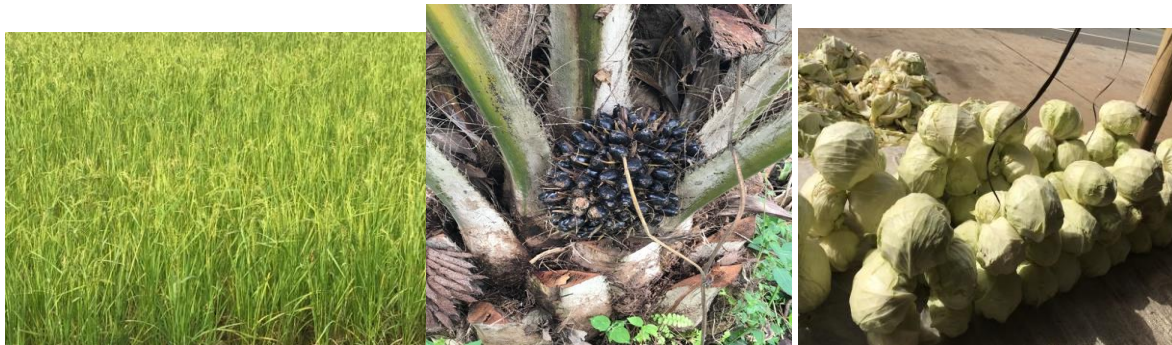




GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

**SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION &
AGRIBUSINESS REVITALIZATION PROJECT (STAR-P)**

GENDER ANALYSIS REPORT



2018

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DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS¹

Gender - Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes

Gender Awareness - Recognition that women and men perform different roles in society and therefore have different needs which must be recognized

Gender discrimination - A difference in treatment of people based entirely on their being male or female. This difference contributes to structural inequality in society

Gender inequality – Refers to the unequal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys in all sectors- political, social, legal and economic

Gender Equity - Recognizing that different approaches may be needed to produce equitable outcomes by taking account of and addressing the differences between and amongst the lives of women and men, boys and girls and the diversity of different groups of women/girls and men/boys

Gender mainstreaming – The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality

Gender sensitivity – Such policies or programmes recognize that within a society, actors are women and men, that they are constrained in different and often unequal ways and that they may consequently have differing and sometimes conflicting needs, interests and priorities.

Gender blind (gender neutral) – such research, analysis, policies, advocacy materials, project and programme design and implementation that do not explicitly recognize existing gender differences that concern both productive and reproductive roles of men and women.

Gender analysis - A tool for understanding underlying values, norms and belief expressed in the construction of gender identities and inequalities.

Women's empowerment – A process through which women and girls acquire knowledge, skills and willingness to critically analyse their situation and take appropriate action to change the status quo of women and other marginalized groups in society.

¹ Definitions from UN Women

ACRONYMS

CARI	Central Agricultural Research Institute
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GA	Gender Analysis
GoL	Government of Liberia
HAF	Harvard Analytical Framework
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MSME	Medium and Small Enterprises
NAP	National Gender Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PCN	Project Concept Note
PDO	Project Development Objective
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
STAR-P	Smallholder Agricultural Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project
SoW	Scope of Work
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)
ToR	Terms of Reference
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WBG	World Bank Group
WEA	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender equality and women's empowerment are key goals for all development projects for Government of Liberia (GoL). Not only has the GoL sought to identify and address key gaps in all sectors of society through its National Gender Policy (NAP), but, the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) for the Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Revitalization Project (STAR-P) that seeks to promote smallholder agriculture commercialization and improve access to markets is required to address gender gaps and constraints in all activities. The GoL has made great strides and enacted several laws and policies to address these gender gaps and constraints.

In the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) specifically, there is a gender strategy although outdated and a gender unit created to support gender mainstreaming, budgeting and identification of key gender-responsive indicators. Notwithstanding these commitments, the MoA continue to face challenges to reach gender equality in the agriculture sector. Agricultural productivity remains low for women farmers due to several factors, including cultural gender norms, lack of access to extension and agricultural services and finance, illiteracy. Women are most often subsistence farmers and their workloads in the farms are high than men but often men make financial decisions of the household.

These gender gaps present opportunities for STAR-P to design activities that reduce gender inequalities and increase women's empowerment. Therefore, Gender Analysis (GA) was commissioned to identify the key gender gaps and manifestations in the agriculture sector in Liberia. The study was also expected to map out existing gender realities across the rice, oil palm and horticulture value chains, specify causes of such inequalities and how they manifest in the productive lives of men and women, and analyze the gender dimensions of access and control of productive resources and development benefits.

The study also aimed to profile donor resources, current government programs and commitments on gender equality and women empowerment in the agriculture sector. The GA was meant to engender the project through updating the PAD and ensure that project benefits reach women, men and other vulnerable groups, and that women's needs, priorities, constraints, aspirations and capacities are recognized and addressed. It was also conducted to encourage the participation and equal voice of women in the project.

The GA study used qualitative research methodology for its flexibility in allowing thick descriptions of phenomena of this nature considering the complexity, sensitivity and relativity of analyzing gender issues that is wrought with diverse cultural meanings both at household and community levels. The methodology allowed for an in-depth investigation and analysis of this private, discreet and often secretive sphere of household decision making practices. The study used gender sensitive data collection tools such as: field observations, Key Informants (KI) interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) as well as literature review in three of the two STAR-P focused counties of Nimba, Margibi and Bomi.

The summary findings of gender issues, which continue to pose barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia in the agriculture sector as well as actions that can be undertaken to address them in the country.

1. Gender in agricultural value chains

The gender analysis of the three value chains rice, oil palm and horticulture revealed that, women continue to face a 'double burden' in the reproduction and production activities in the household and farms. The division of labour and gender roles in the farm is informed by the social contracts with distinctive roles of women and men but place more burden on women than men. Tradition, region and cultural beliefs continue to limit women's access, ownership and control of assets to enhance their agricultural productivity. Men are seen as decision makers in families and cultural norms suggest it is women's job to follow what men say.

Men continue to control decisions about how family incomes are spent, including income earned by women, although this is changing in more liberal communities visited. Access to agricultural credit, input and information are limited to both men and women but women are more limited services to enable them establish or expand their economic and agricultural businesses. Women especially lack knowledge of and access to new technologies including cell phones and improved agriculture practices (such as new seed varieties that are drought tolerant or conservation farming techniques).

Processing and value of crops continue to be male dominated in terms of ownership of processing enterprises, sourcing of raw materials as well as gender roles within the processing plants. Men have more access to employment within food processing plants; women take roles such as rice parboiling designated to women because of their gender. In the market women are more engaged than men especially in the local markets for horticulture and oil palm but where the markets are distant and involve much more money than men are involved.

The implication of increased burden on women is that they will have very little time to attend to other businesses, training and better markets. The domination and control of high value productive assets such as land by men implies that women are left vulnerable to respond and cope with agricultural commercialization. Access to loans from financial institutions that require collateral security will also become difficult for women when they do not have access to high value assets as collateral. Participation of women in the local markets implies that women realize less income because they market low value crops and have limited access to high value markets because of the distances involved and the cost of accessing the markets.

However, these implications present opportunity to SATR-P to address the gender gaps such as women's workload by sensitizing beneficiaries employ shared gender roles at farm and household level. Develop labour saving technologies that help unequal gender roles and reduce women's labour in agriculture e.g. planting, weeding, harvesting etc. and reduced significantly if men begin playing a greater role in crop production work. Sensitize and facilitate women to form or strengthen the existing VSLA groups and linkages to financial institutions and service providers to address limited access to credit. With greater financial security women would have increased access to both new technologies including cell phones.

Strengthen distribution channels of inputs and information using telephones. Support women to formalize land registration and have land titles as well as conduct community gender trainings that promote equitable access and control over resources and assets. Develop basic gender guidelines for processors to help address division labour in the processing business and support women SMEs with startup capital and business registration and development services

to engage in processing business. Strengthen market linkages between producer groups and agro-dealers, and buyers and support gender sensitive local market infrastructures to address gender gaps in the market.

2. Women's participation and decision making

Tradition and cultural beliefs continue to limit Liberian women, resulting in their inability to participate fully in all aspects of household, employment and community life. Low educational levels and difficulties in balancing the demands of public office with their multiple gender roles. Issues of mobility, self-esteem and combined with poverty limit women's ability to take risks or to participate in programs and activities or to take advantage of services offered to them.

This implies therefore that participation and decision hinges rely largely on the appreciation by men of the functions and usefulness. To enhance women's participation and decision-making, STAR-P activities should focus on providing training to women that give confidence, assertiveness and increase women's capacity to lead effectively as well as form women specific groups to create space for women participation. Some activities may focus to promote aspects of behaviour change through training programs for cooperatives, which address these gender norms.

3. Programmes and resource Allocation

The gender analysis identified inherent weaknesses in gender responsive programming of most MoA programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. There were very limited resources allocated to gender equality specific activities and very limited to no attention was paid to having programme documents gender sensitive. Almost all the programme documents were gender blind except for percentages to target women as beneficiaries and emphasis on sex disaggregated data. However, one of the regional projects implemented by the MOA through the PIU, the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program, carried out some gender activities that addressed some of these gaps. There was gender capacity gap among almost all MoA implementing partners and departments. Their understanding of gender is confined to the disaggregation of data and the balancing of men and women in their respective institutions.

This imply the lack of gender integration and awareness among the key STAR-P partners that requires the need for gender tools for use at the field level to facilitate partners gender responsiveness and gender mainstreaming skills to enhance effective gender responsive STAR-P life cycle. The PIU should consider recruiting a gender specialist, conduct training and gender awareness for all STAR-P PIU team and develop all the gender tools to enhance gender mainstreaming.

The STAR-P can take general actions to address gender gaps including

Gender Strategy: Update MoA Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and develop gender action plan including STAR-P specific gender mainstreaming and monitoring tools from the overarching MoA strategy that is informed by the results of this Gender Analysis. Develop a holistic gender-training tool that can be used to train specific actors across the value chain.

Gender Capacity Strengthening for all key partners including developing basic gender tools

to enhance gender mainstreaming.

M&E System to capture Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Indicators beyond gender disaggregated figures but qualitative outcomes of gender mainstreaming.

Male and youth engagement through dialogues and awareness campaigns to ensure men and youth participate in STAR-P as intergenerational champions for gender equality.

Traditional and Religious Leaders as entry points role models who speak out against socially constructed norms around agriculture that perpetuate gender inequality in the value chains

Value chain thinking, training and promoting farming as a family business to enable women and men achieve their desired productivity goal.

The GA revealed that women continue to occupy the lowest levels of all value chains and remain the majority of subsistence farmers. They still lack access to land, extension services, training, and opportunities to help them benefit from STAR-P activities at the higher levels of value chains. For example, access to agricultural inputs and food processing capabilities are limited for all farmers in Liberia but especially for women. Further, women in Liberia are less able to make decisions about how household income will be used than are men, and rural women's workloads are disproportionately higher than men's. These findings present the entry points which encourage gender equitable impacts and will assist in gender sensitive programming for the STAR project as discussed in detail in the report.

This GA report is structured in a way that provides an overview of gender and STAR Project, the objectives of the gender analysis, the conceptual frameworks that guided it and the methodology employed. This is followed by the contextual analysis including global, regional and national policies that informs gender equality discourse as well as gender in agriculture development and policy frameworks in Liberia. The subsequent section provides the findings in the key thematic areas as per the objectives of the study including: Gender in agricultural value chain from i.e. production, processing and value addition and market; women participation and decision making; programmes and resource allocation to the gender equality and actions that can be undertaken by STAR-P to address gender gaps identified .

