

**Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (RWEE)
MPTF OFFICE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS
REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2022**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women Programme Number (<i>if applicable</i>) N/A MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00132318, 00132319, 00132613, 00132320, 00132777, 00130803 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p>Nepal, Niger, Pacific Islands (Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga), Tanzania, Tunisia</p> <hr/> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i></p> <p>The overall goal of the programme is to secure the livelihoods, rights and resilience of rural women to advance sustainable develop, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.</p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme <p>FAO, IFAD, UN Women, WFP</p>	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National counterparts (government, NGO/CSOs)
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document (2022): MPTF /JP Contribution⁴: USD 4,038,247</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> N/A 	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration <i>151 months</i></p>

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

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

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

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

Agency Contribution • <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> N/A	Start Date ⁵ 15.10.2014
Government Contribution <i>(if applicable)</i>	Original End Date ⁶ 24.05.2027
Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i>	Current End date ⁷ (<i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>)
TOTAL: USD US\$ 38,982,644	
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval. Assessment/Review - if applicable <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>N/A</i> Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable</i> <i>please attach</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: <i>N/A</i>	Report Submitted By <input type="checkbox"/> Name: Catherine McCarron <input type="checkbox"/> Title: JP RWEE Global Coordinator <input type="checkbox"/> Participating Organization (Lead): WFP <input type="checkbox"/> Email address: catherine.mccarron@wfp.org

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

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

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

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCU	Global Coordination Unit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISC	International Steering Committee
JP RWEE	Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
KM	Knowledge Management
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NSC	National Steering Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TWG	Technical Working Group
WFP	World Food Programme
PUNOs	Participating UN Organizations
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second phase of the Joint Programme Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE) is being implemented in Nepal, Niger, the Pacific Islands⁸, Tanzania and Tunisia from May 2022 – May 2027. The programme is a partnership initiative between FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP. The second phase of the programme was formally launched by the agencies at a side event during CSW66 in March, with the participation of the contributing donors, Norway and Sweden.

The programme was previously implemented in seven countries from 2014 to 2021⁹, reaching approximately 80,000 beneficiaries. Key results included an 82% average increase in production by rural women; over USD 3.6 million generated by sales and over USD 1.9 million mobilized through savings and loans. Increased empowerment and a higher gender parity index was also achieved, as measured by the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).

Country programmes were designed by the participating UN organizations (PUNOs) in the five participating countries during the first quarter of 2022 and were approved by the International Steering Committee (ISC) in May. The six-month inception phase for the programme started in June. Inception phase activities included agency clearance and approval processes, staff recruitment, setting up of governance and coordination mechanisms, contracting of implementing partners, geographical and beneficiary targeting and baseline survey preparation. Progress made during the inception phase varied across the countries. In a number of countries delays were encountered as a result of external and internal challenges. Notably, in Nepal and Tunisia, government approval was not received until late November, which impeded the start of activities as planned.

At the end of 2022, all country programmes had been approved by government as required, geographical targeting had been undertaken in all countries, in collaboration with government. Beneficiary targeting and the baseline survey was completed in Tanzania. Governance and coordination mechanisms were established in all countries. Two International Steering Committee meetings took place, along with National Steering Committee meetings in Tanzania and Tunisia.

I. Purpose

The overall goal and programme outcomes for the programme are as follows:

Overall Goal: Rural women's livelihoods, rights and resilience secured to advance sustainable development, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

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

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

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

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

⁸ Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga

⁹ Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

There are no results to report for 2022 as the six-month inception phase for this second phase of the JP RWEE commenced mid-year and, with the exception of Tanzania, programme activities did not start during this period.

