, CIRAD	
		Set up an IRC Working Group on Gender and Youth with specific focus on capacity sharing	◊ Weak gender equality considerations in the formation of working groups	◊ Establishment of gender equality working group; form a dedicated Gender Equality Group (GEP's) implementation within CEA-FIRST institution	◊ No. of Gender working groups set up within CEA-FIRST institution	PY1-2 (24 months)	YPARD/ CORAF supported by CSIR, FARA, CIRAD	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
			◊ Weak/neglect of youth and women equality considerations in the formation of IRC working groups	◊ Include young talent to serve the IRC to contribute to its long-term sustainability. ◊ Include women to serve the IRC	◊ Composition of disaggregated Gender working groups membership (male, female, youth)			
			◊ Inadequate training and exposure/mentorship	◊ Build capacity of women and young talents through	• % of male, female, youth			

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility <i>(Lead & Collaborators)</i>	Budget (USD)
			among women and youth in R&I etc. ♦ Lack of opportunities	mentorship programme and workshops during the CEA-FIRST General Assembly to promote	<i>trained and mentored</i>	PY1-2 <i>(24 months)</i>	YPARD/ CORAF supported by CSIR, FARA, CIRAD	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
				♦ Engage women and youth as key stakeholders for policy stakeholder consultations as protagonists of the innovation private sector-research interface in the activities in WP3.	• <i>% of male, female, youth participating</i>			
				• Involve/Engage women and youth as key stakeholders in policy stakeholder consultations as protagonists of the innovation private sector-research interface in the activities.	•			
			Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of gender and youth mainstreaming efforts.	• Develop gender and youth responsive M&E system with disaggregated data	• Number of gender sensitive reports delivered to project stakeholders			
Obj 2	A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LARGE KNOWLEDGE BASE, INCLUDING MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) ACTIVITIES, ARE ESTABLISHED.							
WP 2	Consolidation of Knowledge Management and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning tools to	Task 2.1: Consolidation of Knowledge Management tools	The consolidation and update of existing knowledge management tools will provide the knowledge for brokerage between FNSSA projects/initiatives and the IRC stakeholders					

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
	support the FNSSA Roadmap update							
	Update the existing FNSSA Knowledge Management tools in the form of the FNSSA projects database and –the Knowledge Extract Or Pipeline System (KEOPS) (WP2) creation of one knowledge platform (WP4) for the IRC	Develops the FNSSA Project database: Continuous updates and development of the database, review the scope and boundaries, update and feed continuously with new projects, participants and funders to maintain the project database currency and relevance for the IRC	◇ Limitation in Gender and youth disaggregated data collection insufficient gender-disaggregated data and analysis to inform effective policies and interventions	◇ Enhanced data collection; develop a comprehensive gender-sensitive data collection system to gather sex-disaggregated data to development of the database, review the scope and boundaries, update and feed continuously w	◇ 5,000 users of Project Data Base by <i>Number of hits and Number and % women and young people users</i>	PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: SLU/ FARA, support by: CIRAD, WUR, ARC	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Updating KEOPS: Continuous updates and development of the KMS KEOPS with new documents, websites and RSS feeds. Adaptation of the LEAP4FNSSA vocabulary to IRC context and FNSSA Roadmap;	◇ Weak capacity among women and youth	Upgrade knowledge management tools new documents, websites and RSS feeds for enhanced gender and youth visibility	<i>Number of downloads and % women and young people users</i> <i>Number of hits and Number and % women and young people users</i>	PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: SLU/ FARA, support by: CIRAD, WUR, ARC	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Builds one single interface for the existing tools: Transpose the LEAP4FNSSA tools (project database, KEOPS) in the IRC context				PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: SLU/ FARA, support by: CIRAD, WUR, ARC	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

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		Creates Semi-automatisation of the project database updates: Feeding of the project database will be converted to be as automatic as possible (currently manually) to ensure a continuation of services provided after the project ends	Low number of women with knowledge and experience	Develop a gender disaggregated/ sensitive Semi-automatisation data system for projects database for automation and build sustainability measures	- No. Develop a and operational - No. of women and youth trained	PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: SLU/ FARA, support by: CIRAD, WUR, ARC	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Task 2.2: Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks	<i>Will establish two participatory MEL frameworks, data collection and analysis systems that enable the IRC to monitor and evaluate the progress of the FNSSA Partnership and the IRC's impact on its membership</i>					
		Partnership MEL framework: A FNSSA Partnership MEL framework will be developed and completed. Building on the FNSSA Partnership Theory of Change (ToC) developed by the LEAP4FNSSA project, the framework will include the policy objectives & priorities of the EU and AU.	M&E systems of some CEA-FIRST Institutions do not define specific indicators or metrics for assessing the effectiveness of gender initiatives	Establish clear M&E metrics and develop specific indicators for monitoring and evaluating gender integration across all CEA-FIRST programs.		PY1-2 (24 months)	ACU/ ARC, support by: SLU, ASARECA, FARA)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		IRC MEL framework: Participatory workshops will be facilitated with stakeholder representative groups of IRC members during the first year of CEA-FIRST's inception to strengthen the IRC's narrative of outcomes & its	Ineffective monitoring and evaluation; current M&E frameworks often lack gender-sensitive indicators, making it difficult to track progress.	- Train Key staff in gender-youth sensitive and participatory monitoring and Evaluation - Establish gender-sensitive M&E framework; develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework with	No. of staff trained by Gender (M/F)	PY1-2 (24 months)	ACU/ ARC, support by: SLU, ASARECA, FARA)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

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		required change making processes		gender-responsive indicators by April (2024)				
		Task 2.3 Provide and facilitate Knowledge for Brokerage	<i>This Task will develop knowledge tools that ensure that IRC members and other FNSSA stakeholders have access and are contributing to creating the right knowledge, in the right format and at the right time for learning, sharing and improved decision making.</i>					
6		Develop knowledge tools that ensure that IRC members and other FNSSA stakeholders have access and are contributing to creating the right knowledge, in the right format and at the right time for learning, sharing and improved decision making.	Low proportion of women and youth among stakeholders with requisite knowledge	Develop Gender and youth sensitive knowledge tools for IRC members and other FNSSA stakeholders sharing and improved decision making	No. of men, women and youth trained No. and types of learning of tools developed stakeholders	PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: FARA/CIR AD support by: Agrinatura, SLU, RUFORUM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Collects, normalizes and links heterogeneous data (interoperability) between relevant platforms - e.g. the project database, KEOPS, FARA DataInformS & affiliates, PANAP, - to meet the needs of the IRC and of other WP2 Tasks	To be populated			PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: FARA/CIR AD support by: Agrinatura, SLU, RUFORUM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Implements oups for engagements aDgrnd as IRC contacts database: Dgroups, a global community of discussion groups related to international development that has been widely used by African stakeholders engaged in Agricultural Research	To be populated			PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: FARA/CIR AD support by: Agrinatura, SLU, RUFORUM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		for Development, will be used to strengthen the capacities of IRC stakeholders to use the platform for discussions, learning, sharing, and connecting.						
		Blog – Intelligence on Funding opportunities, supported by social media: Building on lessons from previous programmes and using the KEOPS, scrapping/AI tools linked to the FARADDataInformS and the IRC	To be populated			PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: FARA/CIRAD support by: Agrinatura, SLU, RUFORUM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Monitor and evaluate the IRC knowledge platform effectiveness (Platform construction phase).	Weak technical knowledge among newly recruited staff and women	- Track System based on system requirement analysis to assess functionality of web-based platforms - train newly recruited staff and women in knowledge management platform	- No. of platforms operational gender based - No, of newly recruited staff and women trained in knowledge management	PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: FARA/CIRAD support by: Agrinatura, SLU, RUFORUM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Task 2.4: Support to the update of the FNSSA Roadmap	<i>This Task will support the implementation and updating of the FNSSA Roadmap with new R&I priorities based on identified knowledge gaps and facilitate multi-stakeholder consultations to review the implementation of the current AU-EU R&I FNSSA Roadmap (2016-2026) and guide the development of a new Roadmap (2027-2037).</i>					
		Reviews the implementation of 2016-2026 FNSSA Roadmap	Low proportion of women and youth among stakeholders with requisite knowledge	Organize Gender and youth review workshop	No. of men, women and youth involved	PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: RUFORUM/CIRAD, support by:	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

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					No. and types key recommendation		WUR, FARA, SLU, Agrinatura, ARC, UH)	
		Multi-stakeholder consultations to validate review outputs and solicit input into the 2027-2037 Roadmap: Review outputs will be presented to stakeholders at continental, regional and national levels, for validation and provision of input into the 2027-2037 AU-EU R&I in FNSSA Roadmap	- limited strategies for engaging individuals beyond gender in diversity initiatives. - Weak technical capacity of women and youth stakeholders	Sensitization and Awareness Training: Provide cross-disciplinary training among stakeholders on gender and age dynamics, including awareness of unconscious biases, to promote a more inclusive research environment - Build capacity of women and youth stakeholders to actively participate in consultations and to validation workshops (2027-2037 Roadmap)	- No of women and youth stakeholders trained % actively participating in consultations and validation workshops (2027-2037 Roadmap)	PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: RUFORU M/CIRAD, support by: WUR, FARA, SLU, Agrinatura, ARC, UH)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Supports the drafting of the 2027-2037 Research and Innovation on FNSSA Roadmap	- limited strategies for engaging individuals beyond gender in diversity initiatives. - Weak technical capacity among the youth and women - Inadequate exposure among youth and women	Introduce Capacity-Building Programs: Implement structured training, mentorship, and leadership development programs, with a focus on producing tangible outcomes, such as policy briefs or commercial products, proposals	- Number of trained specialized technical capacity among the youth and women - No. of youth and women exposed	PY1-2 (24 months)	(Leader: RUFORU M/CIRAD, support by: WUR, FARA, SLU, Agrinatura, ARC, UH)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
WP 3	Strengthening Networking and	Task 3.1: Enhancing collaboration between	<i>Provides specific mechanisms for supporting the governance processes of the FNSSA Partnership for the implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap and development of the IRC</i>					

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	Stakeholder Engagement	research & innovation, and policymaking						
		Supports the HLPD, the HLPD Bureau and the Partnership’ Governance Processes in response to the needs and requests of the HLPD and coordinate the IRC’s response to such requests.				PY1-2 <i>(24 months)</i>	(M1-M24) (Leader: UH/FANRPAN, support by: SLU, AFAAS, CSIR, ACU, FARA, Agrinatura, WUR, RUFORUM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Acts as a secretariat for the support for the AU EU Working Group on FNSSA.	Low number of women and youth					
		Supports the FNSSA-related policy dialogue in the IRC.	Weak institutional policy to promote gender and youth inclusivity	Institutional Policies and Diversity Strategies: Develop formal policies across institutions that promote gender and youth inclusion, ensuring representation in hiring, research teams, and leadership positions	No. and type of Policies developed with gender/youth inclusivity			
		Task 3.2 Strengthening liaison between research, innovation, and practice	<i>The aim of this task is to establish at the end of the CSA the operational Funder WGs for the IRC.</i>					
		Establish, strengthen, and support new alliances among partners and develop a knowledge-sharing strategy and mapping IRC member signatories based on taxonomies to facilitate effective IRC WG operations.	To be Populated			PY1-2 <i>(24 months)</i>	AFAAS/C OLEAD, support by: SLU, ACU, CSIR, PAFO, ARC, Agrinatura, Agricorn, RURFORUM, ASARECA, FANRPAN, YPARD.	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