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of women towards development has not been matched by their share of the wealth of the world. This is the case in Liberia and other developing economies, despite women's contribution to agriculture, which is the mainstay of the economy. The lack of adequate attention given to the situation of women and other sources of social diversity such as age, ethnicity and religion, has slowed the impact of development programs on poverty, particularly in developing countries.

Consequently, in addressing poverty, the importance of gender equality considerations and the integration of women and gender concerns into development planning, implementation and monitoring is increasingly recognized, both nationally and internationally, as necessary to facilitate development in a sustainable manner and to secure the wellbeing of households. The Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) achievement is hinged on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. It emphasizes inclusion not just as end in itself but as critical to development effectiveness.

Governments, private sector and citizens are increasingly committed to reducing gender gaps not just because it is the right thing to do but because it makes economic sense. According to World Bank Group, gender equality is central to all goals and a smart development policy of ending poverty and promoting gender equality.

“No society can develop sustainably without transforming the distribution of opportunities, resources and choices for males and females so that they have equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to their families, communities and countries”²

In Liberia, women are the major contributors to the agriculture sector but they face gender specific constraints, which reduce their productivity and they do not have equal access to and control over resources. Women constitute 93% of food crop production and 76% of labor for cash crop production, 80% of the agricultural labor force and 85% of all marketing and trading.³ They are pivotal to the wellbeing of their households despite their poor economic status. Although Liberia has made great strides in identifying and reducing gender barriers and stereotypes such as addressing land rights, women still own less land, and mostly depend on male spouses and relatives to access land, making their rights in land more insecure than that of men.

Communal land tenure system is associated with limitation in productivity and investments in land. Although communal land tenure is considered secured tenure throughout Liberia, lack of title deed places women in more vulnerable positions when faced with an economic crisis family conflict, marriage breakdown or widowhood. Women they do not own the land but use in it trust from the family members of the community.

Social customs hinder women's mobility, constrain their participation in decision-making and limit their involvement in productive activities. Traditional norms continue to restrict women

² World Bank Group Strategy (FY16-23): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth

³ Liberia National Gender Policy 2009

from development opportunities. These problems limit the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts, particularly in rural areas.

Rural women have less access to credit, training, agricultural extension, and information than men. The situation of credit facilities in the rural areas is particularly critical, because it is generally nonexistent. As a result, rural communities continue to use traditional forms of community credit, such as SUSU clubs (Village Savings and Loan Associations-VSLA). Women face serious obstacles in obtaining loans from commercial or public micro finance facilities not only because of lack of collateral, but also because of lack of information and know-how.

Agricultural extension and training are in short supply throughout the country, and access to training is limited for women. Women have limited access to key inputs and technology that are vital to address gender roles skewed towards women in agricultural production and agribusiness development in rural areas such as seeds, communication technologies, radios and small scale production and processing devices.

Agriculture production is still low in Liberia and if women farmers had the same access to training, input, markets, and other agriculture sector services as male farmers, this production gap might be reduced as cited in FAO's 2011 State of Food and Agriculture report on Women in Agriculture⁴. Changing the strict gender norms regarding what women and men are supposed to do could help advance agricultural production in Liberia.

Thus efforts to provide smallholder farmers with support in agricultural activities in general and in rice, oil palm and horticulture production, processing and marketing in particular, which also consider the specific needs of women farmers will go a long way to ensure the wellbeing of households and their sustainable development.

The Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P) targeted crops i.e. Rice, Horticulture and Oil Palm are significant crops for both cash and domestic food security in Liberia. Rice is characterized by labor intensive production and processing, high perishability of the horticulture, adequate value addition and developed trade markets for oil palm. However, there is a lot of potential for both female and male farmers to leverage from these value chains.

OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF GENDER ANALYSIS

The purpose of STAR-P is to promote smallholder agriculture commercialization and improving access to markets through facilitating linkages with private sector firms in selected commodity value chains of Liberia⁵. The STAR Project Concept Note (PCN) and Project Appraisal Document (PAD) is gender blind in general except the 40% Women as target beneficiaries at the indicator level for project level outcomes⁶. However, the linkages between these gender outcomes and the wider project outcomes are not elaborated.

However, commissioning this gender analysis at the project inception stage sets the

⁴ The State of Food and Agriculture, Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development. (2011), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome.

⁵ STAR Project Concept Note

⁶ STAR Project Concept Note

foundation for gender sensitive programme development and awareness among the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and the key stakeholders. The GA was designed as a project specific activity, the findings from which would contribute to the design of project plans and ensure the optimum level of participation of women to produce the greatest impact on reduction of hunger and poverty. The study was also intended to contribute to the specification of target values for gender within the key project components and is a starting point for the broader gender question on how staple food crop development can bring benefits to women and men in Liberia.

The GA also aimed to develop understanding of the social, economic, cultural and political context of development processes associated with the rice, oil palm and horticulture value chains. Particularly the situation and livelihoods of men, women and the poor in the production, processing and marketing of these value chains. In addition, gender issues in relation to the activities of local service providers such as governmental, non-governmental organizations and the private sector including the processing and marketing units were considered.

The GA was designed to examine gender issues along the three value chains from production at the village and household level, processing and to engage with farmers, farmers' organizations and their local service providers. The GA also included both a review of literature and relevant documents on gender, agriculture and agro enterprises, and detailed field studies in the three target counties of Nimba, Margibi and Bomi.

The main objectives of the GA include:

1. Identify and analyze existing gender issues or gaps as they manifest in the agricultural sector in Liberia, and in particular the targeted counties and provide concrete actions to address these issues in practice under STAR-P.
2. Map out existing gender realities across the target value chains, specify causes of such inequalities or gaps and how they manifest in the productive lives of men and women, and analyze the gender dimensions of access and control of productive resources and development benefits.
3. Profile the current programs and donor resources for supporting governments' commitment and capacity to work on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment issues in the agricultural sector.

GENDER CONCEPTS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

The GA was based on the recognition that agricultural development policies and processes affect women and men differently and are also influenced by men and women differently. While 'sex' is a universal biological difference between men and women, 'gender' is a socio-cultural variable that refers to the different roles, responsibilities and activities of men and women, which vary within cultures and over time. A gender issue is therefore any aspect of the relationship between women and men that has an impact on all development processes.

The main conceptual frameworks that underpinned the GA were drawn from World

Development Report⁷, which posits that the interactions between institutions, markets and households influence economic development and gender equality. The framework is premised on the domains of gender equality: human endowments; economic opportunity as measured by participation in economic activities, access and control of critical productive assets and agency and voice.

On the other hand, the GA also adopted the welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment approaches of Moser (1993) and Kabeer and Subrahmanian (2001). The approaches focus on addressing the practical and strategic needs of low income women, to increase their productivity and incomes, manage their reproductive roles and meet the welfare needs of their households while improving their political power through their representation in groups and programs with a view to promoting economic growth, social stability and wellbeing of both men and women.

The GA as well drew on the sustainable livelihoods framework, which promotes a holistic understanding of the causes and dimensions of poverty and the relationships between these different aspects. The approach emphasizes the interconnections between access to five types of assets (natural, physical, financial, social and human); the external sources of risk and vulnerability and the policies, institutions and processes which influence this (Carney, 1998; Ashley & Carney, 1999).

The framework brings information from areas such as: the barriers and opportunities for engagement of women from the impact groups in agriculture; specific market engagement opportunities; agricultural practices and women's roles and participation. The analysis leads to consideration of ways to build or strengthen assets and develop strategies for livelihood improvement for different social groups and genders.

METHODOLOGY

The GA was designed as an exploratory research intended to provide an initial analysis of gender issues in the agriculture sector in Liberia, with a focus on Lofa, Bomi, Nimba, Margibi and Cape Mount (see Annex for the terms of reference). The main methods used were interviews with key informants, focus group discussions with Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private sector, development partners, men and women farmers and processors. The details respondent's numbers are discussed below and (see Annex for a list of people and groups met and list of secondary data) and stakeholder validation workshop. The gender analysis was conducted by the international gender consultant working alongside the MoA and PIU staff.

The GA study used qualitative research methodology, which is governed by the interpretive social science or constructivist paradigm, which assumes relativist ontology. The ontology appreciates that there are multiple realities to explain a phenomenon. Realities on gender in the selected value chain was analyzed and presented as lived experiences and realities. The qualitative methodology was chosen for its flexibility in allowing thick descriptions of phenomena. It was ideal for a gender analysis of this nature considering the complexity, sensitivity and relativity of analyzing gender issues that is wrought with diverse cultural

⁷ World Development Report (2012): Gender Equality and Development

meanings both at household and community levels. The methodology allowed for an in-depth investigation and analysis of this private, discreet and often secretive sphere of household decision making practices.

A participatory gender analysis approach was also used in order to promote learning and ownership of the process and outcome. This was considered appropriate because individual employees of STAR-P, stakeholders, farmers and partner organizations are considered to have the motivation and capacity to assess themselves and their organizations. This approach created an encouraging environment for reflection, analysis and open discussions on the challenges and opportunities of a gender sensitive project.

The methodology drew from evidence-based approaches to promote gender equality in smallholder agriculture that empowers the most marginalized and vulnerable women to participate in and benefit from engagement in the existing value chains. Purposive, random, snowball and other relevant sampling approaches were used to identify respondents and study locations from the STAR-P focused counties.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The consultant used field based observations during the field visits in three counties of: Nimba, Margibi and Bomi. The consultant conducted four 4 Group Discussions (FGDs) of 10-15 farmers including: 1 women, 1 men, and 2 mixed women and men FGDs. A total of 25 Key informant interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including farmers' organization, farmers (men and women), processors, traders, Civil Society Organization (CSOs), development partners, government ministries and department agencies at national, district and community levels. A stakeholders' validation workshop was held to present the preliminary findings and seek the participants' views on the findings to inform the final report.

The main instruments used for the collection of primary data were the semi-structured interview guide for FGD and KI interviews. The interview checklist was developed and shared with the PIU targeting the value chain actors from farmer organizations, through processing enterprises of different scales, to end users (see Annex). The gender study Terms of Reference (ToR) were used as a guide to develop a checklist. The particular areas of information deriving from the gender checklist included the roles, responsibilities, participation, power and labor relations, benefits and risks confronting men, women, girls, boys and the socially excluded and within the diversities of age, ethnicity, religion etc.

In addition, discussions with service providers covered their contribution to the activities of farmers and processors in the rice, oil palm and horticulture value chains, and their information, extension services, training and technology needs. The interview guides and the Gender ToR also directed the secondary data review. A review of related literature was carried out to enable contextualization of the STAR-P and to have an appreciation of its goals and objectives. The data gathered was organized to provide information on gender issues. Specifically, it was categorized into the themes of the study to aid the report writing.

STUDY AREA

The field study was conducted in three of the five project counties. The counties were selected based on the three value chains. Nimba county provided opportunity to meet rice farmers in

an organized farmers' cooperative, farming in a government developed irrigated land and another site where horticulture farmers working independently with little or no support. In Margibi county the consultant conducted key informant interviews with youth in agriculture in the horticulture value chain from an institutional agriculture training context and the linkages with the community. Bomi County presented oil palm value chain from a commercial farmer and market pull factor and the smallholder farmers' context.

For the country context, the issues were reviewed at the national level, through key informant interviews with MDAs, NGOs and development partners and drawing on secondary literature. Because this was an exploratory study, designed to further understanding of the operation of the sector, the rice, oil palm and horticulture producers, the actors in processing and marketing and the specific gender issues within it, the approach was to select areas and groups where maximum interaction and discussion could be facilitated, rather than conduct a random sampling of production and processing areas and enterprises.

The respondent farmer groups, farmers and processors were mostly selected by the PIU and team accompanied the consultant to the field. Stakeholders within the value chains were identified mostly through previous or existing relationships they have had with PIU. Interactions were held with a number of stakeholders and service providers in the agricultural value chains (for details see annex). The locations in which farmers, processors and traders were interviewed and the groups interacted with are tabulated below.

