



Secretariat Annual Narrative Progress Report

Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Phase II
(2022-2027)

Multi-Partner Trust Fund

Reporting Period: January–December 2025

Project Title:	Participating Organization:
Programme Title: Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment MPTF Office Project Reference Number: 00130803	FAO, IFAD, UN Women, WFP (WFP Secretariat hosting the Global Coordination Unit)
Project Location(s): Rome, Italy	Budget Summary: Total approved budget as per project document: Original Project Budget: \$ 2,000,000
Project Duration: Overall Duration: 12.5 years Start Date: 15.10.2014 End Date: 31.12.2027	Report Submitted By: Name: Elena Ganan Title: Global Coordinator Participating Organization (Lead): WFP as Secretariat Email: elena.ganan@wfp.org



Photo: JP RWEE Nepal/ November 2025

1. Background

The Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress Towards Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment” (JP RWEE) is a global initiative that improves rural women’s livelihoods, advances their rights, and strengthens their resilience in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Across both phases, the programme has applied an integrated approach to address the interconnected challenges faced by rural women, particularly in remote and marginalized areas. It links support for production, incomes, and market access with actions to improve nutrition, leadership, voice, and decision-making, while promoting gender-responsive policies and inclusive social norms. By working at individual, household, community, and institutional levels, JP RWEE fosters transformative change that enhances livelihoods, strengthens food security and nutrition, and advances women’s empowerment and gender equality.

The JP RWEE was initially established in 2013 through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTFO) and the four UN agencies, FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP, based on the Terms of Reference for the Fund. The Fund was extended in December 2021 for a six-year period until 31st December 2027.

The JP RWEE is administered by the United Nations MPTFO and governed by an International Steering Committee (ISC) which acts as the main decision-making body. Hosted by WFP as the Secretariat, the Global Coordinator Unit (GCU) was established for the overall coordination of the programme and to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the Fund with regards to strategic, technical, operational, administrative and financial matters, in close collaboration with the Fund’s governing structure, which is chaired on a rotational basis by each of the participating agencies.

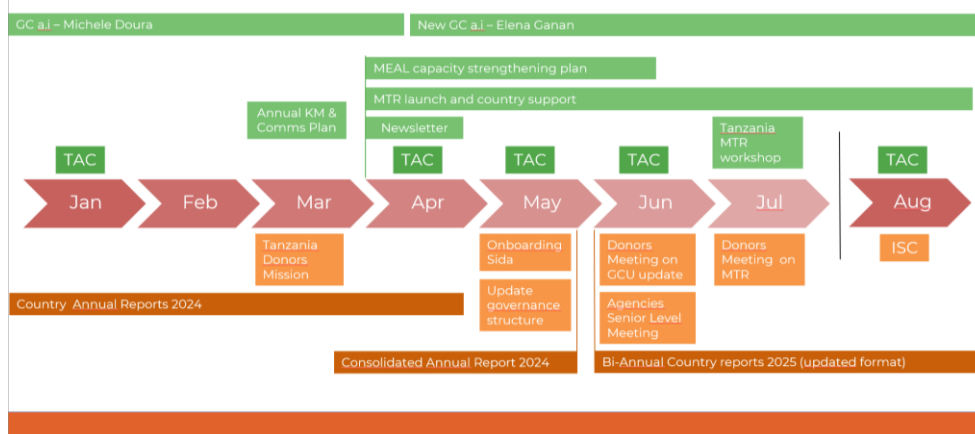
2. Reporting Period Overview

This report focuses on the third year of Phase II (January–December 2025) and on the work at global level, coordinated by the GCU, in collaboration with the national teams and the consultative support of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This report is aligned with the ISC’s approved direct cost Secretariat project document (Prodoc) for the period of 12 months from January to December 2025.

Regardless of being a year of transition, with long recruitment processes, organizational restructuring and rigid efficiency measures, the GCU managed to achieve a productive year and comply with all programme cycle requirements.