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							STDF, CIHEAM)	
		Expands the IRC membership and ensures the IRC value proposition in line with Activity 1.1.2. To increase outreach and its potential to successfully channel efforts toward effective joint EU-AU collaboration on R&I partnerships, actions to expand membership and represent the current AUEU R&I ecosystem are needed.	To be Populated			PY1-2 (24 months)	AFAAS/COLEAD , support by: SLU, ACU, CSIR, PAFO, ARC, Agrinatura, Agricord, RURFORUM, ASARECA, FANRPAN, YPAR, STDF, CIHEAM)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Task 3.3: Clustering activities for defining operational funder working groups for supporting the implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap with new R&I priorities	<i>The aim of this task is to establish at the end of the CSA the operational Funder WGs for the IRC</i>					
		conducts a mapping exercise on existing national, sub-regional and regional public and private funding institutions and their needs, priorities, funding instruments and financial rules.		Climate Change Resilience and Mitigation for Gender Action Plan for Food Systems in Africa		PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: NRE/ CIHEAM support by: FONRID, STDF, CIRAD, FARA, SLU, ARC; AFAAS, COLEAD)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Sets-up one or several funders' operational working groups		♦ The Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) and the relevant Equality Working Groups monitors the				

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		and explores how to promote AU-EU efficient partnerships in FNSSA in the frame of a complex funding landscape.		implementation and revision of the Policy				
WP 4	Knowledge and learning facilitation using information generated from the Knowledge Mgt. Platform and the MEL	Task 4.1. IRC Knowledge Management Platform	<i>will pave the way towards the one single IRC Knowledge Management Platform that will be managed and maintained in this Task. The IRC Knowledge Management Platform will be hosted at the IRC network website.</i>					
		Management and sustainability of the IRC Knowledge Management Platform and capacity building: This activity will ensure that the IRC knowledge platform will be managed throughout CEA-FIRST and will continue to operate and provide its services after the end of the project.	To be Populated			PY1-4 (48 months)	(Task leader: FARA / SLU support by: CIRAD, WUR, Agrinatura, ARC)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		exploit in depth the use of all information resources that are relevant to the different needs of the IRC stakeholders (partner resources, blog, D-groups etc.)	To be Populated					

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		Task 4.2 FNSSA Partnership & IRC MEL Data Collection, Analysis & Reporting	<i>will collect and analyse data to identify research gaps, FNSSA Partnership strengths and opportunities for the scaling of pre-existing and novel FNSSA Partnership research, innovation and partnerships.</i>					
		Partnership data collection, analysis & reporting: Routine collection, monitoring and assessment of indicator data constitutes the greater part of Task 4.2.	- Weak partnership in gender disaggregated Data Collection and analysis among stakeholders - insufficient gendered data collection and analysis, reporting etc.	Regularly assess and report on progress in gender and youth inclusion, using clear metrics and impact assessments to ensure accountability and continual improvement.	C	PY1-2 (24 months)	ACU/ARC, support by, CSIR, ASARECA, FARA, CIRAD)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Reviews of MEL systems, tools and synergies with FNSSA Partnership & IRC stakeholders: In coordination with WP6, follow-up rapid reviews of R&I priorities to be focused on or included within subsequent data collection windows will be held with FNSSA Partnership and IRC stakeholders.				PY1-4 (48 months)	ACU/ARC, support by, CSIR, ASARECA, FARA, CIRAD)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		FNSSA Partnership impact assessment: Two in-depth case studies of FNSSA Partnership impact will be				PY1-4 (48 months)	ACU/ARC, support by, CSIR, ASARECA	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

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		developed, building on methods developed by the LEAP4FNSSA project.					, FARA, CIRAD)	
		IRC impact pathway and hypotheses Assessment: IRC Impact pathways reviews will give the opportunity to assess changes in contextual factors that influence CEA-FIRST and need adaptation or mitigation strategies.	♦ Lack of opportunity by youth and women to be part of assessment teams ♦ Weak technical capacity in evaluation among women and youth			PY1-4 (48 months)	ACU/ARC, support by, CSIR, ASARECA, FARA, CIRAD)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
Obj 3	SYNERGIES AND COHERENCE BETWEEN ACTORS, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECTS, INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES ARE INCREASED; THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL ALLIANCES AND OF CLUSTERS OF PROJECTS AND OF EXPERTISE							
WP 5	Implementing IRC Functions Through Stakeholder Engagement	Task 5.1: Enhancing policy coherence in the IRC	<i>The main aim of this task is to enhance policy processes and coherence in the IRC by linking it with and providing support for the AU-EU HLPD Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) and developing the IRC R&I policy framework through stakeholder engagement events, policy workshops and position papers.</i>					
		Strengthen policy interactions with policy makers in collaboration with the PANAP network.				PY1-4 (48 months)	UH/FANR PAN, Supported by: FARA, ACU, Agrinatura, SLU, ASARECA, AFAAS, YPARD, CSIR, CIRAD,	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Support the IRC in organising annual multi-national, continental and inter-continental policy engagement events and provides support for the AU-EU HLPD SOM.						
		Develops the IRC R&I policy framework by identifying key						

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		focus areas for research and taking into consideration similarities and differences in the regional and national FNSSA related development programmes and strategies.					FARA, RUFORUM, WUR)	
‘		Task 5.2 Initiate the R & I programming for the IRC	Support CEA-FIRST on initiating the work for a functional implementation in the IRC at the end of the four years.					
		prepares demand-driven research topics/ program/ actions fitting with the FNSSA Roadmap. Together with WP1, T5.2				PY1-4 <i>(48 months)</i>	NRF/ CIRAD, supported by: CIHEAM, AFAAS, COLEAD, SLU, ACU, CSIR, PAFO, ARC, Agrinatura, Agricord, RUFORUM, ASARECA, FANRPAN, YPARD, FONRID, FARA)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		<i>Based on funder’s mobilization as organized in task 3.3.2, Prepares guidelines to launch a pilot flagship initiative, building on lessons learned from previous joint funding programmes /projects and on the recommendations of the funders operational WG(s) and the outcomes of the mapping exercise</i>		Organize a workshop involving women and youth to draw up guidelines and recommendations towards the launching of a pilot flagship initiative.	◊ No. of women and youth involved ◊ % women and youth participating after drafting of guidelines			
		Task 5.3 Promote linkages and visibility with other FNSSA actors, programs, and initiatives	Facilitate linkages to enhance visibility with other FNSSA actors, programs, and initiatives					
		Facilitate cross-learning and alignment with other AU/EU	◊ Inadequate exposure for youth/women	Supported more women and youth to participate in exchange or cross-learning with other	No. of women and youth involved in cross learning	PY1-4 <i>(48 months)</i>	COLEAD/ AFAAS,	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

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		actors, programs, and initiatives.		AU/EU actors, programs, and initiatives.			supported by NRF, WUR, AGRINAT URA, AGRICORD, YPARD, FARA)	
		Upscale R&I in FNSSA to bring together resources for stakeholders to adapt and disseminate technologies and solutions that align with the FNSSA Roadmap objectives	Inadequate budgetary allocation for gender communication for the upscaling of R&I in FNSSA initiatives Low capacity in tailor-made technology	- Allocate adequate resources for the upscaling of R&I in FNSSA initiatives to strengthen gender communication in technology dissemination - Supported dissemination of technology to relevant stakeholders align with the FNSSA Roadmap objectives	- Amount of budget allocated for gender communication % of budget released	- Amount of budget allocated for gender communication % of budget released	COLEAD/AFAAS, supported by NRF, WUR, AGRINAT URA, AGRICORD, YPARD, FARA)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
Obj . 4	An evidence-based ground to support the updating of the FNSSA Roadmap will be created, including proposals for new R&I priorities provided by identifying research gaps							
WP 6	Project Coordination and Management II	Task 6.1 Coordination of the Implementation of IRC Secretariat functions	<i>This task will pilot IRC Secretariat functions, including its support to the IRC Council, the AU EU FNSSA Working Group, the External Advisory Board and the IRC Working groups. Activity</i>					
		Coordinate Governance meetings and processes.			No. of gender sensitization and	PY1-2 (24 months)	FARA/Agrinatura	TBD

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		Coordinate IRC thematic WGs that will play out the broad functions expected to characterise the IRC.	- Unclear roles and responsibilities of governance bodies in driving the gender equality agenda. - Low number of youth and women with requisite qualification and experience in governance	Organize sensitization and Awareness Trainings to provide cross-disciplinary training on gender and age dynamics, including awareness of unconscious biases, to promote proper governance	Awareness Trainings		Support by ARC, UH, WUR, FANRPAN, ACU, CIRAD, SLU, NRF, CSIR)	% of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Federating and widening the IRC Platform. Networks of funding agencies (FOSC, Global Donor Platform, Green ERA hub, EIARD), knowledge institutions (RUFORUM, ICA, CGIAR), research coordination networks (ASARECA, CARDESA, CORAF, NASRO	- limited strategies for engaging individuals beyond gender in diversity initiatives on the platform - Uncertainty of funding agencies acceptability for gender and youth integration	Contact and reach out to other networks that have connections with FNSSA, R&I projects addressing priorities of the AU and EU region to	No. of new gender sensitive IRC platforms formed and funded			
		Piloting IRC Gender and Youth Working Group .	- Unclear roles and responsibilities of governance bodies in driving the gender and youth equality working groups - Dedicated and reliable budgetary allocation	Train the next generation of women and youth intellectual and professional talent in the IRC to create strong institutional ties in capacity sharing	- No. of women and youth trained % women and youth trained and resourced	PY1-2 (24 months)	FARA/Agr inatura Support by ARC, UH, WUR, FANRPAN, ACU, CIRAD, SLU, NRF, CSIR)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		Task 6.2.: Implementation of Dissemination and Communication Activities	<i>This task has the objective to disseminate and communicate the activities and outcomes of the IRC with the aim of facilitating outreach, targeting decision-makers, stakeholders, end-users and funders in the field of R&I on FNSSA, to strengthen and extend the IRC to potential members, to engage and strengthen open dialogue with stakeholders, including civil society, in FNSSA.</i>					
		Implement ongoing communication work in close collaboration with all Partners of CEA-FIRST and will implement the dissemination and communication plan.	Unclear budget allocations for gender equality initiatives, leading to potential funding gaps	Allocate resources for gender initiatives in communication; identify and allocate specific budget resources dedicated to gender equality initiatives	- Amount of budget allocated for gender communication % of budget released			
			Weak gender and youth inclusiveness strategies in communication dissemination plan	Roll out a robust communication plan/activities by strengthening, operationalizing and widening partnership and information transfer on gender lines among stakeholders (decision-makers, stakeholders, end-users)	- No. of gender sensitive communication activities disseminated to decision-makers, stakeholders, end-users and funders in R&I on FNSSA - No. of potential women and youth IRC members engaged in dialogue including civil society	PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: Agrinatura/ FARA support by: CORAF and all partners	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		Engage in “IRC Dialogues” with stakeholders. The moderated discussions on the value proposition and further development of the IRC and R&I in FNSSA will be organised monthly	Low number of women and youth in “IRC Dialogues”	- Organise funder briefs that support national funder dialogues; - involve women and youth in IRC dialogues (podcast and internet)	30 National, regional and continental Funders - No. of stakeholders engaged in “IRC Dialogues”	PY1-2 (24 months)	Leader: Agrinatura/ FARA support by: CORAF and all partners	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		on the web	Weak Gender and youth concerns in regional and national policy events	- Include Gender concerns (women and youth) in regional and national policy events on R&I, blog on funding opportunities, campaign etc - Include youth and women in the IRC membership	- No. and % of women and youth engaged - No. of women and youth involved in "IRC Dialogues from CEA-FIRST"			
		Task 6.3: Project Management	<i>This task facilitates the implementation of CEA-FIRST after the end of WP1 activities and will ensure that all administrative, financial and technical obligations required by the REA and the EC are fully met.</i>					
		Promote Technical and financial project administration in line with guidelines developed under WP1.	No or Inadequate dedicated budget for gender and youth action in MEL	- Set a Dedicated budget for gender and youth action in MEL - Gender/youth sensitive financial reporting	% amount of dedicated budget to MEL % amount of dedicated budget to MEL released - No. of staff trained in Financial and Administrative reportin	PY 1-4 (48 months)	FARA/ Agrinatura, supported by: all partners)	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth
		- Coordinate and implement cross-WPs actions/linkages to ensure coherence in line with cross-cutting activities defined under WP1. - Monitor CEA-FIRST by implementing the MEL guidelines developed under WP1, including	Policy outlines intentions lacks specific details on how the objectives will be operationalized, including timelines and resources	- Develop a robust cross-cutting MEL framework with clear Gender and youth disaggregated indicators and mechanisms for regular evaluation and reporting - Develop a detailed gender and youth based implementation	No of staff trained in MEL	PY 1-4 (48 months)		TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender/youth