Table 1: Communities visited

Counties	Communities	Farmers/ Groups	Processors
Margibi	Kakata	Youth farmer/teacher Agriculture Youth Teacher Male Horticulture farmer Vegetables Road side female sellers	Fabrar Rice Processors
Nimba	Gbedin	Chairman Dokodan Coop Female Members of Dokodan Coop Male Dokodan Farmer cooperative	
Bomi	Senjeh	Chief Oil Palm farmers Female Oil Palm farmer Male Oil Palm farmer	PUMAH Oil Palm Farm
	Beafinie	Chief Muslim Religious leaders Male Oil Palm Farmer Oil Palm farmers	

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES

Liberia is committed to the promotion of the rights of women through various international, regional and national laws and policies. The country is a party to various global Treaties, Declarations and Commitments on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment including: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979; Optional Protocol on CEDAW; International Covenant on Economic

Social and Cultural Rights (1966); Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); International Conference on Population and Development (1994), United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women (1993); Sustainable Development Goals SDGs (2015); Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948); and Vienna Declaration and the Plan of Action (1993).

At the regional level, Liberia is a party to regional instruments including: The African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa which constitutes a milestone in the promotion, protection and respect for the rights of women in Africa; New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), underlines the commitment of the African States to ensure the full participation of African Women as equal partners in African development and states; Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004) reaffirms the commitments of the AU and international instruments on human and women's rights. The ECOWAS Gender Policy as a tool of ECOWAS institutions and programs, establishment of gender management systems in all the member states and the adoption of gender mainstreaming as a prerequisite to gender equity and equality.

Other instruments include the Mano River Declaration, the Maputo Declaration and the Beijing +10 Commitment by Ministers of Gender that reaffirm commitments made on gender equality, equity and women's empowerment as stated in Dakar/Beijing Platforms of Action, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, and related UN and international, regional and sub-regional agreements on gender equality.

At the country level, the Government's position on gender equality is reaffirmed in the number of Government policies and programs that promote the equality of men and women in Liberia, which are in place. These include National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action (2006); Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2008-2011) that treats gender as a specific crosscutting issue; Food and Agricultural Policy (2007) and Environmental Policy (2002).

Significant progress has been made in passing major legislations towards establishing equality between men and women. These include the Domestic Relations Law; and the Inheritance Act of 1998 (which specifies Equal Rights in marriage and inheritance under Customary and Statutory Laws). All these policies and legislations affirm the Government's commitment to address gender inequality and to ensure that women are fully engaged in activities that are of benefit to them and to the nation at large.

The Gender and Development Act, 2001 establishes and defines the institutional Mandate of the Ministry of Gender and Development, which is the national machinery for promoting gender equality, women's advancement and children's welfare in Liberia. Specifically, Advise Government on all matters affecting the development and welfare of women and children; Coordinate Government's gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that both women and men's perspectives are central to policy formulation, legislation, resource allocation, planning and outcomes of policies and programs, focusing on gender equality, empowerment of women and development of children.

Monitor and report back the impact of national policies and programs on women and children as well as recommend appropriate measures to be taken in mobilizing and integrating women as equal partners with men in the economic, social, political, and cultural development of the country. Still a lot needs to be done with regard to law reform. The dual systems of laws (customary and statutory) subject rural women to a wide range of social and legal regimes

and make them less protected vis-à-vis their urban counterparts, who are generally protected by and subjected solely to Statutory Law.

The Liberia National Gender Policy and its accompanying policy objectives and strategies highlight Agriculture as one of the key areas for enhancing the status of women in Liberia. It states that “promote gender mainstreaming policies and programs to ensure that all women and men benefit from the national budget; and from increased economic opportunities in agriculture, trade, formal and informal employment, and business”⁸. Both the national gender policy and agriculture sector gender strategy emphasize the implementation of gender sensitive agricultural programs, strategies and activities.

AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture is a key factor to Liberia's economic growth, food security and wealth creation. Agriculture contributes over 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employs approximately 70% of the labor force and provides source of livelihood to over two-thirds of the population⁹. The agriculture in Liberia is predominantly undertaken on smallholder individual and/or family and community managed farms. The smallholder farming system supports over 80% of the farming population in the rural areas holding farms of less than 2 hectares.

There are also large-scale plantations (mainly rubber and oil palm concessions) and emerging domestic commercial-scale farms with vertically integrated supply chains incorporating production and primary processing. The smallholder production system grows mainly food crops (rice, cassava) and a few are in oil palm using traditional production techniques and limited improved inputs.

Therefore, supporting agriculture and other primary sectors that support the livelihood of the majority of the population is pertinent in Liberia's long-term development vision (Liberia Rising 2030) of inclusive growth. The GoL's Agenda for Transformation (AfT) and Liberia Agricultural Transformation Agenda (LATA) promote the agribusiness sector by incentivizing private sector participation that would have market and mentorship opportunities to smallholder farmers. The Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), particularly the second pillar “economic revitalization” which advocates the promotion of export oriented economic growth and facilitation of rural development contributes to smallholder and gender dividends in the agricultural value chains.

In all the above agricultural related policies, gender equality and empowerment of women is silent yet it facilitates the achievement of their strategic objectives. Societal gender construct about gender roles around agriculture remains very strong and has resulted in changes in crop production where men concentrate more on cultivation of cash crops and women focus on food crop production. The gender division has shifted agriculture from family farms to men and women's farms. Women gather food because they must feed the family.

The cultivation of crops considered as men's work and the women remained in the subsistence economy although providing some labour for cash crop farms. The overemphasis on support

⁸ Liberia National Gender Policy 2009

⁹ STAR-P Project Appraisal Document

for cash crops and inequalities in the allocation of resources towards the enterprises of men may result in the policy frameworks not achieving the desired impact of reducing poverty at the smallholder farmer level and particularly poverty among women. This gender analysis aimed to address the inadequate mainstreaming of gender in one of the agriculture programmes STAR-P.

The evolving agricultural sector policies such as Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (LASIP) and Liberia Agriculture Transformation Agenda (LATA) acknowledge the opportunities provided through the existing knowledge on value chains and programs supporting value chains development. These policies highlight constraints and challenges including: weak land management and water control systems; limited market access and linkages on account of limited feeder roads and bad secondary road conditions; non-diversification and rudimentary production techniques.

High pre- and post-harvest losses; poor food value chains including storage, processing, and marketing channels; unimproved planting materials, limited use of fertilizers, and rudimentary tools; lack of formal agricultural credit; insufficient farming household labor; poor pest management practices; low-quality agricultural training and extension services; and low capacity of core agricultural institutions¹⁰. The LATA policy also highlights similar constraints as weak infrastructure especially roads and power, difficulty in accessing finance, difficulty in launching new export activities, due to missing inputs (also known as coordination failures) and weak and unclear property rights¹¹.

The constraints of value chain development raised will have significant implications for STAR-P by virtue of its value addition and value chain approaches. It will have particular significance for the gender aspects by virtue of women's relatively lower human capital base because of their high illiteracy rates. Secondly, women's reproductive roles might pose time constraints on further expansion of their food processing activities. These time constraints and women's limited access to information on safe food handling and food and health standards may restrict women's access to emerging markets for processed products.

In conclusion, the policy documents note the growing awareness at the policy level of the importance of building strong value chains but it will have to be matched with capacity building of the private sector, public agencies and sensitization of value chain actors. The project may consider increasing awareness and capacities in safe food handling and value addition. The use of adult learning principles may help step up the knowledge base and the capacities of men and women smallholder farmers to adopt the value chain development approach of the STAR-P.

¹⁰ Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Program (LASIP) report, 2010.

¹¹ Liberia Agenda for Transformation: Steps towards Liberia rising 2030, (2015).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

GENDER IN AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAINS

Women remain primarily invisible in the work they do in value chains, yet contribute enormously to its output and value. Gender issues fundamentally shape the totality of production, distribution, and consumption within an economy but gender issues have often been overlooked in value chain development. From production to processing to disposal, 'gendered patterns' of behavior condition men's and women's jobs and tasks, the distribution of resources and benefits derived from income-generating activities in the chain, and the efficiency and competitiveness of value chains in the market.

This represents a missed opportunity as it prevents women farmers from achieving higher productivity. The high participation rates of women in domestically-oriented and commercial food production, from small producer to plant worker face persistent gender inequalities that hinder their progress and reflect a 'missed opportunity' that could promote higher productivity and enhance the economic potential of both women and men. This relates as easily to agro-industry value chains as down to small producer farmers and even family production.

PRODUCTION

Decisions about production of crops including farm selection, seeds and inputs used are often done by both men and women but mostly male dominated due power relations within the household. Although MoA indirectly influences decisions on crop varieties to plant through the seeds and seedlings it makes available for farmers in the market, farmers make some decisions in accordance with extension education given to them like in the case of Dokodan rice seed varieties for multiplication being planted.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

Men and women farmers met during the fieldwork indicated that households in their communities are a mix of two parent households and female-headed households. There are nuclear households and extended family types. Some women live alone in their own houses and some live with their spouses. Some communities are ruled by chiefs who manage the communities in collaboration with opinion leaders. The communities visited in Beafinie and Senjeh in Bomi County had 23 and 15 chiefs.

Interviews with these communities revealed that women have more responsibilities than men in meeting household expenditures, income generation, child care, cooking, collecting water, firewood for cooking etc. Women reported that cohesive domestic units with perfect solidarity and altruism reigning in all relationships is an assumption that is giving way to the need to explore the extent to which male and female members of households' pool or keep separate the resources they produce and earn. And the specific sexual divisions of labour, power and decision making

Figure 1: A woman with multiple roles including child care



in the domestic domain.

A member of a women only FGD in Dokodan farmers' cooperative said:

“After selling our rice I bring back the money and give to my husband some pocket money and the rest I use to meet the household expenses like school fees, food clothes and others”.

The chairman of Dokodan Cooperative Society in Gbedin Nimba County also noted that:

“sharing of benefits from farms owned by both man and woman may be a problem but I don't follow them to their households”.

The chairman's fear of house resource sharing at the household level was reaffirmed in a FGD at Dokodan where women farmers reported that they “take care of all the household expenditures. On the contrary, in the focus group discussion with the men in the same village being held simultaneously, men claimed that they bear 80% of the household expenditure. However, the mixed groups confirmed that women take most of the household expenditure.

In Senjeh community in Bomi county women also reiterated that they keep some savings from the rice sale so that their children do not miss school. Eighty percent (80%) of their incomes are spent on their children and the commonest expenditure is education related. Women's interactions revealed a pattern of authority and trends in socio-economic responsibility that indicate that 70% of the women interviewed are taking sole responsibility for their households. Women play significant roles in keeping their households and communities running. However, in most cases women do not make major decisions associated with socio-cultural activities.

Managing the resources of women from income generation and home management is a serious challenge. This could have contributed to the failure of previous agricultural projects to address gender issues in the value chains. It is therefore important to address issues of women, gender and expenditure patterns at the household level and encourage men to fulfill their responsibilities in order to promote poverty reduction and wellbeing among women and their households.

Women are taking up more family responsibility but men still make major decisions. More women are engaging in viable income-generating activities to challenge the myth that men are traditional breadwinners. As a reality, managing time as a resource to women for income generation, childcare, home management, and care of women's health is a serious challenge.

DIVISION OF LABOUR AND GENDER ROLES IN PRODUCTION PROCESSES

The Gender Analysis looked at roles and responsibilities of men and women to determine the workload that each of them carry and implications of these roles and responsibilities on productive and reproductive work. A separate group of men and women were engaged during FGDs to understand who does what in the household and farm.