Programme Start-Up

The country teams developed their country programme documents during the first quarter of 2022. This process was supported by the Global Coordination Unit (GCU) through two workshops held to guide the country teams in understanding the JP RWEE programme outcomes, approaches and monitoring framework. The proposals were reviewed by the Global Coordination Unit and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), following which they were submitted to the International Steering Committee (ISC) in April for review. The ISC approved the country programme documents and annual allocations during an ISC meeting in May. In a number of countries, upon completion of agency clearance and approval, the country programme documents were also required to be submitted to the government for formal approval and signature. In the case of Nepal and Tunisia, no activities, including preparatory activities such as recruitment of a baseline survey provider, were permitted to take place prior to this approval being given. In both Nepal and Tunisia, approval was received at the end of November. As a result, the programme start-up was delayed. Inception phase activities took longer than anticipated in all countries as a result of external and internal factors which are outlined in subsequent sections of this report.

Following the approval of the country proposals, a programme start-up workshop was held by the GCU for the participating country teams. The workshop included sharing key programme learnings from phase one, including findings from the decentralized final evaluation. The RWEE programme approaches and strategies were presented and discussed. The MEAL Specialist and Communications and Knowledge Management Specialist also held orientation sessions for the country teams, including a comprehensive presentation of the global M&E framework. The MEAL Specialist also oversaw the finalization of baseline survey tools in each of the countries, based on the global M&E plan. Guidelines and tools for the country exit strategies were also prepared by the GCU and country exit strategies will be developed in 2023, in consultation with key stakeholders.

In Tanzania, the programme was formally launched in October and the event, attended by over 80 stakeholders, was co-officiated by the Minister of Blue Economy and Fisheries and the UN Women Executive Director.

Geographical and Beneficiary Targeting

Beneficiary targeting guidelines and tools were developed by the GCU and a workshop was held by the global MEAL Specialist to guide the country teams through the required beneficiary targeting process, in line with the programme's commitment to Leave no One Behind. A targeting taskforce team, consisting of relevant agency technical focal points, was established in each country programme to implement and oversee beneficiary targeting. A community driven targeting process took place in Tanzania. This involved the close involvement of local authorities and community leaders in the discussion, verification and validation of targeting criteria and beneficiary selection. A total of 8,000 beneficiaries were selected and registered. Targeting criteria included women involved in limited small

scale economic activity, women with children under five, people with disabilities, and single female headed households. Beneficiary targeting is planned to take place in the remaining participating countries in the first quarter of 2023.

Geographical targeting to identify the specific communities of intervention took place in all five participating countries, and involved consultation and endorsement from national, regional and local authorities. Criteria for the selection of intervention areas included: indicators relating to poverty, food security, nutrition, climate change vulnerability; ongoing or recently completed UN interventions which could be leveraged; remoteness (Niger and Pacific Islands), and the number of conflicts related to natural resource management (Niger). In Niger, communes were also selected in which there will be potential to facilitate exchange and learning with the beneficiaries of the first phase of the JP RWEE.

Baseline Surveys

A baseline survey was undertaken in Tanzania (Dodoma, Singida and Zanzibar¹⁰), with a total of 700 households being surveyed. The survey included both control and intervention groups to enable an evaluation of impact on empowerment at the end of the programme. Preliminary results were made available in December and showed that, in terms of food insecurity, females have higher prevalence of food insecurity in comparison to their male counterparts and that female headed household with more than two children under 5 years old (or with family members holding minor disabilities) have significantly less dietary diversity than other women. On empowerment as relevant to the pro-WEAI Index, women seem to be disempowered especially in work balance and intimate partner violence (Zanzibar). On resilience and climate change, the ability of communities to manage climatic shocks and risks is low in almost all of the targeted districts. The baseline findings will be used to establish programme targets and enable the programme team to tailor the interventions accordingly.

Baseline surveys are planned to take place in the remaining participating countries in the first quarter of 2023.

Activities

As beneficiary targeting was only fully completed in Tanzania, this was the only country where activities took place in 2022. The following activities were carried out.

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

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

Mass sensitization activities including community dialogues, sensitization meetings and community radio sessions were carried out in Ikungi District (Singida) and reached a total of 1,599 people (663 males and 936). A Community Sensitization Action Plan was developed by a total of 80 members of local NPA-VAWC protection committees. These committees are local level protection committees structured to address violence against women and girls.

¹⁰ Chamwino, Ikungi and Kusini Unguja districts

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

Output 4.1 Enhanced capacities of policy makers and other relevant stakeholders to design, implement and track gender-responsive policies, strategies, legal frameworks and budgets.