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
		risk assessment plan, a quality control, internal communication, data management and storage. WP6 will work with the Ethics Advisor to ensure application of the ethical guidelines for CEA-FIRST as described under WP		plan and create an actionable plan outlining steps, timelines, and responsible parties for achieving policy objectives.				
		◇ Monitor the project implementation together with all partners. T6.3 will monitor the implementation and monitor the quality and timeliness of the progress.	◇ Ineffective M&E frameworks -often lack gender-sensitive indicators, making it difficult to track progress	◇ Establish gender-sensitive M&E framework; develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework with gender-responsive indicators ◇ Promote female and youth leadership by setting targets for gender representation in leadership roles within R&	<i>At least 30% female and youth representation by PY 2</i>	PY 1-4 (48 months)	FARA/ Agrinatura, supported by: all partners	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender
			◇	◇ Monitoring and Reporting: Regularly assess and report on progress in gender and youth inclusion, using clear metrics and impact assessments to ensure accountability and continual improvement	◇ No. of Gender and youth sensitive reports ◇ No. of staff y			
			◇ No or Inadequate dedicated budget for gender and youth action in MEL	◇ To promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the professional/ programmatic and administrative levels	◇ <i>% amount of dedicated budget to MEL</i>	PY 1-4 (48 months)	FARA/ Agrinatura, supported by: all partners	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
				Set a Dedicated budget for gender and youth action in MEL-clearly defined allocated resources necessary for the successful implementation of the action plan, including staffing and budget.	% amount of dedicated budget to MEL released - No of staff trained in gender sensitive MEL			
			Monitor progress of implementation of the performance of gender sensitive intervention by private sector- FBO, NGOs and entrepreneurs along the CEA-FIRST implementing institutions	Gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation & reporting progress: tracking progress and learning	No of Gender sensitive project monitored and reported			
			Conduct					
WP 7	Ethics requirements	<i>Objective is to ensure compliance with the 'ethics requirements' set out in this work package.</i>						
		Sets out the 'ethics requirements' that the project must comply with	Weak Gender and Youth responsive consideration and implementation of ' ethics requirements ' in programme/project design, implementation monitoring and evaluation	Integrate Gender and Youth responsive concerns into 'ethics requirements' for implementation in all CEA-FIRST institutional programmes strategies, activities, Including; a code of conduct, ethical guidelines, conflict resolution procedures, description of gender and youth inclusion in governance structures, monitoring and evaluation of gender and youth indicators, generational renewal processes, working group	- No. of CEA-FIRST institutions with Gender responsive Strategies that implement 'ethics requirements' under CEA-FIRST - No of women and youth benefiting from the	PY 1-4 (48 months)	FARA/ Agrinatura, supported by: all partners	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender

No.	Strategic Priorities/Work Package	Key Task & Activities	Key Gender and Youth Entry Points / Existing Gaps	Key Gender & Youth Action/Intervention Strategy or Approach	Target & Indicator	Intervention Year	Responsibility (Lead & Collaborators)	Budget (USD)
				<i>composition, working methods, and parameters required for gender and youth responses to IRC calls for funding.</i>	implantation of 'ethics requirements' in the institutions			
		Sets out the 'ethics requirements' that the project must comply with	♦ Challenges with Cultural norms addressed; recognition of the need for cultural change but lacking concrete strategies to address these norms	♦ Develop cultural change initiatives; create initiatives aimed at transforming negative cultural norms within the institution	No. of and type of negative cultures and norms addressed under ethics requirements' in the institutions	PY 1-4 (48 months)	FARA/ Agrinatura, supported by: all partners	TBD % of planned Budget allocated to Gender
			♦ Weak technical capacity	♦ Training e.g., negotiation skills, Gender transformative approaches,	No of women and youth trained			

Table 1b: Youth and Women-Sensitive Evaluation Metrics

This table outlines a structured approach to systematically measure empowerment, inclusivity, and representation across the IRC's initiatives. It also outlines the significance, design, and application of these metrics to promote measurable progress in advancing gender and youth inclusion.

Category	Indicator	Metric	Target
Involvement in Decision-Making	Proportion of youth and women in decision-making bodies	% of youth and women relative to total members	40% representation
	Frequency of contributions by youth and women during discussions	Avg. number of inputs per meeting	-
	Satisfaction with inclusion in decision-making processes	% of youth and women reporting satisfaction	80% satisfaction rate
Access to Capacity-Building Resources	Number of youth and women enrolled in capacity-building programs	% of youth and women participants	50% participation
	Access to funding or resources for development	Amount of financial/material support allocated	Equal distribution
	Improvement in skills post-training	Pre- and post-training assessment scores	Increase in scores

Participation in Leadership Roles	Number of leadership positions held by youth and women	% of youth and women in leadership roles	30% representation
	Duration in leadership roles	Avg. tenure of youth and women	Equal to others
	Initiatives led by youth and women	% of programs led by youth and women	-
Cross-Cutting Metrics	Perceived empowerment through involvement in programs	% reporting increased self-efficacy	70% improvement
	Reduction in barriers to participation (e.g., cultural, systemic)	Number and type of barriers identified and addressed	Reduction in identified barriers
	Community-level impact of youth and women's involvement	Changes in attitudes measured via surveys/focus groups	A positive shift in attitudes

Annex 2: Analysis of Strategy and Policy Documents of the CEA-FIRST Implementing Institutions

Analysis of Strategy and Policy Documents of the CEA-FIRST Implementing Institutions

Strategic Priorities	Institution 1 (EU)	Institution 2 (AU)	Institution 3 (AU)	Institution 4 (AU)	Institution 5 (AU)	Institution 6 (AU)	Institution 7 (EU)	Institution 8 (AU)	Institution 9 (EU)	Institution 10 (AU)	Institution 11 (AU)	Institution 12 (EU)	Institution 13 (EU)	Institution 14 (EU)	Institution 15 (EU)	Institution 16 (EU)	Institution 17 (EU)
Biophysical and Environmental	N/A	N/A	N/A	Climate Change Resilience and Mitigation for Gender Action Plan for Food Systems in Africa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Technological and Infrastructure	N/A	N/A	Develop resilient and self-reliant youth	Facilitate women's access to markets and ensure their active participation in the agricultural value chain Value Chain Development Provide institutional, training and capacity building programs that specifically target women farmers and entrepreneurs	Establishment of liaison structures for gender integration in R&D programmes	Promote gender research and gender knowledge generation and sharing,	Including gender issues in the scientific and partnership strategy	Ensure that gender equity is integrated into CSIR strategic planning and that policy development, operational practices and procedures are all informed by equality of opportunity. Manage risks and reduce the potential for direct and indirect social and financial costs associated with	N/A	Developing institutional capacities and mechanisms for GESI in AAS	Gender equality in recruitment and career progression Integrating the gender dimension into research and programming	Gender Planning	Recruitment, Career Management and Work-Life Balance	Gender integration in recruitment and allocation of assignments	Gender equality in recruitment and career progression Integrating gender into research and teaching	Gender equality in recruitment and career progression Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	N/A
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Political and Economic	Promotion of inclusion, equal leadership work and social equality efforts	Build an equitable University environment devoid of discrimination	Enhance the participation of the youth in governance, community development, decision-making and elevate their sense of civic responsibility	Creating the right policy environment for youth mentors and their participation in establishing a resilient food system in Africa Create and raise awareness about gender inequalities in the food system sector and advocate for gender-responsive policies and investments	N/A	Ensures that men, women, youth, especially the underprivileged get equal access to and control over resources as technologies and innovations, Agri-inputs, agricultural advisory services and trainings, infrastructure, financing and insurance, and markets to improve food and nutrition security,	Gender strategy is adopted as an advocacy tool	N/A	N/A	Influencing an enabling environment for GESI in AAS.	N/A	Management and financial resources	Reshaping Decision-Making and Governance Integration of Gender in Funding, Research and Teaching	Resource allocation	N/A	N/A	Allocate the necessary resources to implement the GEP, including funding for dedicated positions or Gender Equality Teams. This resource allocation will support the design, implementation, and monitoring of gender equality initiatives.
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Sociocultural and Capacity	Continuous learning and annual cycle of equality and diversity work targeting women and youth	Ensures that all research, training, teaching and learning, and development activities are gender sensitive and aim at bringing out the best in both men and women.	Develops institutional capacities and schemes that support decent job creation, youth skills transfer, creativity and innovation employability and livelihood empowerment for the youth	N/A	Increased awareness and building capacity for gender integration	Promote gender equity in scientific and leadership capacity development for the next generation of researchers;	Building a gender equality culture within the organization • Ensuring equality in recruitment and employment • Guaranteeing career equality • Fostering work-life balance	Advocate for a governance, administrative and research that is gender sensitive in all aspects of the Council's operations, including recruitment, selection and service delivery.	Fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all employees, volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries	Strengthening knowledge, attitudes, and competencies for GESI in AAS	Work-life balance and organizational culture Measure against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Awareness raising and capacity building	Building a Gender Equality Culture and a Gender-Friendly Campus	Equal opportunities: gender integration in courses and study programmes.	Work-life balance and organizational culture Gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Work-life balance and organizational culture Measure against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Conduct an organization-wide workshop to communicate the GEP and make it publicly available. This workshop will help raise awareness and understanding of our gender equality goals and strategies Providing training and capacity-building programmes that address gender equality
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Monitoring and Evaluation and Demographic	Measures and related actions for the strategy implementation period	The Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) and the relevant Equality Working Groups monitor the implementation and revision of the Policy	Strengthens coordination through monitoring and evaluation of youth interventions	Monitoring & reporting progress : tracking progress and learning while doing	Development of a gender integration M&E framework	Ensures that projects results framework generate gender indicators and disaggregated data as evidence base to closing the gender gap in Agricultural research and Development	N/A	To promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the professional/ programmatic and administrative levels	N/A	N/A	Gender balance in leadership and decision making	Partnerships and collaborations Gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation	N/A	Gender-disaggregated statistics	Gender balance in leadership and decision making	Gender balance in leadership and decision-making Monitoring and reporting on progress and change achieved will be undertaken as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the EDI strategy	Collect, analyse, and report gender data on Agrinatura personnel annually. Collect and analyse gender data annually to assess progress. Additionally, the annual review of the GEP will be conducted and the Analysis of the Status Quo
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Annex 3: Questionnaire for CEA-FIRST Implementing Partners



INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CEA-FIRST IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

INTRODUCTION

The European Union funded the Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation (CEA-FIRST) with the key objective of setting the change process towards the IRC functioning in motion, leading its direction, and facilitating the setting up of the IRC structures and services. Work package one of the CEA-FIRST program focuses on start-up actions (for project management, organizational and implementation arrangements, communication and advocacy structure, and channels and for IRC governance processes, strategies, and guidelines) required to pave the way for effective implementation of the ‘proof of the IRC concept’ phase to be coordinated under other work packages.