Traditionally gender roles were assigned to men and women according to the physical strength that is required to carry out the task and the tools to be used to complete the task

Figure 2: A man showing masculine perception of gender roles



well. There are activities that are done by all household members regardless of sex and age, yet other activities are specific to men, women and/or children. It is important to state that in households where there are no males, females perform some male roles, yet for others, they rely on hired labor.

The general pattern of gender roles in agriculture was observed during interactions with male and female farmers and processors. Women play very significant roles and bear much of the responsibility within the sector. Women constitute 93% of food crop production and 76% of labor for cash crop production, 80% of the agricultural labor force and 85% of all marketing and trading.¹²

However, some recent literature questions the extent of women's labour in agricultural production, arguing for a more nuanced and context specific perspective (Enete et al, 2004). In spite of this the MoA gender strategy commenting on labour distribution in agriculture states a similar pattern and the roles reported by the respondents during the GA conform to the pattern. Commenting on labour issues in agriculture, the World Bank¹³ stated that across the world women are the primary workers in the reproductive economy: maintaining households, raising children, preparing food and taking care of the sick and these may be the principal reason for large numbers of women in agricultural activities.

In the field situation, women and men both clear the land for the three crops, but men largely do clearing. Roles undertaken by women and men are the same even when spouses, sometimes with some labour exchanges, jointly cultivate the land. In the situation of female-headed households, male labour is hired to undertake activities that the women do not or cannot perform.

Negotiation of gender roles in this regard has been an issue to farmers. In the community visited men do not have any reason why they only clear the land and leave the rest of the farm work to women but they have generally not offered help to address the constraint. Furthermore, the activities of men are more seasonal such as land clearing, turning the soil and planting, but those of women are more continuous and repetitive which has implications for women's time and labor. The group approach helps deal with labor constraints as members assist each other. Some women also hire labor or provide labor to others to realize some income. In the case of Dokodan women use the proceeds to pay for rent for her farm land. Men use their own labor or pay for hired labor.

However, in the case of weeding, labour is provided by females. Weeding is done manually or by using herbicides. Men sometimes purchase herbicides for their women and spray when they chose to use the herbicides as one man said:

"when we chose to use herbicides to control weeds I help the woman to spray but if its manual weeding that is the work of a women" (Men FDG-Dokodan Cooperative).

¹² National Gender Policy 2017

¹³ World Bank (2009) publication "Women in Agriculture Sourcebook"

Harvesting and cleaning is carried out mostly by women but where rice threshers are used then men do the threshing. Some women run the threshers themselves, as was the case in Dokodan cooperative farm where a few women were trained to operate the threshers. A farmer at Dokodan farm commented that only few women were trained because they don't have the energy to operate the machine.

On the whole, of all the crop production roles listed in Table 2 men do approximately 20% of farm duties while the women take up to 80% (on the basis of total labor in hours spent) and their roles are more repetitive. A chief interviewed in Beafinie summarized the table that:

“women cook food to take to for us (men) to the farm when clearing. They do weeding, harvesting, cleaning and take harvested produce to the market”

Table 2: Gender roles in crop production

Task	General responsibility
Land clearing	Men
Planting	Men and Women
Weeding	Women
Harvesting	Women
Cleaning	Women
Selling	Men and Women
Processing	Men and women

There are distinct traditional roles of men and women and boys and girls in the households in farming communities in particular and the nation at large and with social change there are some changes occurring in the roles. Traditionally, men provide the cash and/or staple food needs of the household and school fee payment (if children are in school). Women provide for family food preparation and are responsible for the social reproduction of the household.

However, with changes in the cultural, political, economic, civic and social domains of society, women are taking up more of the traditional roles of men, particularly in the cash economy of the family and associated decision-making. Women sell vegetables and rice to get ready cash to buy other ingredients needed. According to the respondents interacted with, rice ranks first in providing food security to the household, some is for domestic use and some for cash, oil palm was viewed as a cash crop majorly and as well as horticulture.

A teacher of agriculture school in Margibi providing the youth in agriculture noted that:

“Young people prefer to cultivate tomatoes and cabbages rather than crops which takes long because they want quick money”.

Patriarchal and power relations between men and women have worked adversely against women. Perpetuation of traditional gender roles has not favored the cause. Reaching out to women might require ways to encourage men to bear more responsibilities towards production for example through research and development of labour reduction technology in the areas of weeding,



Figure 3: Women winnowing/cleaning rice

harvesting and rice parboiling. However, on the whole, women perform more tasks and mostly the repetitive ones.

However, it should also be noted that due to socio-economic and demographic changes, there has been a gradual shift in gender roles that has mainly increased the work burden on rural women. The GA revealed that the traditional gender roles for women have remained basically the same. Their gender roles have expanded to include those roles and responsibilities traditionally considered as men's. On the other hand, while men have dropped some roles and responsibilities that are traditionally considered as men's, they have been reluctant to do roles that are considered as women's.

This has increased women's work burden and as shall be discussed below, this has implications for development interventions. During FGDs, women attributed the shift in traditional gender roles to high rate of unemployment, widowhood, and rural urban migration. Roles considered as men's such as clearing land, guarding crops against wild animals, ploughing, fencing and provision of basic needs such as clothing, food and school fees are also now being done by women.

The difficult macro-economic situation has resulted in a high rate of unemployment, which has seen men gradually losing that traditional role as the "family provider". Women are now fending for their families and gradually taking over the role of family provider. FGDs with men revealed that men were increasingly getting frustrated by failing to act the provider role due to the prevailing difficult economic situation.

Widowhood and male migration to urban centers in search of greener pastures has also resulted in women assuming roles that were traditionally considered as men's. In households that are de facto and de jure female headed, the heads perform tasks that are considered masculine or they hire labour to do those tasks. In most cases, these households are amongst the most vulnerable and do not have the resources to hire labour and hence the female household heads end up performing both male and female tasks. Men on the other hand found it culturally difficult to perform roles considered by society to be women's. A woman in an FGD in Nimba noted that, "For me I don't have a husband so I do everything, if I fail hire men to help me"

Implications for STAR-P

The increased burden on women implies that they will have very little time to attend to other businesses, training, and restriction to travel long distances for better markets. It is difficult for them to go far away to sell their produce where they get better returns because of their reproductive responsibilities within the home. They thus wait for buyers who decide the price themselves.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF ASSETS AND INCOMES

There are unclear property rights in Liberia. **Land** ownership for example has a complex and confusing history, with land rights alternating between communities and the state. During the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), the Government adopted the Community Rights Law (2006) and the Community Right Act (2009) in order to properly formalize community ownership. Less

than 20% of the country's total land is privately titled and registered¹⁴.

Despite these attempts, land rights remain poorly defined, with many rural lands having overlapping and unresolved ownership. Implementing records management and land registration systems for rural property and unfulfilled deliverable from the PRS remains a priority. In the Doing Business 2012 indicators, Liberia was ranked 176th out of 183 countries in terms of ease and cost of registering property.

The costly registration of property and processes disadvantage women than men yet ownership rights to land are particularly important to undertake productivity and enhance investments. Land ownership is also important in its own right and provides an entry into securing other factors of production and agricultural credit (Land is often used as collateral). In addition to ownership, access rights to communal land is also often crucial to women's livelihood for food and cash crop production.

The communal land tenure system ordinarily means land is the property of the community or lineage. In all the communities visited women access land through inheritance from parents or spouses or renting for cultivation. Family land is thought of as belonging to the ancestors or local deities and is held in trust for them. As a result, such lands are administered by the lineage elders, worked by the members of the kin group, and inherited only by members of that unit. All others who are not part of the kin group are excluded. While family members have free access to the land, portions of such land may only be leased to others who are not members of the family for seasonal agricultural production as one Chief in Beafinie community noted:

“visitors to our community are often given land through his/her host”.

Land remains within the community or family and usually is not sold. Land is therefore, a prized possession of the community and family and, thus, cannot be titled. Thus, depending on the system of inheritance, land distribution can cause severe exclusion. Women can only access community land through their husbands and in very few cases to single women as one chief in Beafinie said

“for a married couple land is given strictly to men”

At the cooperative owned farm, farmers have access to the cooperative land according to their ability to pay membership fee of USD40 and till the land. Both men and women are given land but majority land owners are men. The women interviewed at Dokodan cooperative land said:

“There are no restrictions on the community land acquisition the only withholding factor is availability of money to pay for membership of the cooperative”

Some communities visited especially farmers' cooperative in Nimba had additional assets available to farmers other than land for example rice processing equipment, tilling and threshers that are hired out to farmers at a cost. However, operating the machines and done by men and women only access when they have money to pay for the labour. Therefore, STAR-P can should train more women machine operators to encourage more women to access and utilize the machines when they see their own operating them. Property or assets

¹⁴ Liberia Agenda for Transformation: Steps towards Liberia rising 2030, (2015).

are particularly important for poor people. They generate income and facilitate access to capital and credit, strengthen individual and households' ability to cope with and respond to shocks by enhancing their ability to diversify their incomes and serves as a store of wealth that can be sold to generate income.

Income decisions on household income on relatively large incomes realised from the sale of crops such as rice and oil palm are often dominated by men. Women are usually given leeway to make income use decisions when the income source is "women's projects" or is very small. Women reported that they have some control over the use of their incomes but seek instructions on how to use the money from the men.

"A man is still the master of the home and takes the major decisions about income. Women makes decisions on other issues such as finding schools for children" (Woman from Senjeh community FGD).

One FGD with women noted that:

"When we sell our rice and realize large sums of money, the money is usually kept by me. I keep the money but I have no control over it. Although my husband consults me on how to use the income, his decision always carries the day" (Women FGD in Nimba)

For households headed by females either because they are widows, divorced or they are single mothers. The study established that in such households, decision making rests with the female household head. Female household heads taking part in FGDs acknowledged that they could quickly make decisions regarding their households compared to their counterparts that were married. They make decisions on what to plant, what to buy and sell and whether or not to participate in development programmes and community meetings on their own.

Figure 4. A man bagging rice for sale



Across all the communities visited, household power dynamics are rooted in cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Men exhibited patriarchal attitudes and justified gender inequality on the basis of culture and religion. Men generally agreed that since they are the heads of households, they should have a final say on major decisions that affect the household. Women also generally agreed that they should play a subordinate role within the family because culturally and religiously, the man is the head of household.

They however argued that in terms of decision-making, the process should be consultative and consensual. The GA established that power dynamics within households varied with age. Women tend to have increasing influence on decision-making, as they grow older. Both men and women across all districts concurred that decisions about agricultural production in terms of which crops to grow, acreage and sourcing of agricultural inputs are usually arrived at through a consultative process

Implication for STAR-P

The domination of control of high value productive assets such as land, farm tools and houses by men implies that women are left vulnerable in houses where the husbands have irresponsible tendencies. Without adequate control and access to high value assets, the capacity of women to respond and cope with agricultural commercialization is very limited.

Access to loans from financial institutions that require collateral security will also become difficult for women when they do not have high value assets to offer as security. Participation in decision making by both men and women is crucial in promoting the objectives of STAR-P. In terms of ownership and control of major household assets and income streams by men implies that decisions on income use might not necessarily promote the interest of women and children.

ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL CREDIT, INPUTS AND EXTENSION /INFORMATION SERVICES

Access to credit: Among all farmers there was limited access to formal credit but women were more limited than men. However, they were existing local Village Savings and Lending Associations (VSLA) call SUSU in the community where farmers access local credit. However, the capital based capacity of the VSLAs did not meet the farmers needs who highlighted the need to buy farm and processing equipment as well as the desire to have working capital to address farmers needs during surplus as was the case with Dokodan cooperative.

Women reported that they were not aware of programs that offer loans or financial services and they felt they were not eligible for them. They also highlighted eligibility criteria in the case of formal credit that may limit their ability to access, such as land ownership or membership in a cooperative. In other cases, financial illiteracy was also a key factor that would keep women away from programs or groups that would increase their access to credit.