The programme provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries in Zanzibar to develop a gender strategy and action plan for the first time. The Gender Strategy and Action Plan was reviewed and validated by a multi-stakeholder group of 80 participants. The JP RWEE will support the implementation of the strategy and action plan during the course of the programme. Technical support was also provided to the review of the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy 2022.

Capacity building was carried out with 18 local government technical staff in relation to the care economy and women's disproportionate unpaid care and domestic work burden. The aim of the capacity building was to inform the design of the local level RWEE programmatic interventions.

In Niger, technical and financial support was provided to the Ministry for the Promotion of Women as part of the commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women (IDRW), October 15th. IDRW was institutionalized by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women in the first phase of the JP RWEE in Niger.

Coordination and Governance

Ahead of the implementation of the second phase of the programme, the governance documents for the Fund were comprehensively reviewed and updated by the Global Secretariat. This included the development of a more detailed Fund ToR, based on the new Programme Document, and the Operations Manual for the Fund. The ToRs relating to each of the governance structures were also reviewed and updated. The governance documents were reviewed and approved by the ISC. ToRs for coordination mechanisms, such as the country-based Technical Working Group and the Coordination Platform were also developed.

A start-up meeting was held by the Global Secretariat and the MPTFO to provide an induction on the Fund's operational aspects and requirements, including reporting requirements. This was attended by all participating countries. In all countries, with the exception on of the National Steering Committee (NSC) in Nepal and the Pacific Islands, the governance and coordination mechanisms for the programme were established. NSC meetings were held in Tanzania and Tunisia.

National Coordinators and MEAL Coordinators were recruited in each country and form the country-based Programme Management Unit (PMU). JP RWEE technical focal points were assigned to the respective country programmes by each agency. Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings, consisting of PMU members and technical focal points, took place on a minimal basis of once a month (more frequently where needed, such as during the targeting and baseline processes).

Two International Steering Committees were held. The first meeting focused on the presentation of the final report from the first phase of the programme. The second meeting focused on the approval of the country programme documents and country allocations. TAC meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis.

Communications and Knowledge Management

A knowledge management strategy and five-year knowledge management plan were developed by the Global Coordination Unit, along with a communications strategy and annual plan. These documents were reviewed by the TAC and approved by the ISC. The communications strategy included the development of branding guidelines and tools for use at global and country level. The implementation of the respective strategies and plans will serve to ensure the generation and dissemination of knowledge and learning both internally and externally, contribution to policy dialogue and good practice, ensure programme visibility and support resource mobilisation efforts. Based on the global strategies, country teams also developed KM and communications strategies, as well as an annual comms/KM plans for 2023.

The second phase of the programme was formally launched in March 2022 during a virtual side event at CSW66. The event¹¹, entitled ‘Empowering Rural Women through a Climate Resilience Lens’ included speakers from the Pacific Islands and Tanzania, as well as the Fund’s donors, Norway and Sweden. The event was attended by over 200 participants.

During the full plenary session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October, a programme participant from Rwanda provided a recorded video testimony of the impact the programme had had on her life.

During COP27, a virtual side event was held by IFAD to present the findings of the GALS intervention in the JP RWEE in Rwanda.

A detailed presentation of the programme was also made by the Director of Gender Equality, WFP, supported by FAO and IFAD, to an informal meeting of the executive board of the Rome Based Agencies in December.

External knowledge sharing and programme visibility was also increased through the launch of a JP RWEE quarterly newsletter. Two newsletters were circulated, the first in September and the second in December. The newsletters included the dissemination of key learning documents and KM products from the first phase of the programme, such as the WEAI impact evaluation findings, as well as two JP RWEE policy briefs. The newsletters were circulated to an external audience of over 500 people, as well as within the internal networks of the four UN agencies.