Given CORAF’s leadership in coordinating gender interventions within strategic cross-regional programs, the organization has established a vast network of partners to promote inclusivity in research and innovation interventions. The experience and partnerships strengthened under the CAADP XP4 programme, among others, allow for robust discussions and interactions to effectively achieve an inclusive Consortium for Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation.

A significant output under work package one of the CEA-FIRST project is to develop a joint gender and youth strategy and action plan. The strategy aims to ensure the CEA-FIRST project and the IRC work are youth and gender-sensitive by being co-created and co-implemented with the youth and gender-related stakeholders. The gender and youth strategy will draw from existing gender and youth strategies of participating organizations, and aspects of this will be crosscutting for the other work packages and activities. The gender survey points to the need to ensure that AU-EU joint actions on research and innovation are gender- and youth-responsive.

On behalf of the CORAF Gender Regional Advisor, I would like you to take some time off and respond to the survey below based on your key role in your institution and experience in the AR4D landscape.



Institutional Role under CEA-FIRST

1. Name of Institution/Implementing Agency

2. Name of Respondent/Officer Responding to Questionnaire

3. Position of the Respondent/Officer

4. What is the mandate of your institution? *Please, provide a brief update*

5a. Does your organization have a Gender/Youth Action Plan or Strategy Document?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5b. If yes, can you name the title of the Gender and/or Youth Action Plan/Strategy Document?

Programme Planning, Design, and Structural Analysis

6a. Does your organization or project design consider or integrate gender and youth-sensitive issues, procedures, and methods into your its design to promote women and youth concerns as active partners?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**If “No” to question 6a, skip to question 6c*

6b. *if yes to question 6a*, how well does your institution’s current strategy align with the intention to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment in agricultural research and innovations in the food system’s transition? **Kindly explain opinion*

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6c. Are there any informal gender-inclusive measures or approaches (not documented) that you are applying that promote gender transformation? **If yes, kindly list them*

☐ Yes ☐ No

6d. Is gender inclusivity considered in your organization's budget planning and disbursement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**If "No" to question 6d, skip to question 7a*

6e. Are resources (staff, finances etc.) for gender/youth inclusion made available?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6f. *If yes to question 6e, what budget items can be attributed to promoting or enhancing gender and youth inclusivity in your organisation? * kindly list them*

Human Resource and Personnel Analysis

7a. Does your HR policy and organizational culture consider gender sensitivity and inclusiveness that embrace women and youth expertise in its systems and structures before hiring people?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7b. *If yes to question 7a, how many women and youth relative to men (adult) do you have as staff in your organization? *Kindly Indicate*

7c. What percentage (%) of women and youth do you have in decision-making positions in your organization? **Kindly Indicate*

8a. Can you share some good case stories of successful collaborations between your institution and similar regional or international organizations demonstrating a strong track record supporting gender and youth-responsive agricultural research and innovation?

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8b. Does your organization consider gender/youth sensitivity and inclusion (voice, visibility etc.) in the organization's communication and advocacy programmes? Please, share any knowledge or communication materials promoting GESI.

9a. Is there a gender-focal person in charge, or do you have dedicated personnel(s) for the implementation of activities related to Gender and youth?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9b. *If yes, what is his/her level of expertise/knowledge on gender?*

9c. Is the gender-focal person well involved in project design, implementation, M&E, and project supervision missions?

9d. Is there any capacity building on gender for stakeholders involved in programs and projects of your organization?

9e. If "No" to the question, can your institution nominate or appoint a Gender Desk Officer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. What types of staff grievance mechanisms relating to Gender inequality and social exclusion issues does the organization possess? And how are they addressed?

Gender and Youth inclusiveness in Programme Implementation

11. What is the target (%) for women and youth beneficiaries of programs and projects of your organization, if any?

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12. Does your organization offer women/youth with requisite resources and opportunities to organize field implementation activities for technology transfer?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
13. How are the socially-marginalized/vulnerable groups identified as beneficiaries of projects and programs?
-
14. What are some of the **gender-sensitive sustainability measures** put in place by your institution to ensure the seamless implementation of research, innovation, and technology transfer in agriculture?
-

Gender and Youth Sensitive/Inclusive Monitoring and Evaluation

15. To what extent has your organization integrated gender/youth disaggregated data and information in the M&E of your organization, projects or programme outcomes (Result Framework) into its system and structure (Budgeting, staffing, equipment, capacity building etc. **Give a brief update*
-
16. Does your programme have a result Framework?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
17. **If yes to question 15, is the Result Framework of projects and programs gender informed or sensitive?*
-
18. What is the monitoring mechanism put in place to track progress on gender integration in your projects and programs?
-
19. Is there an evaluation strategy that analyzes the gender-specific impacts of projects and programs?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
20. How often is gender audit organized to assess the implementation of your gender strategy?
-

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21. Do the high-level decision-makers commission and approve the revisions of your gender strategy; commission actions for progress reports and independent evaluations to assess the implementation of the gender strategy; approve budget allocation for the implementation of the gender strategy. *If "yes" explain*
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
-

CEA-FIRST Related Output/Results Analysis

22. What methodologies and approaches does your institution employ to build gender-responsive research capacity at all levels, and how can these methods be customized to meet the unique needs of the CEA-FIRST project?
-
- 23a. Are there specific indicators measuring gender-inclusive outputs/results that you use or would like to suggest? *If "yes" explain*
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
-
- 23b. Do you collect any sex/gender-disaggregated data or information?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
-
- 23c. **If yes, how do you capture data and information relating to older and younger males' and females' participation?*
-
- 23d. What methods do you use for capturing sex/gender-disaggregated data, and how do you utilize the information?
-
24. In your opinion, what are the gender actions and activities that CEA-FIRST should consider to be inclusive and gender responsive enough? Please, list them.
-

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25. What are the challenges/gaps that CEA-FIRST can be faced with during the implementation of its gender and youth strategy? *Kindly List them*

26. What are the needed actions to overcomes the challenges? Kindly List them

Partnership Analysis

27. a. In the context of a potential partnership, what key areas does your institution believe would be most beneficial for collaboration to promote gender-responsive research and innovation? *Kindly list them*

- 27.b. What should be included as good features for the CEA-FIRST gender and youth strategy and action plan?

- 27.c. Which specific partners do you envision leveraging for gender-responsive research and innovation? Which particular areas do you think would be most effective in contributing to this effort?

- 27.d. As a key partner and stakeholder, how will you contribute to promoting gender and youth inclusivity in agriculture research and innovation?

28. Is there any civil society, particularly women and youth led organizations and networks, private sector, gender NGOs involved in the implementation of your gender strategy?

☐ Yes ☐ No

29. *If "yes" to question 34, to what extent does issues relating to gender equity integrated when it comes to working with Local and international agencies, NGOs/FBOs, private sector affiliated to your course?*



30. *How do* gender equity issues affect the performance (capacity, productivity, livelihood) of key local NGOs/FBOs and the private sector affiliated with your institution?

AU-EU-Innovation Analysis

31. To create synergy between research and innovation programmes and initiatives, a gender and youth-responsive coordination infrastructure and knowledge management mechanisms are crucial. What would you wish to see as a gender- and youth-inclusive mechanism to improve the FNSSA agenda for Africa and Europe Joint Actions?

- 32a. In what ways do you believe the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy could support the updating of the FNSSA Roadmap? Agenda for Africa and Europe Joint Actions?

- 32b. What capacity-building measures would you suggest, especially in the context of the CEA-FIRST? Agenda for Africa and Europe Joint Actions?

- 32c. What other possibilities exist for including gender and youth in CEA-FIRST activities?

Gender Performance Indicator Measurement, Management and Reporting

33. Do you have indicators to measure the set targets for Gender and youth related intervention?

☐ Yes ☐ No

34. What type of Data do you collect regarding Gender and youth to the implementation of CEA-FIRST activities?"

35. Do you have any quality control measures in the implementation of your gender strategy and action plan?



36. Who are the main audience for your Gender and Youth sensitive reports?

37. Does Gender and youth information/report inform management decisions?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

38. How do you disseminate or transmit Gender/youth reports to key partners?

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Annex 4: Survey Questions for Key Stakeholders (Including Women and Youth-led Organizations)

ENG: PARTNERS' SURVEY ON DEVELOPING THE CEA-FIRST GENDER AND YOUTH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The European Union funded the Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation (CEA-FIRST) with the key objective of setting the change process towards the IRC functioning in motion, leading its direction, and facilitating the setting up of the IRC structures and services. Work package one of the CEA-FIRST program focuses on start-up actions (for project management, organizational and implementation arrangements, communication and advocacy structure, and channels and for IRC governance processes, strategies, and guidelines) required to pave the way for effective implementation of the 'proof of the IRC concept' phase to be coordinated under other work packages.

A significant output under work package one of the CEA-FIRST project is to develop a joint gender and youth strategy and action plan. The strategy aims to ensure the CEA-FIRST project and the IRC work are youth and gender-sensitive by being co-created and co-implemented with the youth and gender-related stakeholders. The gender and youth strategy will draw from existing gender and youth strategies of participating organizations, and aspects of this will be crosscutting for the other work packages and activities. The gender survey points to the need to ensure that AU-EU joint actions on research and innovation are gender- and youth-responsive.

I would like you to take some time off and respond to the survey below based on your key role in your institution and experience in the AR4D landscape.

Survey Questions

Structural Analysis

1. In your opinion, how well does your institution's current strategy align with the intention to achieve gender equality and women's and youth empowerment in agricultural research and innovations in the food system's transition?
 - a. Does your organization or project design consider or integrate gender and youth-sensitive issues, procedures, and methods into your its design to promote women and youth concerns as active partners?
 - b. Are there any informal gender-inclusive measures or approaches (not documented) that you are applying to promote gender transformation?
 - c. Is gender inclusivity considered in your organization's projects and programs, budget planning and disbursement? Are resources (staff, finances) for gender inclusion made available?
 - d. Does your organization have a gender-focal person in charge, or do you have dedicated personnel(s) for the implementation of the Gender and youth strategy?
 - e. What are some of the budget items that can be attributed to promoting or enhancing gender-inclusivity in your organisation?

Personnel Analysis

2. Can you share some good case stories of successful collaborations between your institution and similar regional or international organizations demonstrating a strong track record of supporting gender and youth-responsive agricultural research and innovation?
 - a. Is GESI part of the information and management system (including database and reporting mechanisms)? Kindly share any reporting templates.
 - b. Do you have any knowledge or communication materials promoting GESI in your organisations? e.g., anti, gender-based violence, child labor exploitation, workplace harassment policy, anti-social inequality/discrimination policy.
 - c. What types of staff grievance mechanisms relating to Gender inequality and social exclusion issues does the organization possess? And how are they addressed?