Farmers noted that most banks require collateral and the loans are based on the turnover of the persons' accounts, the profitability and viability of the business venture. Women were therefore more disadvantaged because of their poorer conditions and lack of record keeping, business skills etc. in addition to the risky nature of farming and production in particular. The Farmers interacted with especially women desire to access credit but the banks didn't exist, even if they bank existed they feared the banks were not interested to fund their farming activities.

The consultant tried to contact the only bank the PIU suggested were offering some form of agriculture financing but couldn't get them as the staff concern was out of reach. This implied accessing bank would be more difficult for the rural farmers. Recruiting women officers and outreach agents to lead groups or teach women financial literacy would increase women's chances of accessing formal credit if they existed but more focus could be on strengthening the VLSA approach to enhance inclusive financing. Focusing on activities that teach women about markets, food processing, packaging and branding and crop storage would also help to ensure that women farmers learn about other parts of the value chain beyond solely production.

Access to agricultural farm inputs among the farmers visited was rather limited. Most farmers visited use rudimentary tools for production inherited from their ancestors with very minimal ability to acquire improved equipment except in Dokodan cooperative farm where equipment such as power tillers were being introduced. It was also observed that a critical component to the access of agro-inputs was determined by accessibility of the extension agents to agricultural farm inputs and supplies.

A KI interview with the leader of agro-input dealers of Liberia show that the flow and availability of agricultural supplies and products has become limited to the urban areas due to poor roads infrastructure and agents who are willing to establish agro-input shops in the rural areas. The FGD with rice farmers in Dokodan cooperative indicated greater access to agricultural inputs, such as seed and fertilizer compared to a vegetable and oil palm farmer farming in their individual farms in Nimba and Bomi counties who felt limited inputs existed and can only be accessed from the local markets most by men who had some basic knowledge about the chemicals.

Despite perceiving noticeable improvement in rice crop, farmers responded that access to agricultural inputs was currently insufficient to successfully promote productive agricultural practices. No significant deviation in responses occurred between women and men with regard to either changed access to basic agricultural inputs or the needs for greater availability. STAR-P could leverage on the experience from other development partners that show the use of agricultural input shops as a good agricultural practice and to encourage producers' organizations and women groups to open input shops in rural areas for distributing inputs, so as to ensure better availability and access for women farmers.

Access to extension and information services: Across all the communities visited, the field observations and engagements with KI and FGDs revealed that rural women lack access to agricultural services and programs. This was revealed by women in the FGDs that lack of access is because of timing or distance of training which can take place at times that are not convenient for them or at distances that requires long or evening travel or where there are limited transport options. This case was observed during the stakeholders' workshop where a vegetable farmers group in Nimba could not have a female participant because of the distance.

Thus, women are more often excluded or unable to participate. Exploring new ways to ensure women's access to extension services will help to improve agricultural productivity overall and increase household wellbeing. In most cases, extension services were male dominated who often reach out to men assuming they are the chief farmers and that male participants will pass along information they learn to women and young people in their families. One of the farmers said, "we have never received any extension services except seeing hunger free MoA vehicles (A male farmer from Senjeh community).

Basic skills and information for farmer limited but a few farmers acquired training and agronomic information through their cooperative. However, this was in only Nimba county where the farmers' cooperative is farming in Government irrigated land. Men had more time to participate in extension teaching and learning encounters than women in view of the reproductive and multiple roles of women. Some agricultural information is also available through radio, mostly on input supply. Often the farmers are on their farms at the time of these programs and therefore do not benefit much, although in this era of FM radios and handset radios some farmers still benefit. Again, this is more associated with the lifestyle of men than women.

However, farmers expressed a lot of interest to access extension services, education and information to enhance their skills in agronomic practices, soil fertility, post-harvest management, business management and marketing, particularly markets and competitive pricing. Other areas for capacity strengthening are specific women group formation and group sustainability.

Key to note is that some farmers use skills acquired through fellow farmers and through minimal extension staff. They need knowledge and information on best agronomic practices, farm and business management, group development and improved farm and processing equipment. Mobile phones may as well be used to improve farmers access to agricultural information such as weather, prices, markets, financial resources and social networks.

Implication for STAR-P

STAR-P presents a unique potential for gender equality in the transformation of smallholder farmers, given its relationships with both public and private sector players. It can work with various organizations that build capacity, help to improve and increase collateral for smallholder farmers, and seek to increase small farmers' access to credit. It is important to understand which savings products best meet women's needs and use gender-sensitive approaches such as women-focused initiatives (such as more flexible terms of withdrawals and minimum balance requirements) and dedicated spaces for women (such as "women-only" teller line), or dedicated purchase of crops from women farmers or things like waivers on collateral for women.

STAR-P could also promote the increase of women's use of and access to credit and financial services through education and capacity building activities. Activities that focus on literacy for young women about credit and financial services could help young women learn about credit resources from an early age.

PROCESSING AND VALUE ADDITION

A visit to FABRAR rice processing enterprise was conducted in Nimba County. The processing unit is one of the biggest in Liberia employing a total of 26 employees, 3 women and 23 men. Men dominate the management and supervisory level except one woman who is the parboiling supervisor. FABRAR provides ready market for rice farmers in Liberia. The factory has buying outlets in all the counties across the country, they source paddy rice from mainly farmers' cooperatives/groups through their agents.



Figure 5: Men working in the rice factory

Roles and responsibilities of men and women at the processing processes follow the socially constructed gender roles. The owners are men; men do operating of the rice mills, servicing and maintenance as the Deputy Director noted:

"Men operate the machines because it is hard work and require more energy to carry heavy sacks, I pity women that is way I don't put them on the machines"

Women take the role of parboiling, drying and cleaning reflecting the socially constructed and traditional roles of women in rice processing.

"women are the best 'chemist' and cooks that is why we put them in parboiling" (FABRAR Deputy Director).

Interactions with FABRAR management revealed that their concern for the inability of women

Figure 6: A woman doing parboiling and drying rice job



to handle the processing processes which is considered for men is because the packaging material is too heavy to be carried by women that is why women undertake female related jobs like parboiling.

The labour conditions under which the male and female workers operate largely lacked protection of workers. The time for women related jobs was revealed by the director to be longer than that of men. Women workers work over night to meet some demands of rice parboiling without any extra pay because of the nature their job. Arrangements without growers are the same for men and women farmers, although more men than women are

involved. It should take the intervention of the STAR-P team to make the FABAR realize the impact of their decision on the workers and out growers particularly on the women by putting in place a gender specific policy to inform processors view on division labour in the processing business.

Workers have control over the incomes they get from working with the processing plants, however given the nature of the job women are involved they may be unfairly paid and the working hours may not allow them time to do other work. The nature of the women's job matched with low wages could not attract male labour in the female dominated work when needed because the workers are seen as paupers.

MARKETING

Marketing of crops follows the classification of crops as men or women's crops. Men are mostly involved in the marketing of high value crops outside the community while women market their low value crops, locally. The FABRAR rice processors revealed that they have established satellite collection points in communities for rice that are produced in an area. It is at these satellite points that they have observed that men mostly come to these satellite points.

In KI with vegetable farmer in Margibi, he revealed that he prefers to market vegetables because he knows the amounts of money that he invested in farming hence he can negotiate for a price from an informed position. Furthermore, he highlighted that market places are risky places for women as a result of poor and gender insensitive market conditions. The vegetable farmer remarked,

“women sell locally because if they go to Monrovia where will they sleep? Besides those GobaChop women are so crafty”

The buyers have dictated relationships between buyers and sellers at the household level more. They dictate the price at the farm gate. It was revealed that in the horticulture value chain, buyers hire their own vehicles to collect produce at the farm gate and deduct the fare from the proceeds. Farmers have no bargaining power over the produce they sell. This situation was noted to be worse during the bumper season.

During interactions at Nimba with a vegetable farmer, he recounted an experience he had with buyers he referred to as “Gobachop women” took his vegetable of over 80,000 Liberia

Dollars (LRD) equivalent (USD593) but only LRD 30,000 (USD222) up to the time of the GA

“we sell to these middle men and women because we do not have storage facilities to store our goods” (Male vegetable farmer at Nimba).

The decision of this farmer to let their vegetable rot was recounted. In the instance of the same farmer, he realized only 80,000 from an acre and for a year's work. The vegetable farmers believe that their lack of formidable farmer groups to bargain their position and hold on to their produce make them more vulnerable to unfair trade relations. By virtue of having the big food market in the community and the desire of buyer to maximize their profits, the farmers are likely to come under much pressure from the market queens. Virtually, all the produce from the community is sold in the market.

Since prices are very low and sales are high during the bumper season, farmers lack financial resources to add value to their rice and vegetables and often cannot wait for lean season prices or lock up their capital within the period. When farmers think they may have a better bargain by taking their wares to the market, the market queens take their wares and offer any prices to them. During the dry season when planting vegetables is difficult and prices go higher, farmers in both Nimba and Margibi reiterated that they could be more competitive in their pricing and realize more income but lack irrigation and storage infrastructure to enable them store or produce in the off season.

The field observation and interviews revealed a free market system. The market ranges from private-government partnership, to solely private limited liability enterprise, to a micro level sole proprietorship. Their levels of operation and associated issues also vary. A micro level vegetable markets were owned by road side women sellers, they buy vegetables from farmers and sale at the road side as seen in Nimba. The customers believe that their vegetable are cheap and easily available that has contributed to sustain their market.

The private-government structured market was seen in Dokodan cooperative where farmers produce seeds and sell to government to distribute to other regions. Men sell their rice to the cooperative or to processors. The processors hold a bigger share of the market and observed

at FABRAR rice processing facility with various rice packages and supply orders.

Figure 7: Road side vegetable seller



The local market for the horticulture and oil Palm is female dominated but for the rice although the cooperative encourage spouses to come together when bringing rice to the store, male dominate the sale of rice because of the bad roads and the fear that women may not know how to count the kilograms at weighing of the rice.

Therefore, to realize the objective of STAR-P to reduce poverty, extra attention may be needed to increase gender awareness at the household about farming as a family business for both female and male at the household level and community to achieve sustainable income generation and use from the farms.

Implication to STAR-P

Participation of women in the local markets implies that women realize less income because they market low value crops and have limited access to high value markets because of the

distances involved and the cost of accessing the markets. STAR-P could invest in value addition, branding and packaging of low end women crops to reach the high end markets with better price as well as rural market infrastructures that can attract better buyers.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING

Some progress has been made in incorporating women in community-based decision-making structures but barriers to women's meaningful participation in public decision making still exist including: lack of confidence to assert themselves in public owing to cultural and religious practices and beliefs which limits public space for women, low educational levels and difficulties in balancing the demands of public office with their multiple gender roles.

Communities are generally aware that that there should be some representation of women in community based structures. The study established that despite these efforts, men still largely dominate the structures. The dominance of these structures by men was reportedly perpetuated by patriarchal attitudes and practices.

The consultant visited one of the farmers' primary cooperatives called Dokodan in NIMBA County where farmers sell their crops through the cooperative who in turn sell to the market. The cooperative consisted of 360 members, 110 women and 250 men but only 2 women are in the board as group leaders. Members of the cooperative receive benefits such as farming skills through training by extension, collective crop marketing, improved bargaining power, sharing profits from sales of crops in question and support services.

Memberships to the cooperative are easy, voluntary and a fee of USD40 is paid annually. It was noted from the FGDs that it was easier for a man to become a member than a woman. The reason for this was that women have limited decision-making power over use of the amount of money as fees. It was also revealed that if a man is a member in a certain group then automatically he represents the woman.

