

Gender Assessment

FP016: Strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone to climate variability and extreme events through an integrated approach to water management

Sri Lanka | UNDP | B.13/23



C) Gender Assessment and Proposed Gender Action Plan

Introduction

This gender assessment aims to provide an overview of the gender situation in Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on the Dry Zone, and identify gender issues that are relevant to the project, and to examine potential gender mainstreaming opportunities. The assessment was based upon available data from studies conducted by the Government of Sri Lanka, donor agencies, and multilateral development banks; and includes:

1. Undertaking a desktop review and aligning approaches in this proposal with the national priorities of Sri Lanka.
2. Incorporating information and lessons learned from past studies and assessments on gender in Sri Lanka from the Government of Sri Lanka, the United Nations, civil society organisations, and multilateral development banks.
3. Conducting stakeholder consultations and engaging women affected by the project and incorporating all points raised; and
4. Integrating gender considerations in the project indicators, targets and activities, identifying women as leaders and decision-makers.

I. Resilience of smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone to climate variability and extreme events

As an island country heavily dependent on agriculture, Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to multiple impacts of climate change. IPCC's fifth assessment report predicts that South Asia including Sri Lanka is vulnerable to drought, flood, food shortages and heat-related mortality¹. Sri Lanka has been experiencing severe shifts in its seasonal rainfall patterns accompanied by increased flood and drought in the last decade directly impacting rural food security, incomes and plantation related export earnings². About 5.2 million people — equivalent to a quarter of the population — are estimated to have been undernourished in 2014.³ Almost 80 per cent of poor Sri Lankans live in the rural areas and depend on agriculture for food and income. This persistence of rural poverty, indebtedness and vulnerability (despite many efforts by government to support farmers through input subsidies and marketing interventions), high youth unemployment at 19 per cent⁴, low participation of women in the labour force and large scale migration in search of employment all indicate a high level of unevenness in growth and opportunity across the provinces and districts.

Traditionally, smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone used village irrigation systems to deal with the seasonality of rainfall where demand for water always exceeded supply. A typical village irrigation system comprises storage reservoirs and water diversions to irrigate farm fields downstream. Many of these village reservoirs are hydrologically connected along small streams and form “cascades”. These systems evolved over the past two thousand years, and are the outcome of ancient farming communities' attempts to control seasonal flooding and droughts in the Dry Zone, and to ensure the continuous cultivation of paddy during the year as well as provide drinking water for household and livestock consumption.

These village irrigation systems, though designed to overcome regular dry periods of the Dry Zone, have rapidly deteriorated in the past decades due to frequent floods and siltation from run-off, as well as human-induced impacts such as encroachment and cultivation in the watershed, deforestation of local catchments and unsuitable agricultural practices. Siltation due to intense rainfall events and evaporation losses due to high temperatures are more evident in small tank systems than in larger reservoirs. High run-off and siltation have decreased water storage and hence the viability of village irrigation schemes to provide continuous water resources to farmer communities⁵.

¹ <http://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/CDKN-IPCC-Whats-in-it-for-South-Asia-AR5.pdf>

² http://www.climatechange.lk/NAP/NationalAdaptationPlan_RevisedFinal.26.10.2015.pdf

³ <http://www.ips.lk/talkingeconomics/2015/10/26/food-security-does-it-matter-for-sri-lanka/>

⁴ Labour Force Survey Annual Bulletin 2013

⁵ Aheeyar M.M.M Climate change adaptation in water management for food security: Recent developments in Sri Lanka-A review of Existing Knowledge and Information. Sri Lanka Water Partnership 2012

In the Dry Zone districts, especially in the north, north centre, north-west and east, prolonged dry periods have limited access to safe drinking water. Limited recharging of groundwater during these dry periods, and contamination of drinking water sources due to high run-off and sedimentation associated with high intensity rainfall, further aggravate this. There is often insufficient water for domestic consumption, and water sources are often not available in close proximity to where people live. The main source of groundwater in the Dry Zone is the weathered rock zone or regolith zone. This aquifer is recharged by rainfall, which is seasonal, and by water in village irrigation systems during the dry period. Several small-scale water supply schemes use irrigation reservoirs directly as water sources and many wells are also linked to the village irrigation systems, making the quality and availability of drinking water in the Dry Zone heavily dependent on the quality and availability of water in irrigation reservoirs.

Furthermore, the reduced recharge of groundwater during dry periods, concentrates minerals in the available water, well above the recommended levels for potable water. Similarly, accumulated pollutants from human activities tend to be concentrated during dry periods. The heavy floods that have followed some of the prolonged dry periods have led to runoff that has resulted in erosion and loss of soil nutrients, compelling farmers to apply increasing amounts of inorganic fertilisers. This increases the concentration of pollutants in the water during the dry season, creating a continuously vicious cycle of drought, floods and ground and surface water contamination⁶.

Water security in the dry zone is also hampered by a lack of weather, climate and hydrological information, which can be used for agriculture and water management. Farmers do not currently receive seasonal forecasts on which to base decisions about when and which crop varieties to plant, and water releases in the cascade system are not planned using early warnings of extreme rainfall, which would allow them to plan discharges and flood mitigation measures to limit damages to infrastructure. Additionally, there are limited weather and water level measuring stations to monitor the current situation, as well as limited capacity to use this information to estimate floods and water availability which helps manage water supplies.

II. Existing gender inequality in Sri Lanka

The National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2011–2016 has eight sections of which one section highlights the rights of women as the government’s “commitment to ensuring gender equality.”