Output/Results Analysis

3. What methodologies and approaches does your institution employ to build gender-responsive research capacity at all levels, and how can these methods be customized to meet the unique needs of the CEA-FIRST project?
 - a. Are there specific indicators measuring gender-inclusive outputs/results that you use or would like to suggest?
 - b. Do you collect any sex/gender-disaggregated data or information? How do you capture data and information relating to older and younger males' and females' participation?
 - c. What methods do you use for capturing sex/gender-disaggregated data, and how do you utilize the information?

Partnership Analysis

4. In the context of a potential partnership, what key areas does your institution believe would be most beneficial for collaboration to promote gender-responsive research and innovation?
 - a. What should be included as good features for the CEA-FIRST gender and youth strategy and action plan?
 - b. Which specific partners do you envision leveraging for gender-responsive research and innovation (*list particular organizations that would be good partners in implementing the gender and youth strategy*)? How can they contribute to meet the objectives of a gender and youth responsive food system transition?
 - c. As a key partner and stakeholder, how will you contribute to promoting gender and youth inclusivity in agriculture research and innovation?

AU-EU-Innovation Analysis

5. To create synergy between research and innovation programmes and initiatives, a gender and youth-responsive coordination infrastructure and knowledge management mechanisms are crucial. What would you wish to see as a gender- and youth-inclusive mechanism to improve the FNSSA agenda for Africa and Europe Joint Actions?
 - a. In what ways do you believe the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy could support the updating of the FNSSA Roadmap?

- b. What capacity-building measures would you suggest, especially in the context of the CEA-FIRST?
- c. What other possibilities exist for including gender and youth in CEA-FIRST activities?

Thank you

FR: ENQUÊTE AUPRÈS DES PARTENAIRES SUR L'ÉLABORATION DE LA STRATÉGIE ET DU PLAN D'ACTION DU CEA-FIRST EN MATIÈRE DE GENRE ET DE JEUNESSE

DRAFT

Introduction

L'Union européenne a financé le Consortium Europe-Afrique sur la recherche et l'innovation pour la transformation des systèmes alimentaires (CEA-FIRST) dans le but principal d'initier un processus de changement concernant le fonctionnement de l'IRC, d'orienter sa direction et de faciliter l'établissement des structures et des services de l'IRC. La première composante du programme CEA-FIRST se concentre sur les actions préliminaires (pour la gestion de projet, les modalités d'organisation et de mise en œuvre, la structure ainsi que les canaux de communication et de plaidoyer, les processus, stratégies et lignes directrices de gouvernance de l'IRC) nécessaires à une mise en œuvre efficace l'IRC, qui sera coordonnée dans toutes les composantes du programme

L'un des résultats significatifs de la première composante de CEA-FIRST est l'élaboration d'une stratégie et d'un plan d'action conjoints concernant le genre et la jeunesse. Cette stratégie a pour objectif de s'assurer que le projet CEA-FIRST et les initiatives de l'IRC intègrent les perspectives des jeunes et du genre, avec l'engagement des parties prenantes concernées. Dans sa formulation, la stratégie sur le genre et la jeunesse de CEA-FIRST s'appuiera sur les approches existantes des organisations impliquées dans la mise en œuvre du projet, et proposer des approches et activités innovantes qui aideront à améliorer et à renforcer la prise en compte des perspectives genre et jeunesse dans les systèmes alimentaires. L'enquête genre et jeunesse met en évidence la nécessité de garantir que les actions conjointes UA-UE en matière de recherche et d'innovation prennent en compte les dimensions de genre et de jeunesse.

Je vous prie de bien vouloir consacrer un moment à répondre au questionnaire ci-dessous, en tenant compte de votre rôle essentiel au sein de votre institution et de votre expérience dans le domaine de l'AR4D.

Questions d'enquête concernant l'analyse structurelle

1. Selon vous, dans quelle mesure la stratégie actuelle de votre institution est-elle en adéquation avec l'objectif d'atteindre l'égalité des sexes ainsi que l'autonomisation des femmes et des jeunes dans le domaine de la recherche agricole et des innovations liées à la transition du système alimentaire?

- a. Dans votre organisation, la conception des projets et programmes prend-elle en considération et intègre-t-elle les dimensions sensibles au genre et aux jeunes?
- b. Y a-t-il des mesures ou des approches informelles inclusives en matière de genre (non documentées) que vous mettez en œuvre pour favoriser la transformation du genre?
- c. Les dimensions genre et jeunes sont-elles prises en compte dans le PTBA, la planification et les allocations budgétaires ? ? les ressources (personnel, finances) sont-elles allouées pour favoriser l'inclusion des femmes et des jeunes dans les projets et programmes de votre organisations?
- d. Votre organisation a-t-elle une ou un expert genre dédié, ou un point focal genre chargé de la la mise en œuvre de la stratégie Genre et jeunesse?
- e. Quelles sont les allocations budgétaires dédiées à la promotion ou au renforcement de l'inclusion des sexes et des jeunes au sein de votre organisation?

Analyse du personnel

2. Pouvez-vous fournir des exemples de collaborations fructueuses entre votre institution et des organisations régionales ou internationales similaires, illustrant une expérience significative dans le soutien à la recherche et à l'innovation agricoles, en tenant compte des enjeux de genre et de la jeunesse?
 - a. L'approche genre et inclusion sociale est-elle intégrée dans le système d'information et de gestion de connaissances (y compris la base de données et les mécanismes de reporting) ? Merci de partager tout modèle de reporting.
 - b. Disposez-vous de connaissances ou de supports de communication visant à promouvoir l'approche genre et inclusion sociale au sein de vos organisations ? Par exemple, la politique de lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre , l'exploitation du travail des enfants, le harcèlement au travail.
 - c. Quels types de mécanismes de règlement des griefs du personnel concernant les questions d'inégalité des sexes et d'exclusion sociale l'organisation met-elle en place ? Et comment sont-ils gérés?

Analyse des résultats.

3. Quelles méthodologies et approches votre institution utilise-t-elle pour renforcer les capacités des chercheurs en tenant compte des questions de genre et de jeunesse à tous les niveaux, et comment ces méthodes peuvent-elles être adaptées pour répondre aux besoins spécifiques du projet CEA-FIRST?
 - a. Y a-t-il des indicateurs spécifiques mesurant les extrants/résultats intégrant les dimensions genre et jeunes que vous utilisez ou que vous souhaiteriez proposer?
 - b. Collectez-vous des données ou des informations désagrégées par sexe/et par catégorie d'âge?
 - c. Quelles méthodes utilisez -vous pour collecter les données différenciées par sexe et par catégorie d'âge, et comment exploitez-vous ces informations?

Analyse de partenariat

4. Dans le cadre d'un partenariat potentiel, quels domaines clés, selon votre institution, seraient les plus avantageux pour une collaboration visant à promouvoir un secteur de recherche et d'innovations agricoles sensible au genre et à la jeunesse?

- a. Quelles actions pertinentes devraient être intégrées dans la stratégie et le plan d'action du CEA-FIRST concernant le genre et la jeunesse?
- b. Quels partenaires spécifiques envisagez-vous de mobiliser pour promouvoir un secteur de recherche et innovations agricoles sensible au genre et à la jeunesse (énumérez les organisations qui selon vous seraient de bons partenaires pour la mise en œuvre de la stratégie sur le genre et la jeunesse de CEA-FIRST)? Comment peuvent-ils contribuer à atteindre les objectifs d'une transition du système alimentaire prenant en compte les enjeux de genre et de jeunesse?
- c. En tant que partenaire et acteur clé, comment participerez-vous à la promotion de l'inclusion des dimensions genres et des jeunes dans la recherche et l'innovation agricoles?

Analyse de l'innovation AU-UE

5. Pour établir une synergie entre les programmes et initiatives de développement du secteur de la recherche et des innovations agricoles, il est crucial de disposer d'une infrastructure de coordination ainsi que de mécanismes de gestion des connaissances qui prennent en considération les enjeux de genre et de jeunesse. Quels mécanismes suggérez-vous pour optimiser le programme FNSSA en faveur des actions conjointes entre l'Afrique et l'Europe?
 - a. Comment envisagez-vous que la stratégie Genre et Jeunesse du CEA-FIRST puisse contribuer à la révision de la feuille de route de la FNSSA ?
 - b. Quelles actions de renforcement des capacités des acteurs recommanderiez-vous, pour faciliter la prise en compte systématique des dimensions genre et jeunesse dans la mise en œuvre du CEA-FIRST?
 - c. Quelles autres options existent pour intégrer le genre et la jeunesse dans les activités du CEA-FIRST ?

Merci

Annex 5: Financial Instruments

Based on the interviews, below is a summary of suggested strategies for funding gender- and youth-focused activities within CEA-FIRST. Examples of proposed funding mechanisms and cost systems are also discussed in this section.

Suggested Strategies for Funding Gender- and Youth-Focused Activities

1. Establishing a Seed Fund for Youth and Gender Initiatives:

There is a call for a dedicated seed fund focused specifically on youth and gender inclusion in agriculture and related sectors. This fund should ideally be managed by youth-led organizations, such as YPARD, to ensure that it directly addresses the needs of young people and gender-related goals.

2. Mapping Foundation-Based Funding Networks:

To access a broader array of resources, it was suggested to map out foundations that provide funding specifically for societal impact, gender, and youth-related initiatives. This could include European and African foundations, such as the Corner Foundation in Finland, which supports societal projects. Understanding the landscape of foundations could open up new sources of funding.

3. Leveraging International Philanthropic Collaborations:

International foundations and philanthropists, including the EU, UKRI, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Warren Buffett Foundation, are seen as potential funding sources. By establishing effective collaborations with these entities, CEA-FIRST could potentially access more funds for gender- and youth-specific projects.

4. Public and Private Sector Investment:

Encouraging both private sector and public sector investment is highlighted as crucial. Specifically, fostering private sector involvement could attract funding by highlighting how youth- and gender-focused innovations benefit the private sector (e.g. developing apps or promoting newer technologies).

Advocates also suggest implementing policies that require the private sector to contribute to youth-focused initiatives, following models that certain countries use to fund specific programs.

5. Improving Public Spending Accountability:

Ensuring that public funds allocated to youth development are spent efficiently is essential. Representatives suggest implementing more transparent and deliberate policies to track the impact of public funds on youth programs, rather than allowing funds to be absorbed by administrative costs.

6. Including Civil Society in Funding Efforts:

Collaboration with civil society organizations alongside the private sector is recommended to foster more inclusive gender and youth programs. This approach could create a more robust support system that involves both community and corporate interests.

7. Setting Up Cost Projects and Consortiums for Capacity Building:

Creating cost-sharing projects like those within the European funding schemes could support gender and youth capacity building, particularly in training and skill development. An example mentioned is the PRIMA program (focused on food and water management in the Mediterranean), which could serve as a model for collaborative, multi-party funding.

By implementing these funding strategies and leveraging suggested funding mechanisms, CEA-FIRST could enhance its capacity to support gender- and youth-focused initiatives.

Annex 6. Support of Institutions to the FNSSA Roadmap

Support to the FNSSA Roadmap Update

This section presents the summary of the support provided by participating organizations for updating the FNSSA (Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture) Roadmap. It also discusses suggestions on how the Gender and Youth working group of CEA-FIRST could support the FNSSA Roadmap update.