In communities with strong traditional practices women have not been incorporated into decision- making structures, in some instances, it has been cosmetic positions such as chair lady as noted by CHAP officials:

"communities are so cunning; they have created chair lady position to cover up women position in leadership"

This was particularly the case with structures that were chaired by traditional leaders such village heads and chiefs. Gender parity in community structures does not necessarily equate to equal influence between men and women in terms of decision-making. The study noted that in some communities where women dominate development projects such as vegetable gardens in Nimba, there is a tendency to elect men as chairpersons even if the majority of committee members are women. Such men elected into chairmanship tend to dominate meetings and make decisions on behalf of the whole group.

Figure 8: Traditional and Religious leaders met



In Senjeh community, Bomi County where the Muslim religious sect has a big presence, women

rarely participate in committees. The chief socially exclude themselves on the basis of their religious beliefs and yet some of the most vulnerable and poorest households are found within this sect. The chief committee is composed of males except one position of the chairlady responsible for the women's affairs. The Chief of Senjeh community had this say,

“the time for the women to lead has not yet reached and its God who will determine that time”

Therefore, meaningful participation by women in public decision-making is still limited, particularly in Muslim communities. While gender parity could have been achieved in some farmers' cooperatives and community-based committees, there is further need to ensure that women influence decisions that affect their lives. Men and traditional leaders have to embrace and acknowledge the importance of women's participation in public decision-making.

Implication for STAR-P

Meaningful participation by women in public decision-making is still limited, particularly for Bomi county and Muslim communities. While gender parity could have been achieved in some community-based committees, there is further need to ensure that women influence decisions that affect their lives. Men and traditional leaders have to embrace and acknowledge the importance of women's participation in public decision-making. This implies therefore that participation and decision hinges largely on the appreciation by men of the functions and usefulness.

PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO GENDER EQUALITY

There has been a myriad of development projects in Liberia on reducing poverty with minimal gender focus. Although some awareness on gender, targeting of women and allocation of resources have been minimally achieved, gender mainstreaming as an approach to development interventions and to improve the status of women often lacks adequate integration at the organizational or field level has been limited.

In spite of the MoA gender strategy that expired in 2015 and an established MoA gender unit, various programmes/projects and their respective budgets within MoA reviewed indirectly had very little influence on gender equality. There are inherent weaknesses in programme implementation that negatively affect their gender responsiveness. The resources allocated to gender equality specific activities have been very negligible. Very limited or no attention was paid to having programme documents gender sensitive in including the upcoming new projects such as STAR-P and WAATP. In fact, almost all the programme documents were gender blind except for percentages to target women as beneficiaries and emphasis on sex disaggregated data.

Among other programmes reviewed are:

- ✚ Smallholder Agricultural Productivity enhancement and Commercialization (SAPEC)
- ✚ Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRSP)
- ✚ West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP)
- ✚ Climate Change Adaptation Agricultural Project (CCAAP)
- ✚ Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)
- ✚ West Africa Agricultural Development Programme (WAATP)

✚ Smallholder agricultural Transformation and Agribusiness revitalization Project (STAR-P)

Although it was not one of the specific objectives of the GA to carry out a capacity assessment of STAR-P partners, it was regarded important to gauge the gender mainstreaming capacity levels of the partners because the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives hinges on the technical capacities of the implementing partners. Assessment of capacity was done through interviews with STAR-P partners, review of programme documents and interaction with programme staff during the GA.

Most partners met confined gender mainstreaming to the disaggregation of data and the balancing of men and women in the institutions. There was limited appreciation of the dynamics and meaning of gender beyond the numbers. Having equal numbers of men and women in an organization does not necessarily translate to meaningful participation and decision making by women.

Capacity gaps were noted within STAR-P potential technical partners who play a critical role in Sub-Component 1.2 of the project in terms of Capacity building/ Institutional support for Government MDAs and selected Non-state Institutions¹⁵. In most interactions, with KI and gender responsive programming or research is seen as the concern of a gender specialist and the number of women and men working in the projects as noted by CARI Director,

“There is no policy specific to the matter, but when it comes to gender, we are very sensitive as to how many men and we have in the institution to enhance equal employment opportunity”.

But he was also quick to say that,

“As time goes by I know we will definitely include lots of women in the institute because currently the post-harvest department is focused on women and is providing means of reducing the efforts and energy, stress and time during the post-harvest activities”.

Another KI commented that

“we have not done much gender equality in our previous projects but the upcoming new project has got a position for a gender specialist” (IFAD Official)

Both responses imply the lack of gender integration and awareness among the key STAR-P partners. Discussion with staff at MoA and PIU revealed the need for gender tools for use at the field level to facilitate partners gender responsiveness. Partners also need to be equipped with mainstreaming skills to enable the partners to effectively mainstream gender in the implementation of their programme activities. Capacity training of these partners should be prioritized by the STAR-P.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN STAR-P

The PAD presents an opportunity for gender mainstreaming in the targeted value chains. This section discusses gender analysis of the PAD and respective recommendations, general,

¹⁵ Project Appraisal Document

specific actions and lessons learnt, that can be undertaken by STAR-P to address the gender gaps identified in the gender analysis.

STARR-P PROJECT COMPONENTS

To enhance the ability of STAR-P to address the gender gaps identified in this study, emphasis needs to be placed on (1) support to women's participation at all levels of the value chains; and (2) support to women farmers for access to markets and production factors. These two pronged approach can be addressed in the project components more generally as wells specific actions with the respective implementing partners.

Component 1: Institutional Capacity Building for farmers, State and Non-State Organizations

This component is designed to build the capacity of community institutions, enhance capacities of the supply chains of selected agricultural commodities, and improve agricultural policy environment but no specific attention is given to women specific institutions or groups. However, to enhance gender equality this can be strengthened by mainstreaming gender in the respective sub components.

Subcomponent 1.1: Strengthening Existing Smallholder Farmer-Groups for selected commodity value-chains

STAR-P needs to recognize the gender constraints in the targeted value chains and offer a sustainable support for women to be successful players in value chains and take advantage of the existing network of women's groups or establish new once. Support needs to strengthen the ability of women's groups to cooperate with and understand the requirements and needs of other players. Enhance the potential of these networks to become effective conduits of information and delivery of agricultural inputs and products to its members in the areas of: Technical production capacity; Access and control of physical assets and control of financial assets; Dedicated market channels for women in both input and output markets, and Capacity development to strengthen self-esteem and leadership capabilities.

Interventions need to focus on strengthening women's roles in partnerships, and their profit and market orientation. The project need to invest on costs of organizational development that enables women's farming groups to become economically viable and sustainable. facilitate leadership trainings, mentorship and sensitization of private sector, cooperatives etc to improve women's representation at the management and decision making levels of the institutions. At the farm level build entrepreneurial and innovative farming skills in women and provide suitable equipment to ease the burden of farming.

Subcomponent 1.2: Capacity building/ Institutional support for Government MDAs and selected Non-State Institutions

In order to sustainably maximize the ability of the government MDAs to support interventions that address gender issues in STAR-P emphasis on the institutional framework is critical. This requires clarity on MDAs roles and mandates, emphasis on technical and implementation capacity, and improved coordination and information sharing among relevant MDAs. Building institutional capacity in the areas of policy, programming, and monitoring of gender issues in

STAR-P is necessary to encourage development of skills commensurate with respective institutional mandates for example:

1. The MOA Gender unit needs to strengthen its capacity and knowledge of gender issues in STAR-P. Specific areas to be targeted include skills to guide the policy dialogue, to coordinate the integration of gender issues into STAR-P, and to ensure that gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation are adequately integrated into the program. Dedicate or supervise gender officer of STAR-P to oversee gender issues in the projects. Focus on gender training at the central level, to ensure effective interaction and proactivity with other relevant institutions, at the decentralized level, MOGD County Gender Officers are adequately versed with STAR-P and gender issues. MOA needs strong gender capacity building through training and exposure that acknowledge and address gender disparities in STAR-P. The gender training and respective tools are necessary at the MOA gender unit as well as decentralized level levels, including in research and extension functions.
2. The Central Agricultural Research institute (CARI) and the Agricultural Extension Service, MOA's technical and service delivery arms, also need to be targeted with gender-aware capacity building to better identify and disseminate gender-sensitive technologies. While rebuilding capacity in these services, it will be important to incorporate gender considerations ranging from the composition of trainers and trainees to actual program content at both national and decentralized levels. Extension staff needs training in the importance of gender issues and effective communication of the implementation strategy to complement their technical skills. For example, there is a need to strengthen CARI's ability to develop and adjust agricultural and agro-processing technologies to improve access by women. Efforts to develop its ability to use gender-sensitive product development processes can be strengthened by exchanges of experiences with similar institutions in other countries. To ensure success, training programs for CARI personnel have to be well coordinated with those for extension staff responsible for disseminating the research products to farmers and a gender focal point person at CARI would help coordinate gender issue within the institution.

Component 2: Financial and Technical Assistance for Enhancement of Productivity and Competitiveness

For this component to sustainably increase agricultural productivity and competitiveness through matching grant support to farmers and agribusinesses for increased investment in value chain segments and farmers' linkage activities. The focus on women's roles as key players in the value chains needs to be enhanced through gender sensitive financing, production technologies and small scale infrastructure. The respective sub-components' gender response includes:

Subcomponent 2.1: Value Chain Financing (VCF) and Technical Assistance (TA) for Productivity Enhancement considering women as producers

- Provide sustainable productivity enhancement inputs and means of production, particularly high yielding seeds, agrochemicals, tools and technical assistance to women promote women-based seed multiplication and seed bank technology
- Improved access to cash crops by providing incentives for private sector to work with women in out-grower schemes and encourage public-private partnerships to address constraints that limits women participation in the targeted value chain.

- Ensure effective delivery of extension messages for knowledge and technology dissemination and provide gender-aware extension, use extension packages and delivery methods that meet women's needs; rely on Farmer Field Schools (FFS) methodology, in coordination with FBOs for extension delivery
- Improve access and land tenure through promotion of information on women's rights to own land and support land registration for women land owners; disseminate existing laws among the rural population to expand benefits from the changes already enacted in the law; and support production in larger areas through promoting productivity-enhancing technologies and reduction of the burden on women.

Subcomponent 2.2: Matching Grants for FBO assets and related market infrastructure

- Promote women groups to lease or own processing plants
- Support women-friendly technology for processing
- Provide business training to strengthen management skills, profit and market orientation for women groups
- Facilitate market linkages for women farmers' groups with wholesalers and processors of the targeted value chains
- Establish strategic gender friendly marketing infrastructure with washrooms and rehabilitate farm-to-market roads through incentive systems such as cash or seeds for work involving women. Support markets rehabilitation and construction of drying floors and primary storage structures that benefit women.
- Facilitate gender-aware storage or receipt system technology to help women during the harvest season
- Establish a market information system collecting and sharing data on product availability and prices, educational campaign on accessing and using market information (radio, cell phone, and so on)

Subcomponent 2.3: Support to MSMEs

This subcomponent aims at providing matching grants and technical assistance to competitively support MSMEs to mitigate risks of adoption of new technologies on production lines with substantial benefits to the smallholder farmer and a competitive matching grant scheme will be established to provide financing for investment in productivity enhancing activities. For STAR-P to achieve its MSMEs matching grants and technical assistance support goal there is a need to mainstream gender concerns and build the capacity of MSME institutions in all aspects of gender equality for women led MSMEs to competitively benefit for the programme.