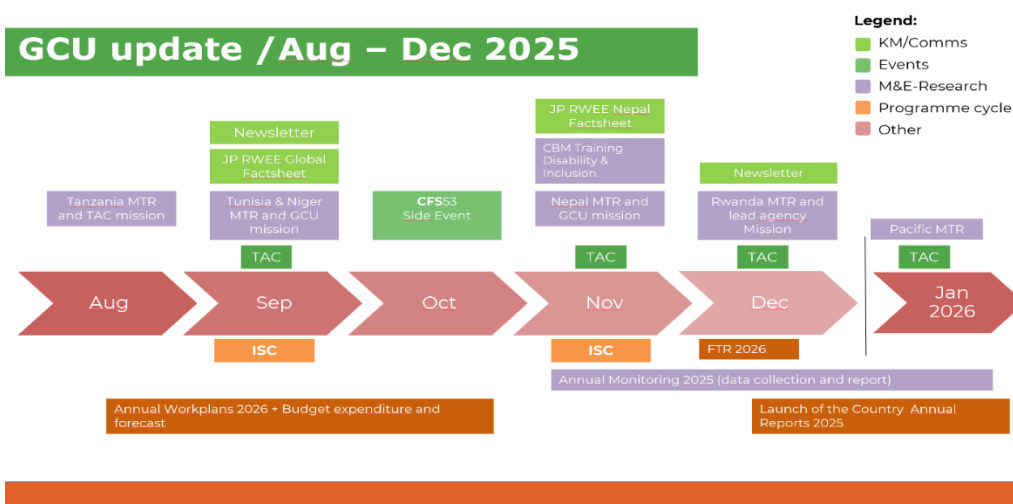
2025 was a year of increased engagement with the donors. In the first half a year, in March, a donor mission to Tanzania, was organized by GCU in close collaboration with the country team and the Participating UN Agencies (PUNOs). Donors Representatives from Norway, Switzerland and Ireland were accompanied by the WFP Director of the Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service, a TAC member from UN Women and programme staff from PUNOs at the national level. Recommendations were formulated and then addressed during programme implementation throughout the year. During the rest of the year, beyond the ISC, several exchanges were organized around the Mid-term Review (MTR), as well as onboarding of new ISC members.

GCU update / January – July 2025



In the second half of the year, efforts focused on consolidating JP RWEE's position in global gender equality and food security fora while preparing for the next programme cycle. MTRs were conducted across most countries to inform evidence-based adjustments, with inclusive participation of stakeholders, particularly rural women, and strong communication continued through quarterly newsletters, factsheets, and social media to support advocacy and engagement. A key milestone was the JP RWEE side event at the 53rd Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October, "[From Policy to Action: Investing in Women for a Just Agrifood Systems Transformation.](#)" Government representatives from Ireland, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM), took part in the discussion, bringing diverse perspectives on what meaningful investment in rural women looks like in practice. Panelists highlighted how the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality (VG-GEWGE) and the JP RWEE are powerful tools to accelerate transformation across food systems. At the programme level, MTR findings informed the development of the 2026 Annual Workplans progress and budget forecasts were shared for approval to ISC, ensuring funds were transferred to three of the five projects by the end of the year. The Annual Country Report exercise was launched in December to close 2025 strongly and enter 2026 with clarity and sustained momentum.

GCU update / Aug – Dec 2025



3. Activities

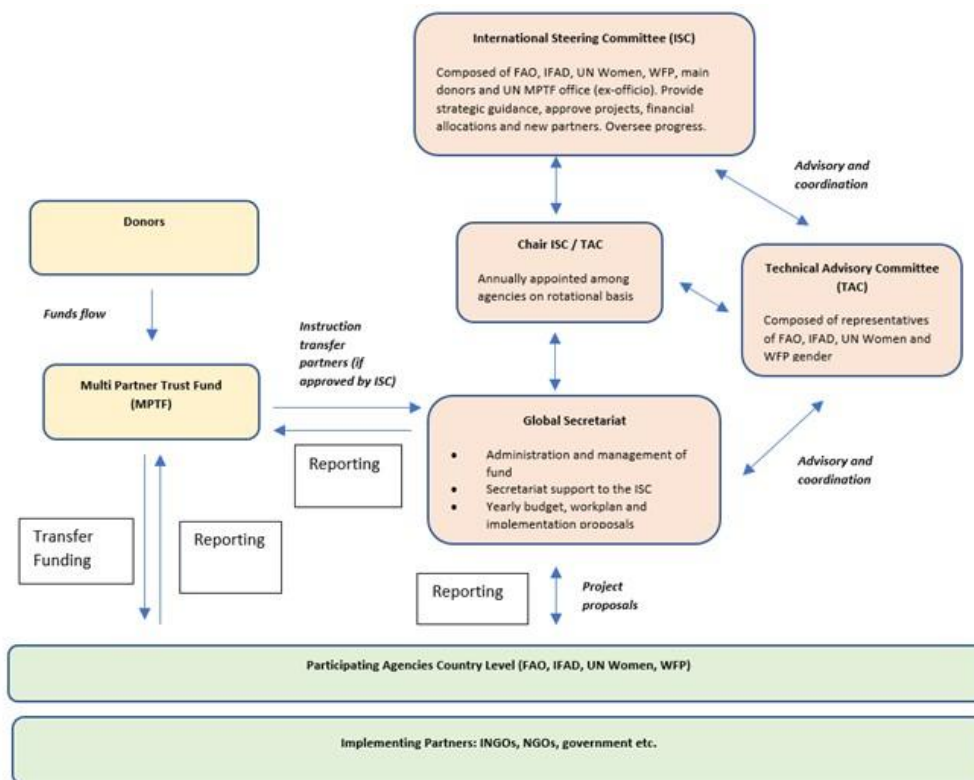
During the reporting period, the GCU provided support to the Fund under the guidance of the TAC, through the following activity areas/functions:

a. Update Governance Structure

Ahead of and during the November 2024 ISC meeting, concerns were raised about the structure of the ISC, particularly regarding the limited time available to adequately review country-level

implementation due to a crowded agenda and the onboarding of new members. These challenges contributed to the inability to approve the 2025 annual workplans, following questions on the 2024 consolidated annual report. In addition, members requested the formal inclusion of a Government of Rwanda representative in the ISC as full and formal recognition of Rwanda as an implementing country of the JP RWEE Phase II.

In response, the TAC met in early 2025 and tasked the GCU with proposing adjustments to address these issues. The GCU proposed **introducing a regular second ISC meeting each year**, aligned with the release of the consolidated annual report and the mid-point of annual implementation. This extra meeting in 2025 has provided a structured space for feedback on the consolidated report and for informal updates on the implementation progress across the countries, ahead of bi-annual reporting and annual workplan preparation, thereby improving governance efficiency and oversight. **Rwanda has also been officially invited as a non-voting member** and has joined both ISC meetings in 2025. Taking the opportunity of the revision of the Operations Manual with these changes, the GCU and TAC agreed as well in a **new visual representing better the linkages between the GCU, the Chair and the TAC** (previous version did not had specific box for the Chair) as per the different roles assigned at design of the structure. The Revised Operations Manual was shared with MPTFO for reference. Updated Operations Manual Rev2025 reflects these decisions. ISC TOR remain the same.



b. Reporting and Planning activities

In 2025, the GCU focused on coordinating and supporting the countries in planning their workplans and budgets and preparing their annual country reports including the performance results framework, beneficiary adjustment, and updating their plans for knowledge management and communication. To ensure quality and alignment, all went through various rounds of contributions and reviews by GCU, TAC and Head of Agencies (HoAs), prior timely submission as per deadlines agreed in Operations Manual both to the MPTFO and the ISC. The GCU also reviewed the Annual Country Report of Rwanda, for the Gates Foundation.

The GCU managed ongoing engagement and coordination with the MPTFO, mostly around the period of transition between the portfolio managers during first quarter, on preparations for funding framework for the ISCs, and at the time of the fund transfers for the upcoming year implementation. Accessibility to the Gateway FAS platform was granted. Under the guidance of

MPTFO, specific support was provided on budget revision related to Tunisia Project, in view of the closure of the WFP Office and the decision to transfer programme responsibilities and budget to FAO. The FTR for Tunisia was delayed until May 2026.

Beyond the regular cycle of planning and reporting the GCU also supported the country teams with regular meetings on coordination, MEAL and knowledge management and communication, responding to ad hoc support in the different areas. For example, with the support in the recruitment of the national coordinator position in Tanzania (parental leave) or support in reviewing TORs for consultants at country level.

c. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)

During the reporting year, the GCU M&E function, under the lead of the Global MEAL Coordinator, focused on the JP RWEE Mid-term Review (MTR), the annual monitoring cycle, strengthened data reporting systems with expanded data evidence learning outputs.

- **Mid-term Review (MTR):** The GCU, under the leadership of the Global MEAL Coordinator, guided and coordinated the implementation of the 2025 MTRs across five participating countries, launching the process in April 2025 and overseeing a 6–9-month cycle from inception to reporting in April 2026. The GCU developed the global methodological framework, guidance package, analytical tools, and reporting templates ([2025 MTR Guidelines for JPRWEE Country teams .pdf](#) (Annex I)) while providing continuous technical support to Country Teams and externally contracted consultants throughout planning, data collection, analysis, and validation. The MTR combined desk review and qualitative research methods to assess relevance/adaptability, effectiveness/impact, efficiency/synergy, and sustainability, with dedicated attention to gender-transformative approaches and climate resilience. The process concluded with participatory national validation workshops involving government counterparts, implementing partners, and rural women's groups; GCU and TAC, as part of the MTR Reference group, provided direct in-country support in Tanzania, Nepal, and Tunisia, while Niger benefited from peer-to-peer engagement led by the Tunisia National Coordinator. The GCU also consolidated country-level findings into a MTR global synthesis to inform internal strategic discussions on consolidation priorities, sustainability, and the future direction of JP RWEE beyond 2027 ([JP RWEE Mid-term Review Consolidated Synthesis Report](#)).