Current support and best practices for the FNSSA Roadmap Update provided by member institutions

1. Institutional Memory and Historical Involvement

Organizations such as the University of Helsinki (UH) have a longstanding role, especially through their historical involvement in AU-EU partnerships since 2008. This institutional memory helps provide continuity and context to the FNSSA Roadmap, which has been evolving since 2015. UH and other institutions contribute by providing background materials, documents, and insights from previous projects, such as those from the Renia and ERA Africa initiatives, which laid the groundwork for FNSSA's development.

2. Technical and Administrative Support

Organizations contribute directly to specific tasks within the FNSSA update process, such as Task 2.4, which focuses on roadmap-related consultations. UH, for instance, offers inputs and feedback on documents and participates in consultation processes. In collaboration with ACQ and other institutions, UH provides support services, including secretariat functions for working groups, and coordinates consultations for roadmap updates.

3. Research and Evidence Contributions

Organizations contribute to evidence-based updates by sharing research findings and providing input on emerging issues that need consideration in the roadmap, such as sustainable intensification and food systems transformation. While they might not focus explicitly on gender, these organizations acknowledge the increasing importance of youth in agriculture, often referred to as "the voice of the future."

4. Consultancy and Advisory Roles

An expert consultancy, funded by various organizations, reviewed the existing roadmap, identifying implementation outcomes and recommending updates. This review is a foundational element of the roadmap update. The CEA-FIRST project, being a critical partner, is anticipated to play a key role in drafting the new roadmap and continuing the advisory and consultancy process.

5. Bureau-Led Oversight

The HLPD Bureau plays a central role in steering the roadmap update, mandating working groups to lead the review and update process. This structure ensures a systematic approach to review and adapt, with input from multiple sectors, including those focused on gender and youth.

Prospects for the Gender and Youth Working Group's Role in FNSSA Roadmap Update

1. Inclusion in the Drafting Process:

The Gender and Youth working group should be directly involved in the roadmap update drafting process, either as members of the expert drafting group or in an advisory capacity. This involvement will help ensure that gender- and youth-specific needs are adequately addressed in the updated roadmap.

By participating in drafting, the group could ensure that the roadmap reflects youth and gender perspectives on issues like climate change adaptation, livelihood diversification, and sustainable agricultural practices.

2. Focus on Gender and Youth Statistics and Data Collection:

The Gender and Youth Working group could play a key role in gathering and analyzing gender- and youth-related data, conducting literature reviews, and synthesizing reports. This data-driven approach would provide the necessary evidence base for any recommendations on youth and gender inclusion in agricultural and food security strategies. Additionally, the Gender and Youth Working group could assess the impact of previous roadmap themes on youth and gender, providing critical feedback on what changes or improvements are needed.

3. Stakeholder Consultations for HLPD and FNSSA Roadmap Input:

The CEA-FIRST and IRC will provide input as requested by the HLPD. To include gender and youth perspectives, the gender and youth working group should conduct consultations with relevant stakeholders, including youth groups, women's organizations, and other civil society entities, to gather diverse perspectives. These consultations would additionally inform the roadmap on youth and gender-specific priorities in FNSSA. Engaging with smallholder farmers, especially women, would offer valuable insights into challenges and opportunities in agriculture for marginalized groups.

4. Advocacy for Youth and Gender as Core Topics:

The working group should advocate for youth and gender topics to be central to the roadmap update rather than treated as separate, isolated themes. This inclusion would emphasize the need to integrate youth and gender as core considerations across all FNSSA themes rather than as add-ons. By situating gender and youth at the “main table” of discussions, the group ensures these areas are not overlooked or sidelined but are integral to the broader FNSSA goals.

5. Addressing Structural Barriers and Knowledge Gaps:

Identifying and addressing barriers to youth and gender participation in agriculture, such as access to land, financial resources, and decision-making platforms, should be a priority. The group could highlight policies or initiatives that could help reduce these barriers within the roadmap’s scope. Additionally, by identifying knowledge gaps related to youth and gender within FNSSA, the working group can recommend specific research or pilot programs to address these gaps.

6. Promoting Inclusive, Sustainable Agricultural Practices:

The working group should, through communications and dissemination activities, promote a shift away from terms like “sustainable intensification” (which some experts find problematic) and towards more inclusive and adaptable agricultural practices like climate-smart or regenerative agriculture. These practices could be more beneficial to youth and women, particularly smallholder farmers in Africa. Advocating for livelihood diversification and resilience-building among youth and women in agriculture could help create sustainable livelihoods, which align well with FNSSA’s overarching goals.

Annex 7: Accountability Framework to Implement the Gender and Youth Strategy

CORAF gender adviser and YPARD director will serve as Focal persons to facilitate the implementation of CEA-FIRST gender and youth strategy. However, the implementation of the gender and youth strategy will be a shared responsibility. This entails explicit roles and responsibilities for the General Assembly of CEA-FIRST, the Steering Committee, the Program Implementation Unit (PIU), the Work Packages Coordinators, along with stakeholders involved in the implementation of CEA-FIRST.

General Assembly

- Approve the gender and youth strategy, and action plan
- Approve budget allocations for the implementation and evaluation of the gender and youth strategy and action plan.

The Steering Committee

- Commission actions for progress reports, and independent evaluations to assess the implementation of the gender and youth strategy, and action plan.
- Ensure quality control during the implementation of the gender and youth strategy, and action plan.
- Ensure budget allocation to implement the gender and youth strategy, and action plan

The CEA-FIRST Coordination Unit

- Appropriate the gender and youth strategy and create awareness among organizations and stakeholders involved in CEA-FIRST;
- Create enabling conditions for CEA-FIRST gender and youth focal persons to carry out their mission to facilitate the inclusion of gender and youth aspects during development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects;
- Ensure TORs of staff and consultants include gender considerations whenever appropriate;
- Ensure appropriate mechanisms are developed to foster a gender and youth -friendly workplace and to prevent and mitigate sexual harassment within the implementing organizations.
- Ensure imaging and branding around any CEA-FIRST projects are gender and youth responsive enough i.e., don't contribute to promote gender inequalities in ARD, but to close the gaps;
- Ensure the focal persons have adequate budget to carry out the work;

CEA-FIRST gender focal persons (CORAF & YPARD)

- Ensure concept notes and projects are gender and youth compatible;
- Provide the needed technical support to CEA-FIRST Work Packages Coordinators
- Conduct gender trainings for CEA-FIRST stakeholders
- Ensure production of gender and youth responsive annual work plans and annual reports on progress;
- Ensure TORs of staff and consultants include gender considerations whenever appropriate;
- Coordinate the overall implementation of CEA-FIRST gender and youth strategy; and monitor performance;
- Ensure imaging and branding around any projects are gender responsive enough i.e., don't contribute to promote gender inequalities in ARD, but to close the gaps;

Table 1: Grounded theory codes used for the analysis of interview transcripts and organizational documents

Theory	Code	Sub-code
Hart's Ladder of Youth Engagement	Youth Participation and decision making Roles	Youth initiated with collaborative leadership
		Youth-initiated and youth-led
		Adult-initiated with shared decision-making
		Youth consulted and informed
		Youth assigned roles with ongoing update
Commonalities between the individual strategies of the respective CEA-FIRST	Inclusive Communication Strategies	Recommended Improvement on Inclusive Communication
		Promotion of gender-based communication
		Promoting cultural sensitivity and communication

Participating Institutions	Research and policy integration for gender and youth inclusion	Recommendation to improve research and policy integration for gender and youth inclusion
		Establishing liaison structures for Gender integration in R&D programs
		Research and Policy programs
	Gender Equality and Empowerment	Recommendations on Gender Equality and Empowerment
		Building Resilience for women and youth
		Promoting Gender-responsive Leadership
		Anti-discrimination policies
		Leadership empowerment
		Workforce equality

Annex 8: Survey Key Findings and Observations

While the gender and youth strategies from the CEA-FIRST implementing institutions may not capture all the detailed discussions and considerations of a particular context or thematic issue regarding food systems transition, they highlight the key priorities and areas of focus for the institutions. As such, the

reviewed strategies and action plans point to significant trends in how gender considerations are integrated across the various institutions and the degree to which the 17 strategic plans are implemented.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis of the 17 reviewed documents shows that:

- Out of the 17 strategies reviewed, only one contains a gendered reference to climate change and mitigation measures.
- Over 90% of the strategy documents make direct reference to sociocultural factors and capacity strengthening in gender integration. However, only 23% of the strategy documents focus on individuals, while the rest focus on systemic and structural approaches.
- Only three (3) strategy documents (17%) include some form of broad references supporting and promoting women and youth's participation in research and innovation and food systems transition.
- Seventy-six percent (76%) of the documents reviewed include monitoring and evaluation measures. However, only seventeen percent (17%) make reference to promoting sex disaggregation data.
- Twenty-three percent (23%) of the strategy documents reviewed highlight the importance of empowering young men and women in leadership and the ongoing need to consult with women/youth innovators.
- Only three (3) out of seventeen (17) strategy documents highlighted resource allocation as a key priority when implementing the strategies.

Thematic Analysis: Commonalities and Gaps

Some overall observations can be drawn from the desk review:

- **Common Themes:** Many institutions with a national scope focus on workforce equality, leadership empowerment, and anti-discrimination policies. Institutions with an international scope focus on promoting gender-responsive leadership, research policies and programs, and building resilience for women and youth. However, there is a shared commitment to creating inclusive environments and promoting equal opportunities.
- **Unique Approaches:** Some institutions have innovative programs, such as promoting cultural sensitivity and gender-based communication and establishing liaison structures for gender integration in R&D programs. These unique strategies could provide valuable insights for the joint strategy.
- **Identified Gaps:** Despite the commonalities, there are notable gaps, particularly in private sector engagement, promoting investments for gender-responsive approaches, and improving protection from and resilience to the impacts of pandemics and political instability. Additionally, critical observations made include
 - ✓ The need for an ideal purposive ratio of male to female in the discourse on gender inclusivity, especially with programs and projects targeting women and youth empowerment?
 - ✓ There is a need to identify ongoing initiatives or existing opportunities for R&I to facilitate collaboration and joint actions.
 - ✓ There is a need to examine best practices and success cases that lead to effective integration of youth and gender in R&I.

- ✓ There is need for intentionality in addressing structural gender gaps that influence the three components of food systems – value chains, the food environments and consumer behavior – and their outcomes.
- Addressing these gaps will be crucial for a comprehensive joint strategy, while contributing to an inclusive and equitable food system in all 4-dimensions: individual, systemic, formal, and informal.

The strategic documents provided by the seventeen institutions offer a valuable foundation for developing a joint CEA-FIRST/IRC Gender and Youth strategy. While a direct comparative analysis was not possible due to the diverse nature of the institutions, the thematic analysis highlighted significant areas of overlap and gaps that need to be addressed. The insights gained from this analysis were discussed in a consultation workshop with the gender focal persons from the CEA-FIRST implementing institutions. The feedback and reflections are highlighted in the next section as they guide the development of a joint strategy that leverages the strengths of each institution while addressing identified gaps.

Gaps in Youth and Gender Inclusion

Based on the literature review, analysis of member institution Gender and Youth Strategies, Consultations and Interviews, clear trends emerge as gaps for gender and youth inclusion. These have been grouped below with some corresponding quotes from the interviews.

To begin, the informant interviews revealed several challenges to meaningful youth and female participation in decision-making roles within the participating organizations and institutions, which can be identified in the steps of Hart's youth engagement ladder:

1. **Token Representation:** There is an issue with youth often being included in decision-making bodies as a symbolic gesture rather than as equal contributors. The comments from interviewees about not making youth "a decor" or "the main course of a meal" emphasizes the need for genuine inclusion rather than superficial representation. Youth representatives are frequently present at decision-making fora, but they may not always have an equal voice or significant influence in these roles. This is because youth participation is usually symbolic with a focus on metric rather than inclusion. This can be identified in the steps of Hart's youth engagement ladder.