- Raise awareness, upgrading knowledge and build skills in gender mainstreaming for responsible government ministry or agencies such as Ministry of Trade and Commerce to document existing female and male operated MSMEs in the country for gender responsive intervention.
- Facilitate business extension and support staff to consult with women in the rural areas (at district and village level) to identify their needs and interests for support.
- Promote and establish small business groups/associations and cooperatives of women entrepreneurs

- Identified and strengthen Female role models (in a variety of enterprise situations) so that they become effective resource persons and mentors during field extension and training of women led MSMEs
- Ensure all MSME agencies focus on incorporating gender equality issues into their plans, activities and budgets, with emphasis on: capacity building for the various institutions; greater involvement of women at all levels of operations and decision making, especially at management level, and developing gender action plans.
- Facilitate women led MSMEs training on basic business management, entrepreneurship, marketing and vocational training, updated information on technology, markets; and counselling of new women entrepreneurs involved in establishing and growing their businesses.
- Improve marketing and promotion of the products and services of women entrepreneurs, and this could be achieved through well-planned business events such as trade fairs, as well as through the publication of directories of women entrepreneurs.
- It is recommended that paperwork concerning business registration should be reduced (involving fewer agencies and levels of administration); the length of time for processing loan applications should be reduced; and procedures should be made easier to understand by entrepreneurs, especially women and disadvantaged groups.
- The MSMEs matching grant system should put in place an appropriate mechanism to ensure that women entrepreneurs and various disadvantaged groups benefit equally.

GENERAL ACTIONS

Gender Strategy: Update MoA Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and develop gender action plan including STAR-P specific gender mainstreaming and monitoring indicators (see sample in the annex) from the overarching MoA strategy that is informed by the results of this Gender Analysis. Through this analysis, gaps have been identified which the strategy will need to address. The strategy and tools developed should be communicated and disseminated to all the project life cycle STAR-P.

Capacity Strengthening: there were gender capacity gaps across all key partners, therefore an ongoing gender mainstreaming capacity building including developing basic gender tools needed for partners. Develop a holistic gender training tool kit (see sample in the annex) to enhance capacity training for all project stakeholders to systematically mainstream gender and develop a common approach to tackling gender inequality and women empowerment issues in STAR-P.

Strengthen M&E System: There is a need to capture the elements of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Indicators in the STAR-P M&E system. The M&E system should go beyond gender disaggregated figures but should capture qualitative outcomes of gender mainstreaming. A common reporting template for the programme needs to be developed and should have adequate space for capturing qualitative gender mainstreaming indicators. Adequate time and resources should be allocated to strengthen the M&E system. See examples of gender indicators to include.

Male and Youth Engagement: strengthen/establish male and youth engagement platforms for example Lango Lippaye High School agriculture youth programme, through dialogues and awareness campaigns to ensure that men and youth participate in STAR-P especially on the

areas of asset ownership and control and use of household income, highlighting the advantages of joint decision making in the household and emphasizing farming as a family business to address inter-generational norms. Male engagement should also aim at sensitizing men so that they can speak out against and discourage harmful cultural and religious practices that perpetuate gender inequality.

Traditional and Religious Leaders as entry points: Utilize more traditional, religious and community leaders as entry points for the gender mainstreaming processes. Community members take leaders as role models; hence if leaders are empowered through gender training and awareness programmes, the impact will trickle down slowly to the communities. Role models amongst the traditional leaders should be identified and molded into gender champions who speak out against socially constructed norms around agriculture that perpetuate gender inequality in the value chains

Value chain thinking should be introduced to smallholder farmers and stakeholders. This should cover: Introduction to concepts on value, value chains and standards, Relationships between buyers and sellers, Value and market driven values, Commodity chains and value added thinking, Value chain mapping etc. to enable women and men achieved their desired productivity goal.

SPECIFIC STAR-P ACTIONS TO ADDRESS GENDER GAPS

Table 3: Specific actions to address gender gaps in STAR-P

No	Gender gaps	Actions	Responsible Person
1	<p>Gender issues in agriculture value chains</p> <p>Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women continue to face a “double burden” of domestic and production responsibilities • Men make major income and household decisions • Distinct roles of men and women in the farms, (80% of the work of, Weeding, harvesting, cleaning, storage, men do clearing of land) • Communal Land ownership is restrictive to men and limits registration • Limited access to credit for women • Extension and information services are male dominated • Access to inputs are urban based and male dominated • There are Male/female dominated crops e.g. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitization about gender norms and women's high workloads • Training and capacity building for men about gender norms. • Introduce labour saving technology in women dominated work • Involve male, religious and chiefs as champions of gender equality • Sensitize and support youth in agriculture to address gender roles at an early age • Support land communal rent for women, cooperative fees, land registration and ownership for women/families and conduct land rights campaign • Form/strengthen/formalize VSLA groups for women's financial security and access to credit • Business training and 	<p>MoA Gender unit</p> <p>CARI</p> <p>Gender Unit</p> <p>Gender unit</p> <p>MoTC</p>

	women-horticulture and rice and oil palm are for men	<p>registration for women's SMEs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support agri-input distribution channels to reach rural women • Recruit and train 50% women in rural extension training and activities • Use telephone and media to raise awareness 	<p>Agro-Input dealers/Cooperatives</p> <p>MoA</p>
	<p>Processing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male dominated food processing enterprises • Socially constructed roles in processing • Raw materials mostly sourced or sold by men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender training for processors • Gender guidelines for processors • Support gender friendly packaging • Support branding and packaging of vegetables to benefit more women • Support women processors with capital, business registration etc. to engage in processing businesses • Mobilize women out-growers 	<p>MSMEs</p>
	<p>Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture is female dominated and prices are dictated by buyers "Gobachop women" • Oil Palm sale by women in the local market • Both men and women engage in selling • but men make major decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish gender friendly strategic markets with washrooms, construct rural road to link markets accessible to women • Develop market linkages for women • Support road side and cross boarder women traders • Encourage women in male dominated crops • Established storage and value addition for women's vegetables • Establish Horticulture women cooperative to have a stronger bargaining power of their crop 	<p>MoA</p>
2	Women's Participation and decision making		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers/community structures are led by men except Cosmetic positions created for women (chair lady) • Patriarchy, social construct and religion deny women's participation space • Lack of confidence, assertiveness and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create space e.g. women groups • Adult literacy • Provide seed capital, business registration and credit to support women's led SMEs • Leadership and self-esteem training/activities • Partner with CSOs to advocate and encourage women to 	<p>CSOs</p>

	limits women	<p>participate in Farmers and community leadership e.g LADA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use role models and champions of women's leadership • Exchange and exposure visits learn and build self-esteem 	
3	National Programmes and resource allocation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender blind projects except WAAPP • Limited capacity of MDAs and general lack of gender awareness • Limited Collaboration and capacity of the gender unit • Limited budget allocation • Minimal targeting of women in agriculture • Low political and donor will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engender all new project proposals • Enhance leaders and development partners to commitment to gender equality • Allocate gender specific budgets • Gender training/awareness for all agriculture department • Strengthen and collaborate with MoA Gender unit to mainstream gender 	Gender unit
	STAR-P Implementation Unit		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAD is gender blind but gender analysis is meant to mainstream gender in project design and inform implementation and M&E • Outdated MoA gender strategy • There is no gender specific budget • General lack of gender awareness and capacity of implementing partners • No gender mainstreaming tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engender PAD • Include gender specific indicators in the Monitoring framework • Update MoA gender strategy and develop action plan • Develop gender training tool kit • Allocate gender budget • Recruit gender specialist to collaborate with gender unit • Conduct gender training for all staff and partners • Develop gender indicators • Conduct joint monitoring with gender team • Develop gender sensitive data collection tools • Write gender sensitive reports and communication materials 	PIU

LESSONS LEARNT

During this gender analysis some lessons were learnt that to effectively reduce the gender gap in the targeted value-chains, women should be promoted to an integral part of the project. STAR-P needs to specifically focus on creating diverse sustainable opportunities for women.

- Strengthen the capacity of private sector firms; larger farms and producers to work, support and mentor women farmers and demand for compliance of woman's participation in their various institutions
- Support women farmers' market orientation and processing capabilities for sustainable income generation
- Target capacity building for women through farmer-based organizations (FBOs) for business development services, value addition and women's participation in submitting business development plans
- Upgrade women's roles in value chains to include processing and marketing roles that are not currently a major strength for women in those value chains
- Empower women and women's groups with both knowledge and access to resources, information, and opportunities to competitively participate in the along the value chains
- Establish interactions in the value chains, through facilitation of access to technologies, training, and markets
- Address issues of infrastructure, storage technology, market information and access to finance for women.

ANNEXES

1. EXAMPLE OF STAR-P GENDER INDICATORS

STAR-P Gender equality indicators should measure the following:

- Differences in participation, benefits, outcomes, and impacts for women, men, boys, and girls
- Changes in gender relations (positive or negative)—that is, changes toward equality, or changes toward inequality between men and women, and between girls and boys
- How these changes impact on the achievement of the project objectives?

Gender Equality Dimension	Sample Gender Equality Indicators
<p>Enhanced gender equality in agriculture value chain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Increased access to agricultural and other services, inputs, and markets ✚ Increased ownership of productive resources and assets by women ✚ Increased security of land tenure and usage rights for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes in productivity by women and men ▪ Number and percentage of poor women and men who adopt new production and postharvest technologies ▪ Number and percentage of poor women and men receiving extension services ▪ Description of the number and type of extension activities targeted at increasing the productivity of poor women and men ▪ Number and percentage of poor women and men with increased access to markets as buyers and sellers ▪ Number and percentage of poor women and men with increased ownership of productive assets (e.g., livestock, equipment for production, storage, processing, and marketing) ▪ Number of women with secure tenure or usage rights to land (e.g., where sole or joint ownership or usage right is recorded on land title documents) ▪ Number and percentage of women and men receiving business development advice and support (e.g., how to start and operate a business, taxation, and business regulations)
<p>Increased employment and enterprise development for poor women and men</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Targets met for women's access to financial services and credit for agricultural productivity or enterprise development ✚ Increased employment of women in rural development agencies, including as extension agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of jobs created for poor women and men in the value chain ▪ Number and percentage of women and men trained in enterprise development, business, or financial management ▪ Number and percentage of micro, small, or medium-sized enterprises established or expanded by women and men ▪ Percentage increase in the number of women engaged in viable and profitable micro and small enterprises, including evidence of increased incomes from these enterprises ▪ Number and percentage of women and men who receive credit, by type of enterprise (and profitability) ▪ Proportion of credit provided to men and women ▪ Number and percentage of women and men with increased access to financial services ▪ Description of specific measures taken to increase women's access to financial services and products ▪ Number and percentage of women and men employed in STAR-p as project staff, including the percentage employed as extension agents and community facilitators

	<p>(e.g. agro-processing, marketing, enterprise development, and management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the type of incentives designed to recruit women, increase their capacity, and provide career development
<p>Increased women's participation and decision making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased membership of women in community associations and rural producer and business organizations Strengthened rural women's organizations and networks Women empowered to play an increased decision-making role in their households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percentage of women and men members of community associations and organizations (e.g., irrigation, farmers, credit groups), and the percentage of women in decision-making positions Number and percentage increase in women's rural producer and business organizations and networks Number of rural women's organizations that advocate with government agencies and elected representatives on women's needs, interests, and priorities (e.g., as producers or consumers) Number of rural women's organizations contracted to deliver program or project activities and services Number of women's self-help groups formed Examples of changes in women's decision making in family and livelihood matters due to their engagement in the project Changes in women's control over income (their own earnings and other family income)
<p>Gender capacity gap</p> <p>Strengthened capacity of STAR-p partners to ensure women and men benefit equitably</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More research undertaken that focuses on increasing women's productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new technologies developed targeted at reducing labour intensive agriculture work and increasing women's productivity in agriculture, horticulture, and postharvest processing and marketing Evidence that constraints to women's access to productive resources and assets are documented and analyzed; and that strategies are developed and monitored to address constraints