2025 annual monitoring and measurement enhancements: The GCU guided the annual monitoring exercise initiated in Q4 2025, introducing significant enhancements to both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, which required several weeks of preparation, adaptation, and technical training for Country MEAL Coordinators. In collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the GCU piloted a light WEAI-based M&E module to capture changes in women's economic empowerment among programme participants at mid-course, without requiring administration of the full pro-WEAI survey. Additional enhancements included integration of the [Washington Group Short Set on Functioning \(WG-SS\)](#) (Annex II) to strengthen disability-inclusive monitoring and improve identification of persons with disabilities benefitting from programme interventions.¹ Qualitative tools were also upgraded in collaboration with [CBM Global](#) and the Disability & Inclusion technical units of participating agencies. As a result, Country Teams produced more in-depth Outcome Monitoring Reports,² which were technically reviewed by the Global MEAL Coordinator and consolidated into a JP RWEE [Global Performance Results Analysis](#) highlighting cross-country comparisons, implementation trajectories since baseline, and emerging programme-wide trends.

- **Data systems and integration:** Efforts in 2025 focused on strengthening beneficiary tracking and data integration in line with the complexity of the JP RWEE integrated delivery model. A beneficiary adjustment exercise was introduced to capture overlaps across outcomes and improve estimation of unique beneficiaries reached, strengthening analysis of programme integration at both country and global levels. In parallel, Tableau dashboards were deployed to Country Teams, partners, and TAC members in Q3 2025 to support real-time visualization,

¹ Approximately 6% of the JP RWEE target population globally self-identified as persons living with disabilities

² Internal reports available upon request through the GCU.

performance monitoring, and cross-country analysis. Development also commenced on a public-facing dashboard aimed at enhancing transparency, accessibility, and visibility of programme results, with launch planned for the end of 2026.

- **Accountability and feedback mechanisms:** Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs), established and managed at country level since programme inception, continued to strengthen in 2025, with approximately 52 cases recorded across four countries (excluding the Pacific Islands). The GCU supported Country Teams in reinforcing documentation and integration of feedback analysis into programme monitoring, while maintaining country ownership and operational responsibility of the systems.
- **2027 Global Impact synthesis and forward-looking evidence:** The GCU, in close coordination with UN Women and IFPRI, continued to lead technical engagement on the development of the JP RWEE global synthesis. In 2025, focus was given in working towards the preparation of the global synthesis pre-analysis plan, including alignment on PRF core indicators, triangulation approaches, and cross-country analytical frameworks. In parallel, preparatory discussions were initiated with Country Teams and TAC members on the qualitative research component planned for 2026–2027 to complement endline data collection. The process focused on defining common thematic areas, country-specific learning priorities, and pathways of change to strengthen contribution analysis and forward-looking evidence generation across the Joint Programme. This work is continuing in 2026.

d. Capacity strengthening

The GCU facilitated learning exchanges across the participating countries and supported the enhancement of technical understanding and good practice on programme approaches, in collaboration with technical specialists at the HQ level.

- Capacity strengthening remained a core function of the JP RWEE M&E system, with 18 sessions delivered by the GCU to country teams and an average of seven sessions delivered by countries to implementing partners, reinforcing capacities for data collection, analysis, and use. Targeted support included a donor mission to Tanzania in August 2025 and an IFAD-led recalibration mission in the Pacific, which emphasized the need to strengthen market linkages, align activities with outcomes, refine targeting, and improve the sustainability of income pathways.
- The GCU strengthened understanding and coherence of the JP RWEE MEAL system by developing and disseminating a [JP RWEE MEAL System Reference Document 2025.pdf](#) (Annex III)
- in 2025, outlining the programme's integrated monitoring and evaluation approach and its alignment with UN joint programme standards. This document, shared with PUNOs, supports consolidated results measurement and will be a key asset for resource mobilization in 2026.
- In parallel, the GCU expanded capacity-building efforts through global and country-level trainings on knowledge management and communications, introducing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the 2025 KM and Communications Plan, and working directly with country teams in Tunisia, Rwanda, and Nepal. These efforts led to stronger engagement and closer alignment with JP RWEE branding and messaging across countries.
- Finally, with financial support from the Gates Foundation, and in partnership with IFPRI, GCU supported the preparation and launch of the WE-IMPACT 2025 Fellows Programme. This programme feeds into the efforts of the JP RWEE in indicator 4.3.1³ It was successfully delivered a blended learning experience to two cohorts (English and French) between June and October 2025, with certificates issued to participants in December.

e. Communications

³ This programme feeds into the efforts of JPRWEE in indicator 4.3.1 Increase in the number of policy briefs and/or knowledge products published on rural women's economic empowerment topics and measurement strategies by supporting the understanding on how to measure women economic empowerment in agriculture and how to use the data to design policy.