An internal JP RWEE knowledge management platform was set up through Microsoft Teams in December. This platform includes JP RWEE focal points and technical staff from each of the PUNOs in all of the participating countries, as well as HQ gender equality specialists. The platform enables a shared space for sharing information, resources and good practice documents. It also offers a forum for JP RWEE staff in different countries to communicate with one another. Country teams participated in an orientation session provided by the JP RWEE Communications/KM Specialist.

¹¹ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3hOsyF6nxQ>)

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

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The progress made during the inception phase varied from country to country and took longer than anticipated, resulting in the start-up of activities being delayed in all countries. The reasons for these delays are as follows:

- Time taken for internal signature and programme clearance within the PUNOs varies between the four agencies, with some agencies requiring longer clearance procedures than others. As a learning, and given that approval processes cannot start without ISC approval of country proposals and allocations, in any future country start-up this needs to be accurately factored into the preparatory start-up time ahead of the agreed inception phase period.
- Procurement procedures, particularly within IFAD, are lengthy and require extensive levels of detail. This has meant that implementing partner contracting has taken time. The resulting delay has been a particular challenge in the Pacific Islands, where IFAD is responsible for hiring service providers to carry out beneficiary targeting and baseline surveys in each of the four islands. In this instance, IFAD is proactively engaging with potential partners to create awareness of the JP RWEE and the forthcoming tender. A list of potential vendors has also been compiled. In the case of other agencies, where possible, goods and services procurement were initiated, whilst awaiting the finalization of implementing partner/service provider contracting.
- In Nepal and Tunisia, no activities, including the contracting of baseline service providers and implementing partners, were permitted to take place until government approval for the programme was received at the end of November. In Nepal, such a delay was not foreseen as additional layers of approval have recently been introduced at government level. In Tunisia, there was political change taking place during this period which led to delays. To mitigate in the future, country teams should be well aware of government procedures and requirements, and endeavour to clear internal procedures as efficiently as possible prior to requesting government approval. Where this cannot be mitigated, it should be realistically factored into inception phase planning.
- The programme was also affected by increasing global prices in 2022, in particular fuel, food and commodity prices, which were caused primarily by the War in Ukraine. In Niger, for example, the price of diesel increased by 24% between August and September, impacting the cost of transport during targeting processes. In the Pacific Islands, this has resulted in increased prices for imports including agricultural inputs such as fuel, fertilizer and equipment. These price increases will be monitored in 2023 and may have an impact on planned activities and inputs. In Tanzania, increased prices led to a significant increase in the rates for government Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA). As a result the programme is seeking to combine coordination activities with government and organize hybrid/online meetings where possible.
- The annual workplans for 2023 were developed to take into account the delays. Each country also updated its risk matrix.

Good Practices

- The close involvement of government at local and national level was established as a good practice in all countries. Regions of intervention were agreed with government during the design stage and close collaboration took place during the inception phase to determine the exact areas of intervention, based on agreed criteria relating to the demographic profile and socio-economic indicators. There was also close involvement of local communities and local government during the beneficiary targeting process in Tanzania. Local government technical staff also actively participated

in the baseline survey. This close involvement from the outset is important for understanding and ownership of the programme by government, as well as contributing to programme sustainability.

- Good practice in beneficiary targeting were established through the development of comprehensive guidelines and tools to guide targeting and ensure a thorough and inclusive process to take into account intersectionality which can increase women’s marginalization and exacerbate barriers to equality and inclusion. The targeting process is documented in each country for knowledge management purposes and for monitoring during the programme to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable. A targeting taskforce team was also established within the PUNOs to ensure a robust targeting process.
- Country teams established regular and frequent meetings of the technical working group during the inception phase in order to ensure strong collaboration and planning from the outset.

- **Qualitative assessment:**

N/A

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment

N/A

iii) A Specific Story (Optional)

N/A

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

N/A

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

N/A

V. Resources (Optional)

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation allocated an award of USD 6.8 million to UN Women in November for the JP RWEE. This will be used to fund Rwanda’s participation in the JP RWEE, as well as to fund qualitative research across the countries. Whilst the award is granted to UN Women outside of the MPTF modality, Rwanda will be fully involved in the global programme, including in the generation and sharing of evidence-based learning and knowledge.