2. LAYOUT OF THE GENDER TRAINING MANUAL SAMPLE FOR STAR-P

The proposed standard Training Manual on Gender Mainstreaming will be a reference material when designing training programmes on gender mainstreaming for STAR-P. The trainer may adapt training activities to suit their contexts and needs of the target group. It will be important to carry out a training needs assessment of potential learners to help identify training needs/gaps. The results would determine the training programmes, methodology and how it may suit the target group. The manual will be organized in modules and the trainer may use all the modules or some of them depending on what the target group requires and according to specific needs. The modules will include the following: -

Module 1: Introduction to Gender

Module 2: Gender in STAR-P

Module 3: Gender Awareness, Lobbying and Advocacy

Module 4: Gender in Production, Processing and Marketing

Module 5: Approaches and strategies to Gender Mainstreaming and Integration

Module 6: Methods and Strategies of Gender Mainstreaming

Module 7: Mainstreaming Gender into Leadership and Governance

Module 8: Gender Responsive Budgeting

Each module is divided into sections which contain the following sub-sections:-

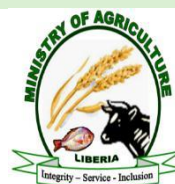
- Objectives of the topic
- Content of the topic
- Training methods
- Learning resources
- Summary
- Trainer's guidelines
- Trainer's notes

3. PARTICIPANTS LIST

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11.	Nyan M. Yardolo	Farmer	Selazor	0886729090
12.	Marcus T. Jones	Director General	CARI	0777978335
13.	D. Kalawala Mulbah	Instructor	Lango Lippaye High School	0777855816
14.	Peter K. Kerkulah	Instructor	St. Augustin high school	0880799312
15.	Varney Kiadii	R. Analyst	Ministry of Commerce	0880077600
16.	Christopher G. Kennedy	R. Analyst	Ministry of Commerce	0886498414
17.	Angeline Y. Garteh	Farmer	DOKODAN	0776584221

18.	Ramcy L. Flomo	Farmers	Selazor	
19.	Paul Y. Gono	Agronomist	CHAP	0886542259
20.	Kaibeh Jallah	M. Aggregator	CHAP	0880359944
21.	Z. Edward Greaves	CAC	MOA, Bomi	0886410489
22.	Barbara Z. Quie	Gender Officer	MOA	0888081045
23.	Mbakai Varpilah Woyee	Liaison Officer	MOA-STAR-P	0886663946
24.	Julius M. Bass	National Coordinator	FUN	0886545786
25.	Boimah Dargo	M& E Officer	FUN	0886530819
26.	Halala W. Kokulo	CAC/ Lofa	MOA	0886556858
27.	Henry H. Sele	STAR-P/ Accountant	MOA/PMU	0886401506
28.	J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr.	STAR-P/ National Project Coordinator	MOA/PMU	0880828775
29.	Edward P. Borloh	STAR-P/M&E Officer	MOA/PMU	0886524003
30.	Jackie M. Eastman	AFA	PMU/ MOA	0886900591
31.	Paulette E. Findley	Administrator	CARI	0770366810
32.	Mbakai Varpilah Woyee	Planning / Liaison Officer	MOA	0886663946
33.	Harris B. Wennie	Deputy registrar	CDA	0886535314
34.	Jehu P. Banneyoo	S, G	NAIDAL	0886347232
35.	Rebecca S. Kalayi	President	NAIDAL	0886579681
36.	Urias J. Tumu	Office Manager	NAIDAL	0777798200
37.	Akoi Kollie	Adviser	NAIDAL	0770444732
38.	Mackie S. Kamara	National Coordinator	NAIDAL	0776195911

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE



Republic of Liberia Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization
Project (ST AR-P) Ministry of Agriculture Credit No: 16045

Consulting Services: RECRUITMENT OF A CONSULTANT TO CONDUCT GENDER STUDY/ANALYSIS FOR THE SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION AND AGRIBUSINESS REVITALIZATION PROJECT IN

LOFA, BOMI, CAPE MOUNT, NIMBA AND MARGIBI COUNTIES.

Request for Expression of Interest

1. The Government of Liberia has applied for financing to the World Bank toward the cost of the Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Rehabilitation Project (STAR- P) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services for **Recruiting the Services of a Consultant to conduct Gender Study/Analysis for the Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project in Bomi, Cape Mount, Margibi, Nimba and Lofa Counties.**

2. The scope of assignment includes, but not limited to the identification and analyzing existing gender issues as they manifest in the agricultural sector in Liberia, and in particular the targeted counties-Lofa, Bomi, Nimba, Cape Mount and Margibi Counties.

At the minimum, the study is expected to map out existing gender realities across the target value chains, specify causes of such inequalities and how they manifest in the productive lives of men and women, and analyze the gender dimensions of access and control of productive resources and development benefits.

The study will also profile the current programs and donor resources for supporting governments' commitment and capacity to work on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment issues in the sector.

3. The Ministry of Agriculture now invites eligible Individual Consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and at least five years relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are: **description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, proof of appropriate skills for the assignment, proposed methodology in achieving the desire objectives of the assignment, specific experience relevant to the assignment and experience in the region.**

4. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants [under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants] by World Bank Borrowers January 2011 and revised July 1, 2014 ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. In addition, please

refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment: relationship with Borrower's staff: Consultants (including their experts and other personnel, and sub-consultants) that have close business or family relationship with a professional staff of the Borrower (or of the project implementing agency, or of a recipient of a part of the loan) who are directly or indirectly involved in any part of: (i) the preparation of the TOR for the assignment (ii) the selection process for the contract, or (iii) the supervision of such contract may not be awarded a contract, unless the conflict stemming from this relationship has been resolved in a manner acceptable to the Bank throughout the selection process and the execution of the contract.

5. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Individual **Consultant Selection (ICS)** Method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

6. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **9:00 to 17:00** hours, Mondays through Fridays.

7. Expressions of interest must be delivered in person or by email to the address below by

September 21, 2017

Attention: Mr. J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr.
National Project Coordinator
Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P)
Program Management Unit
Ministry of Agriculture
Tel: +231-880-828775
Email: jcsaygbe@yahoo.com; csaygbe@moa.gov.lr; mutricias@yahoo.com

5. WORKPLAN

Day	Activity	Responsible Person
Mar 18-19	Travel from Uganda to Liberia	Consultant
Mar 20	Write inception report	Consultant
Mar 21	Meet with STAR-P team for orientation and review of TOR, and discuss draft inception report. Finalize the inception report	PIU
Mar 22-23	Literature review, finalize data collection tools and consultation with relevant stakeholders within Monrovia	Consultant
Mar 24	Write consultation report	Consultant
Mar 25	Travel to the counties	PIU
Mar 26-28	Fieldwork	Consultant/PMU
Mar 29	Travel back to PMU	PIU

Mar 30-2 Apr	Information synthesis, processing and report writing	Consultant
Mar 31- Apr 3	Conduct stakeholders consultation workshop and present preliminary findings, recommendations	Consultant/PIU
April 4	Presentation of preliminary findings of Gender study	Consultant
April 5	Travel back to Uganda	
Apr 6-8	Submit draft report to STAR-P	Consultant
Apr 9-16	Submit final report	Consultant

6. LITERATURE REVIEW GUIDE

- What is already known about gender and agriculture in Liberia, in the context of the STAR-P?
- What are the gender gaps? Which can be filled in the course of the program implementation (either through specific actions that are a part of the project^[1] or through other interventions^[2]?)
- How do these findings inform the underlying causes of gender in agriculture?

List of Reports/Materials and more to be Included in the Literature Review

- STRA-P project concept
- MoA gender strategy 2012-2015
- MoA Gender framework 2012-2015
- National Policy on Gender
- Gender in Rice, Oil Palm and Horticulture value chains
- World Bank New Gender Tag: Advancing the gender agenda in lending operations
- ILO Manual on Gender in Value Chain Analysis
- FAO Manual on Gender in Agriculture

7. QUESTION GUIDE

Value Chain	Questions	Respondents
Production at farm or enterprise level	<p>1. Socio-economic status of women/Men <i>Religion, Literacy and education levels, Number of dependents, Age profile, Wealth profile, Women's daily and seasonal calendars, Non-agriculture, sources of income, Community and other levels of participation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do women want to start and/or increase growing, processing, marketing in their own right? - What enables/constrains them? What happens if they do? - Who are the women farmers? Rural, peri-urban or urban farmers - Are the numbers of women engaged in these value chain increasing or decreasing over time? - Incidence of Gender-Based Violence 	Farmers and farmers groups
	<p>2. Gender roles and division of labor on smallholder farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who owns the farms - Who owns, has access to productive resources? Who controls? Who benefits from production? - What tasks do women and men perform on the farms run by (a) men and (b) women? - What is the estimated number of hours/days involved per man/woman? - Do women ever do men's tasks (and vice versa)? - When does this happen? Is this changing over time? - Are sources of labor external to the hh/family used? For what tasks? What are the estimated numbers of hours/days? Who does this hired help represent? Are they from the same community? Ethnicity? Can women use hired labor? 	Farmers and farmers' organizations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to/control of assets and income - How do women and men get access to land/water for crop production? How difficult is it to get land? - What are the differences between men's and women's access? - How has women's access to land changed over time? - What is the land tenure system for the specific area? How does cultural practices influence land tenure practices? - Are farmers aware of Land rights (for men/women?) - Who makes decisions on land use, what to grow, sell products - How is the income/benefits generated shared/distributed in the hh? - Who negotiates the price for the crops when the farm is run by (a) men and (b) women? - Who receives the income? How is the income distributed within the household? - Are women compensated for helping out on the husband's farm, 	Farmers and farmers' organizations

	and vice versa?	
	<p>3. Access to credit for agribusiness at both the farm and small enterprise levels?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do women get credit if they need it (inc. from savings)? When do they need it, and what for? Who from? What type and how much credit can they access? On what terms? - What are the constraints to getting credit (embedded as well as cash)? Are there differences between men's and women's access? 	<p>Financial institutions Input dealers Extension workers</p>
	<p>4. Access to agriculture inputs/extension services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is women/men's access to agricultural inputs and extension services? - What role do women/men play in the delivery of inputs and extension? - What role do women/men play in the ownership of agric input enterprises? - Is the agricultural extension available specific to certain types of crops and how is it delivered? - Do women get farming advice/information from any other sources, eg, buying companies, NGOs, mass media? - What other production/advice would they like to receive? 	<p>Input dealers Extension workers</p>
Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do women engage in buying and trading of both raw and processed rice, palm oil and horticulture? - Who undertakes processing of the crops and why - Do you have informal or formal processors among the farmers? 	<p>Agro-processors</p>
Market access and linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do women get market information? - What information do they get? - Which source(s) of information are most useful/reliable? - What other market information would they like to receive? - What is the split of activities, decision making, and distribution of benefits between men and women? - What tasks do women and men get in buying and trading rice, oil palm and horticulture? - What are the constraints to women becoming traders and buyers, business owners? - How far do women/men have to travel to sell their products? - Are any of you involved in cross-border trade? - What role do women play in decision making? 	<p>CSOs, farmers, Traders Exporters Development partners</p>
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do women participate in farmer groups and farmer associations? As members? In the leadership? - What benefits do they receive? - What hinders their participation? - Are there women groups specific to target value chains? - Are there any producer groups? If yes are they active? 	<p>Farmers Farmer groups</p>

<p>Enabling environment for smallholder farming and agribusiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much of a priority is support of smallholder agriculture for the government? - What policies are in place? - Are these policies sensitive to promote gender equity and women's access to the benefits? - Are there policies that support/hinder smallholder production and processing of rice, oil palm and horticulture? - Do women have access to the benefits of these initiatives? (E.g. Soft loans to small farmers, input and equipment provision?) - Do the communities and District governments feel they are benefitting from these policies and how? Are women benefitting? - How are land policies enacted at the district and community levels? - Are farmers' activities in line with districts development plans¹³. What are your views? Suggestions on how farmers can be assisted? 	<p>Government Development partners Farmers</p>
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