In 2025, the GCU played a central role in strengthening JP RWEE's visibility and advocacy footprint at global, regional, and country levels. The GCU, in coordination with the PUNOs, positioned the programme prominently across major international platforms—including the Rome-based Agencies' (RBA) International Women's Day event, RBA side event at CSW69, and a JP RWEE global policy dialogue at the sidelines of the CFS53—while supporting country-level visibility initiatives such as policy dialogues in Nepal and market-focused fairs in Tunisia. These efforts helped elevate the voices of rural women and consolidate the JP RWEE results in national and global advocacy spaces.

Under GCU's coordination, online and knowledge products expanded significantly. Website reach increased markedly in 2025 (6.6k new users in 149 countries), supported by strategic dissemination of quarterly newsletters (3) and targeted content, while social media engagement grew on key platforms through more dynamic formats and partnerships. The GCU oversaw a substantial rise in content production, including articles, publications, and three thematic newsletters focused on social norms, women's incomes, and climate-resilient agriculture, all drawing on evidence generated by country teams. Although the KM platform revamp was delayed, the GCU kept it operational and prioritized its upgrade for early 2026. Overall, improved visibility and stronger results packaging reflect effective coordination and support and training (as mentioned above) between the GCU and country teams, transforming local-level evidence into coherent global advocacy and learning products. Details of the global visibility efforts in the [2025 Knowledge Management and Communications report](#) (Annex IV) and country-specific KM and Comms activities in the [2025 All country_KM_Comms_Tracking.xlsx](#) (Annex V).

f. Support to the TAC and ISC

As per TOR, the GCU has performed the secretariat support to the TAC and the ISC. In 2025, the GCU dedicated significant time to the organization of seven TAC meetings and two ISC meetings throughout the year. The GCU, in coordination with the Chair (FAO in 2025) developed meeting agendas and produced the minutes, presented regular updates about the programme, keep a tracker of actions from meeting to meeting, prepared background information to the TAC for advise on suggested issues, prepare presentations for the ISC, seek approval with ISC members by liaising with them to provide any clarifications, share additional information to facilitate the decision-making process, and manage the following actions after decisions taken. Onboarding meetings were planned for the new representatives of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Ireland who joined the ISC during the year.

4. Personnel

Subsequently to the resignation of the previous Global Coordinator, the Global MEAL Coordinator assumed these responsibilities until WFP appointed two consecutive Global Coordinators ad interim (a.i.), who led the team and programme until December 2025, when the current Global Coordinator was recruited.

In 2025, the Knowledge Management (KM) and Communications position was filled as planned, strengthening the capacity of the GCU. The role initially started at two days per week until September, after which the contract was extended to three days per week. By the end of the year, the significant KM and Communications portfolio of the JP RWEE demonstrated the need for a full-time position from 2026 onwards.

In preparations for the next year, and for the approval of the Novembre ISC, a new Programme Document (Prodoc) for 2026–2027 was prepared, including revised Terms of Reference (TOR) for a full-time KM and Communications role, as well as updated TOR for the Global MEAL Coordinator. Additionally, the GCU identified the need for support in data management, partnerships, and investment for 2026. TORs for two short-term positions were therefore developed and the process of recruitment with WFP started before the end of the year.

5. Next Steps: Driving Progress Through 2026 Towards 2027 Closure

For the GCU, 2025—representing the midpoint of the programme lifecycle—marked the commencement of longer-term strategic planning, with a forward-looking horizon extending to December 2027 and beyond.

As is the case at the country level, the updated GCU workplan and budget will be submitted to the ISC for approval in June 2026. The primary focus for 2026 will be on laying the groundwork for 2027. This will include leading and facilitating the development of a new project proposal, accompanied by a comprehensive resource mobilization, partnership, and investment roadmap. It will also entail consolidating and streamlining country and global datasets, including the development of integrated dashboards to support improved data management and analysis. In parallel, efforts will be directed towards enhancing programme visibility through strategic engagement in key events, as well as through updates to the website and social media platforms. Finally, attention will be given to the finalization and further development of new knowledge management products and platforms.