The respondents point out that while there are programs to train young people (e.g., in research or policy), the outcomes of these programs are not always tangible or visible. The informants stress the importance of seeing measurable outputs from training initiatives, suggesting that too often, youth are engaged in training without a clear pathway for them to apply what they've learned in meaningful ways.

"We shouldn't have conferences with the same people saying the same things, and then a session on youth inclusion where we say, 'Okay, we're doing it.' Youth need to have equal footing, not just be a decoration." -Key Informant Interview

Token representation can be understood with Hart's ladder of participation as level "3. Tokenism" and is classified by Hart as the highest level of non-participation.

2. **Lack of Equal Decision-making Power:** This also resonates with discussions on the steps of Hart's youth engagement ladder. There is a call for youth and women to have equal footing in decision-making power with other stakeholders in decision-making processes. This highlights a common challenge where youth and women may be present but are not treated as full, equal partners in discussions and decisions, limiting their ability to make impactful contributions. A lack of equal opportunities to be equal partners in the decision making can be understood with Hart's ladder of participation as level "5. Consulted and informed" and is classified by Hart as "Participation" but with room for improvement to levels 6, 7 and 8 of the ladder. In higher levels, youth are able to 6. have a part in decision making and 7. even implement and 8. initiate projects.

"Sometimes, we still fall into old habits and just talk to men. We try to be equal-minded, but there's still a tendency to view men as the default leaders." -Key Informant Interview

3. Structural Barriers and Lack of Explicit Inclusion in Program Design:

Many programs were not initially designed with explicit considerations for gender and youth inclusion, making it challenging to allocate budgets or justify such inclusion later. The structure of calls for participation and funding requests rarely emphasizes these demographic factors as essential.

"Often these issues tend to get overlooked if they are not necessitated. In an ideal society, this wouldn't need to be pushed, but we don't live in an ideal society." -Key Informant Interview

4. Hierarchical Nature of Academia:

The academic field is highly hierarchical, with fewer women and youth in higher positions. Although some diversity exists at entry levels (e.g., PhD candidates), positions of power (ie: tenured professorships, curriculum boards, department chairs, and heads of institute) are predominantly dominated by more senior males, especially in higher echelons and in certain disciplines like the natural sciences. This structure limits the advancement opportunities for youth and women in academia.

"Just the representation doesn't mean full inclusion... Young people often don't get to lead or influence decisions, even when they are present in research groups or committees." -Key Informant Interview

5. Bias in Academic Mobility:

Academic mobility programs often favor the movement of scholars from Europe to the AU, while barriers, including a lack of programs for AU-AU (ie: south-south) and AU-EU (ie: south-north) mobility, hinder scholars from the global south from moving to Europe. This unequal mobility restricts knowledge exchange and limits exposure to diverse perspectives from these scholars in European institutions.

"It's still difficult... the academic mobility of young scholars should work both ways. Often, European scholars come to the Global South to learn and do things, but it doesn't work as easily the other way around." -Key Informant Interview

6. Emphasis on Metrics Over Inclusion:

Academia's focus on publications, rankings, and citation counts drives institutional priorities, which may overshadow the importance of inclusivity. Efforts to achieve gender and youth representation often clash with academia's productivity-driven culture, making inclusivity seem secondary or less relevant to institutional success measured on metrics alone.

"It's frustrating to see how funding and reporting requirements focus more on the number of participants or gender balance in numbers, but not on whether their voices are actually shaping the outcomes." -Key Informant Interview

7. Blind Spots in Youth Inclusion:

While gender representation is frequently monitored (e.g., through student enrollment and hiring data), youth inclusion lacks similar scrutiny, particularly in universities, which tend to focus youth-engagement on students. This gap in monitoring youth-specific data may contribute to limited support structures tailored to young researchers or students.

8. Institutional Resistance to Inclusion:

There is substantial institutional resistance to adding gender and youth considerations into research protocols. Some scientists are unaware of how gender and youth perspectives could enhance their work, indicating a need for targeted awareness and training to demonstrate the value of these components in relevant research areas. According to the interviews established institutional resistance to inclusion is rooted in longstanding cultural norms, structural inefficiencies, and a lack of genuine commitment.

"There are cultural obstacles. There are norms and traditions that don't enable women to fully adhere to, for example, trainings. There are some cultures that don't allow women to attend certain trainings, if they are other male participants in the room, or if there is a male trainer delivering the training, for example." -Key Informant Interview

Workforce equality in relation to maternity/paternity leave as well as equal remuneration comes into play through government policies which institutions have little control over; however, methods of addressing these concerns were identified as a potential area of work for the CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Working Group.

9. Lack of Tailored Training and Capacity Building:

Many institutions lack targeted training programs to help researchers integrate gender and youth perspectives into their work meaningfully. Webinars, seminars, and other educational tools could be essential for helping scientists understand how these elements might be relevant to different research topics.

"But the issue with the barrier, was that the youth couldn't afford to practicalize it, to use it as their job, because it was capital intensive. So it's a major barrier for the youth to engage, even in the technologies that the scientists have developed to use it to address the youth unemployment problem." -Key Informant Interview

10. Funding and Resource Allocation:

Disparities in resource allocation affect youth inclusion, especially for early-career researchers. PhD students on grants or scholarships often lack benefits like health care access, which salaried positions offer, creating inequality in support. Additionally, postdoctoral opportunities and resources for international mobility favor European scholars over those from the global south, restricting reciprocal exchange.

Lack of Dedicated Gender- and Youth-Responsive Budgets

Some projects lack specific budgets allocated for gender and youth inclusion, which limits the ability to develop targeted strategies. Without dedicated funding for these aspects, initiatives that aim to integrate gender and youth considerations struggle to secure resources, impeding their effective implementation. Funding agencies are encouraged to proactively allocate budgets for these components to enhance the sustainability of projects.

"If inclusion is not necessitated, these issues tend to get overlooked. Funding instruments need to require a gender equality plan or explicit provisions for youth inclusion." -Key Informant Interview

Dependency on External Funding and Unstable Financial Support

Projects that previously supported youth engagement and gender-responsive programming have slowed down or been discontinued due to reduced or inconsistent funding. This dependency on external financial support means that any reduction in funding limits the continuity of gender-sensitive programs, impacting long-term outcomes.

Financial Constraints and Limited Capacity

Many organizations, particularly smaller ones, face financial limitations that prevent them from investing sufficiently in gender and youth-responsive initiatives. Representatives indicate that while these organizations are efficient and impactful, they need additional resources to expand their capacity to include gender and youth considerations effectively. Limited budgets restrict these organizations from taking on additional initiatives that could drive more inclusive programming.

Collaboration as a Workaround to Funding Shortfalls

To address financial challenges, some organizations have resorted to collaboration with other institutions to sustain their programs. While collaboration can be beneficial, it may not fully compensate for the absence of targeted funding for gender and youth inclusion. This reliance on partnerships reflects a workaround rather than a sustainable solution, as collaborative projects are often dependent on each partner's funding priorities and constraints.

Challenges in Engaging the Private Sector

In some countries, regulatory or bureaucratic barriers prevent organizations from accessing private sector funding. Engaging the private sector could help address funding gaps, as private sector involvement might bring additional resources and drive inclusive practices. However, limitations in accessing private funds restrict the potential for incorporating gender and youth components in projects.

"Most young people don't have the capital means to do things we want them to do. We want them to be part and parcel of development and the private sector, but they don't have access to commodities, capital, or enabling policies." -Key Informant Interview

The interviews also hinted that organizational culture—including lack of innovation, and resistance to inclusion—might contribute to difficulties in fostering private sector partnerships.

"The culture in many organizations focuses on traditional structures and hierarchies, and there's little room for innovative approaches that attract private sector collaboration." -Key Informant Interview

Uncertain Sustainability of Gender-Responsive and Youth-Inclusive Programs

Some representatives of the participating organisations of the CEA-FIRST Project in the interview question the long-term sustainability of projects that do not include dedicated gender and youth considerations. Without these elements, programs risk losing relevance or effectiveness over time. This concern underscores the need for funding agencies to recognize the importance of gender and youth inclusion as essential for sustainable development rather than optional or secondary aspects of project design.

In summary, the main investment-related gaps in gender and youth-responsive approaches are a lack of dedicated funding, dependency on unstable external funding, financial constraints within smaller organizations, reliance on collaboration as a temporary solution, difficulty accessing private sector funding, and concerns over the sustainability of programs without targeted inclusivity measures. Addressing these gaps requires more proactive investment by funding agencies and possibly structural changes to facilitate private sector involvement.

These gaps highlight that while awareness of gender and youth inclusion issues is growing, structural, cultural, and resource-based obstacles continue to hinder meaningful progress.

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Annex 9: Justification and Recommendation for a Gender- Responsive Results Framework

A critical review of the draft CEA-FIRST Gender and Youth Strategy and Action Plan revealed the absence of a Result Framework, a key requirement in the development of every strategic document. The absence of a comprehensive gender disaggregated Result Framework (RF) in CEA-FIRST M&E system fails to adequately integrate and track results of implementation performance of key gender/youth policies and strategic actions or interventions under CEA-FIRST.

The following are some key reasons for the inclusion of a RF in the CEA-FIRST Gender and youth strategy to ensure CEA-FIRST is able to implement, track gender disaggregated results and report satisfactorily on gender and youth responsive action to all stakeholder. The issues are as follows;

- The nonexistence of a RF that represents the underlying logic which explains how the development objective of a CEA-FIRST is to be achieved comprising the Programme's Development Objectives (PDO) with set of gender and youth sensitive/responsive indicators to measure outcomes that are linked to the project development objective and a set of immediate results to track progress toward achieving the expected results must seriously be considered.
- The need for a clear statement of the intent with emphasis on CEA-FIRST's long-term development outcome the intervention aims to achieve and must be clearly indicated under the Programme's Overall PDO.
- The absence of a Gender/youth sensitive and responsive measurable outcome indicators or intermediate results per each of the programme's Components, which is directly linked to the PDO with clearly defined targets, unit of measure and baselines that reflect progress towards the PDO must be developed. Each of these intermediate results must be linked to specific targets with cumulative target values for each indicator. Intermediate results are drawn from clearly stated outcomes resulting from the use of outputs that seek to measure the immediate Gender/youth responsive deliverables or actions produced by the CEA-FIRST and must be given serious consideration in a gender/youth responsive RF. This would enable the CEA-FIRST track implementation performance of its interventions each year as well as the cumulative performance of gender and youth related outcomes or intermediate results over the programme's lifespan in the RF.
- Furthermore, the gender sensitive RF will enable the programme come up with the frequency of collecting Gender/youth sensitive and responsive disaggregated data with clearly stated sources of data, the methodology for collecting each gender disaggregated data and institution (s) responsible for collecting specific gender and youth disaggregated data under the programme. The need to focus on specific and right processes and procedures for capturing Gender/youth responsive and sensitive information contributes a great deal to the development of reliable gender and youth sensitive RF using mixed methods of generating data (quantitative and qualitative) data collection processes and procedures must be adequately considered.
- To be able to define the reason for or essence of each indicator, provision should be made in the RF for a brief but in-depth description of each indicator to inform key stakeholders about the importance or otherwise of each indicator.
- The development of a gender/youth sensitive and responsive RF requires a number of steps including a description and development of Theory of Change (TOC) and the operationalization of the TOC through a logical framework, incorporating gender/youth sensitive and responsive indicators into the framework. Apart from indicators that are sex disaggregated specific indicators, there are a numbers of indicators that are gender/youth-responsive for monitoring and evaluation purposes. While this can draw on conventional programme evaluation tools, the need to focus on the right processes and procedures to capture sensitive information means that greater reliance will usually be placed on mixed methods and qualitative data e.g. It is important to recognize that gender differences and processes are often based on social traditions and customs that may be invisible to many agencies or not reported, particularly when they touch on sensitive areas. The need for the introduction of gender/youth sensitive and responsive RF cannot be overemphasized.

- Finally, integrating gender and youth dimensions into Gender-sensitive M&E in a results-based framework will help reveal the extent to which a CEA-FIRST interventions have achieved improved participation, decision making and overall social and economic well-being of women, youth and men. Again, it will help improve project performance during implementation, facilitates midterm adjustments, and helps to derive lessons for future project.

Annex 10: Good Practices of Gender and Youth Inclusion

Inclusion in Decision-Making

1. Representation in Decision-Making Bodies:

Organizations ensure that youth have a presence on various decision-making boards within institutional structures. For example, there are youth or student representatives on departmental and faculty boards, which enables them to participate in different levels of institutional decision-making. Student unions and fraternities within universities also provide platforms for youth to organize and have a voice in institutional governance.

2. Programs with Mentorship and Skill-Building Opportunities:

The **Arua FSNet** (a program managed by a consortium involving Vanapan and the University of Pretoria) exemplifies an initiative that fosters youth involvement through active mentorship and skill-building. In this program, early-career researchers were paired with mentors, including experienced professors, to guide them in research and policy.

The program included hands-on training in stakeholder engagement and policy capacity, ensuring that young researchers were not only doing research but also learning to communicate and apply their findings in practical, policy-relevant ways.

3. Inclusive Program Management and Financial Oversight Training:

Young staff in certain organizations are provided with the opportunity to run their own programs, which includes handling budgeting and procurement responsibilities. This not only involves youth in operational decision-making but also trains them in key administrative and financial skills that are essential for future leadership roles.

Young people are also included in proposal writing and are given opportunities to work closely with senior colleagues who review and provide feedback on their work. This creates an inclusive environment where youth gain experience in crafting and managing projects from the ground up.

Inclusion through Equality and Empowerment

Based on the excerpts from informant interviews, participating organizations focus on strategies that foster youth and gender inclusion through gender equality and empowerment. These strategies cover multiple aspects, including resilience-building, leadership promotion, anti-discrimination, and workforce equality. Below is an organized outline of these strategies, along with the examples provided by the informants.

1. Building Resilience for Women and Youth

Participating organizations actively work to build resilience by ensuring women and youth have opportunities to participate in key initiatives and conferences. Some examples include:

- **Scholarships and Conference Participation:** One organization sponsors youth and young girls to attend international conferences, such as the Tropical Summit in Lisbon, to engage with global issues. The youth's roles, activities, or contributions during these conferences, could likely reflect broader impacts such as representation, learning, or advocacy.
- **Youth-Focused Research and Training:** Capacity-building workshops are held to train youth and gender-focused researchers in understanding how gender and youth components can be integrated into research protocols, even in fields where these issues are not explicitly gender or youth focused (e.g., olive tree research).

2. Promoting Gender-Responsive Leadership

Gender-responsive leadership is critical for inclusion in decision-making processes and empowering women and youth. This is reflected in the following initiatives:

- **Policy Dialogs with Gender and Youth Components:** Through policy dialogs and briefs, organizations ensure that gender and youth are integral parts of discussions, even in technical or niche areas like biotechnology.
- **Inclusion of Youth in Policy Creation:** Programs aim to involve youth in the development of policies that affect them. For example, young people are asked to demonstrate what policies they would enact if they were policymakers.

3. Anti-Discrimination Policies

Anti-discrimination measures are key to ensuring that women and youth are not marginalized in decision-making spaces:

- **Equal Representation in Delegations:** One organization stresses equal participation of men and women in delegations to conferences, ensuring that youth inclusion is prioritized over gender in many contexts.
- **Mainstreaming gender and youth vs. isolating gender and youth** In addressing challenges related to institutional resistance, organizations advocate for integrating youth and gender into research and policy processes from the beginning of the program design, rather than as stand-alone programs focus on gender and/or youth in addition during program implementation

4. Leadership Empowerment

Empowering women and youth to take leadership roles in shaping policies is a primary goal for the organizations involved:

- **Youth Leadership in Advocacy:** An example is the mentorship of youth to take leadership in advocating for policies that reflect their needs, emphasizing the importance of allowing youth to voice their concerns in consultations, written policy briefs, and leading policy discussions.
- **Regional Engagement with Youth:** Regional policy convenings and competitions are organized to empower young people to propose solutions for the future, where young people are encouraged to express their ideas for sustainable youth-focused policies.

5. Workforce Equality

Organizations are committed to promoting workforce equality by ensuring that both men and women, as well as youth, have equal opportunities in the workforce:

- **Inclusive Conferences and Competitions:** Conferences and student challenges are held, providing youth the chance to engage in policy-making and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Youth and Gender Engagement in Research Projects: For research projects funded by donors like the EU, there is a strong focus on ensuring youth involvement and gender inclusion, emphasizing that future leadership and sustainability in research depend on including youth from the onset.

Annex 11: Glossary

- **Gender:** refers to the socially determined differences between men and women, such as roles, attitudes, behaviour, and values. Gender characteristics are assigned to men and women during their childhood and are expected to be followed. For example, in some societies, women are considered dependent on men; in other societies, women are decision-makers, or men and women equally make decisions. Gender characteristics vary across cultures and time. Thus, they are amenable to change.
- **Gender Gap:** Gender Gap is the difference in the scores between men and women on attitudes, interest, behaviour, knowledge and perspectives on particular issues.
- **Discrimination:** It refers to the biases, prejudices and intolerance that people suffer from on account of their sex, race, social status, religion, health condition or related factors.
- **Gender equality:** The equal access to rights, resources and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys, and gender-diverse people. Equality refers to the state of being equal. However, equality of opportunity by itself does not guarantee equal outcomes.
- **Gender equity:** Fairness, impartiality and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men, girls and boys, and gender-diverse people. Gender equity explicitly recognizes and actively promotes measures to address historical and social disadvantages to all groups. Gender equity is needed to achieve gender equality.
- **Gender fade:** The inability to advance gender equality and inclusion outcomes over the life of a project or program. That is, considerations related to gender feature more in the project rationale and design than in its implementation and outcomes.
- **Gender Inequality:** The ways in which males and females are treated differently in relation to opportunities and responsibilities in the society.
- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social spheres so that inequality is not perpetuated.
- **Gender-sensitive research:** Research that, in its rationale, design, and methodology, adequately considers gender differences and gender power dynamics, but does not follow this through to the analysis and action needed to address gender inequalities.
- **Gender-responsive research:** Research that thoroughly considers gender differences and gender power dynamics in its rationale, design, and methodology, and takes preliminary steps to address gender inequalities through analysis and action. The project successfully integrates a gender lens in its implementation, analysis, communication, and knowledge sharing strategies, and engages in actions to address the symptoms of gender inequality. However, gender-responsive projects stop short of implementing strategies or interventions to tackle the root causes of gender inequalities and underlying gender power imbalances, and are unlikely to impact long-term, structural changes to gender norms and relations.
- **Gender-transformative research:** Research that examines, questions, analyzes, and builds an evidence base to address the underlying causes of gender inequalities (not just the symptoms) and contribute to long-term, structural changes for more equitable, fair, and inclusive systems. Gender-transformative research typically seeks to address inequalities by strengthening individual and collective agency, transforming formal and informal institutions and policies and rebalancing gender power relations at various levels (e.g. community, household, national).
- **Gender Awareness:** Gender awareness is an understanding that there are socially determined differences between women and men based on learned behaviour, which affect their ability to access and control resources. This awareness needs to be applied through gender analysis into projects, programmes and policies.
- **Gender Balance:** the attempt and conscious effort made to ensure equality in the representation of women and girls relative to men and boys. It often ends up being a more equitable representation than an equal representation of the group of people described above.

- **Gender Bias:** to promote circumstances that permits and supports the status of men as above the status of women in work, family, and beliefs. Gender bias gives a predisposition to men over women based primarily on social teachings about women or men.
- **Gender Blind:** Having no recognition as an essential determinant of the life choices available to people in society.
- **Gender and Development (GAD):** is an approach that was developed in the 1980s to overcome the perceived weaknesses of the Women in Development (WID) approach. Rather than focusing exclusively on women, this approach is concerned with relations between women and men, particularly inequality in power-sharing and decision-making. GAD tries to address profound causes of gender inequality through integrating gender in the policy-making process in.
- **Empowerment:** it is the process of increased opportunity for women and men to control their lives. Empowerment of women or men includes increasing their power to make decisions, to have their voices heard, to put things on the agenda, to negotiate and to challenge outmoded customs.
- **Equality and Affirmative Principle:** the revised strategy is based on the principle of the equality of rights, opportunities and benefits between women and men in all the domains of the political, social, economic and cultural life. This is an ultimate goal which will eventually be reached.
- **Equity Principle:** the revised strategy is based on the recognition and respect of all human rights including the fact that the equity between women and men must lead to actions of improvement of the gender status at all levels, with observance of the cultural diversity that characterizes the Ghanaian society. It is also based on the principle of fairness, access and respect of one another.
- **Gender power relations/dynamics:** The set of roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for women and men, girls and boys, and genderdiverse people. These roles can be the cause, consequence and mechanism of power relations. These power relations/dynamics are experienced from the intimate sphere of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making.
- **Gender roles:** Socially and culturally constructed expectations that dictate which behaviours, traits, activities, tasks and responsibilities are acceptable, appropriate or desirable for individuals based on their gender. Gender roles stem from gender norms and power relations. They interact with other identity factors, including sexual orientation, age, class, race, caste, ethnicity, citizenship status, migration status, religion and disability, and are shaped by geographical, social, economic and political contexts.
- **Gender-specific strategies:** Strategies for research/projects where the central research question and expected outcomes address gender.
- **Inclusion:** A process or approach in which diversity is leveraged and different forms of exclusion are addressed to create fair, healthy and high-performing individuals, groups, organizations or societies. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all and enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated and valued for who they are in addition to their participation in, and their contributions toward, individual, organizational and societal goals.
- **Gender-Neutral Policies:** These are policies that are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom, if ever, have the same effect on women as they do on men, even if at first sight they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Thus, policies which may appear to be ‘genderneutral’ are often ‘gender-blind’, and are biased in favour of males because they presuppose that those involved in and affected by the policy are males, with male needs and interests.
- **Gender-Sensitive Indicators:** an indicator is a statistical measurement that shows the change in a particular context over a given period of time. A gender-sensitive indicator is therefore a measurement of gender-related change over time. For example, a gender sensitive indicator could show the change in the number of women studying agriculture, relative to men and over a period of about a decade.
- **Gender-Specific Policies:** these policies take into account gender differentials, and target women or men specifically, but leave the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact. Lack

of Gender Awareness is the shortage of information and knowledge about gender issues and their impacts on experiences and development results of men and women, boys and girls.

- **Gender awareness:** Gender Awareness is consciousness and recognition by an institution and staff of the importance of gender and its effects on their objectives, plans and programs.

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