While women possess a satisfactory position in comparison to other South Asian countries, in accordance with international standards set out by among others, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is still to achieve gender parity and be recognized by international standards as being fully empowered. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Report 2014*, Sri Lanka ranked 73rd of 187 countries in the human development index (HDI) in 2013, with an HDI of 0.750.

A number of horizontal inequalities relating to Sri Lanka are expanded upon below. Ethnicity and gender are two attributes that contribute to unequal access to wealth and opportunity⁷. Whilst women have higher life expectancy and educational attainment than men, socio-cultural factors and patronage systems have contributed to their alarmingly low political representation in national, provincial and local government – below 6 per cent at all levels⁸, and the percentage gets worse at local levels (down to 1.6 per cent at Urban and Village Councils).⁹

⁶GOSL (2010) Sector Vulnerability Profile: Water, Supplementary document to the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2011 to 2016 pp7

⁷ Gunewardena, D. (2009). Inequality in Sri Lanka: Key Trends and Policy Response, UNDP Regional Centre for Asia Pacific, Colombo, Sri Lanka

⁸ Inter-Parliamentary Union website: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> [Accessed on 04/12/2014]. Compiled by authors from Samuel, K. and Kuru-Utumpola, J. (2014) Sri Lanka in Women Count - Security Council Resolution 1325: Civil Society Monitoring Report 2013 (NGO). Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

⁹ Jayathilake, R. Policy Dialogue of the International Conference on Promoting Socio Economic Equity in South Asia. Colombo Sri Lanka

Poverty

Poverty has continued to be an issue in Sri Lanka. The multidimensional poverty index in the *United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report* based on indicators pertaining to living standards, education, and health status was 4.7 per cent in 2011. In 2013, Sri Lanka had a HDI of 0.750¹⁰; and an Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) of 0.643. The Gini coefficient for 2003-2012 was 36.4. While abject poverty is low (around 6.5 per cent), a recent World Bank study showed that the poverty incidence rises dramatically when a US\$2 per day threshold is applied (to around 40 per cent). This shows that while there have been development gains, many people live in the margins of poverty and are easily affected by economic, climatic or other shocks.

Within conflict-affected areas, poverty is exacerbated. Shortages in food and nutrition as well as access to education for internally displaced persons are negatively affected. In addition loss of identification severely constrains mobility and coverage of health services is weakened. Restoration of livelihoods is dependent largely on the prospects of resettlement¹¹.

Education

MDG 3, the *elimination of gender disparities at primary, secondary, and higher education level*, has been reached. However MDG 2 *universal primary education* has not. During the 2005-2012 period, the percentage of women with at least some secondary education (at 25 years or older) was 72.7 per cent¹² compared to 75.5 per cent male, while mean years of schooling were 10.7 compared to 9.4 for males. The expected years of schooling were 13.9 years for females and 13.4 for males. Despite the provision of incentives, poverty has prevented vulnerable groups of children in urban low-income neighborhoods, remote rural areas, plantations, and conflict-affected areas from enrolling in schools and pursuing their education. (UNDP, 2014). Expenditure on education has declined to 1.9 per cent of GDP and 7.3 per cent of public expenditure in 2010, leading to deterioration in the quality of education. State expenditure is limited largely to payments of staff salaries, and donor assistance is required to improve the quality of education.

Political participation

Women have participated fully in exercising their voting rights since universal franchise was introduced in 1931. Nevertheless, their representation in political assemblies from Parliament to local councils has been, and continues to be low, particularly in the context of the world's first woman prime minister being elected in Sri Lanka in 1960. The percentage of seats in parliament shared by women in Sri Lanka is 5.8 per cent¹³ (13 seats). In local government bodies it is less than 4 per cent. Sri Lanka had an elected woman president from 1994 to 2004. Despite this, based on data from 190 countries collected by the Inter-Parliamentary Union as of 1 April 2015, Sri Lanka ranked 130th with 139th as lowest rank. Leadership in trade unions, which have some degree of political clout, has traditionally been male dominated.

Income

When considering the highest positive difference between gross national income (GNI) per capita rank and Human Development Index rank, by human development group, 2013. Sri Lanka shows a high human development is GNI per capita of 103, to HDI 73.¹⁴ Displaying a lack of command over economic resources, the GNI per capita disaggregated by sex demonstrates gender disparity persevering in income with the GNI for 2013 being USD5,078 for females and USD13,616 for males.^{15 16}

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

¹¹ Asian Development Bank, 2009. Poverty and Human Development in Sri Lanka <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27993/poverty-human-dev-sri-lanka.pdf>

¹² United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

¹³ <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

¹⁶ Explanatory note on the 2014 Human Development Report composite indices: Sri Lanka, HDI values and rank changes in the 2014 Human Development Report.

Women earn less than men in a range of comparable employment avenues. More educated women, face greater barriers to formal employment- unemployment among secondary educated (advanced Level completed) women is 10.8 per cent, whereas only 8.8 per cent of those who sat for Ordinary Level Certificate (dropped out at 16 years) are unemployed.¹⁷

Labour force

The unemployed and the working poor, including roles such as landless labourers, small-scale farmers, plantation labourers, small and cottage industry workers, casual workers, construction workers, small traders, and domestic workers—find it difficult to move beyond poverty. Women form the majority of those who are engaged in these occupations. The poorest have no access to land, housing, savings, and basic infrastructure. Women are more vulnerable than men as their life expectancy is higher. Many women are unlikely to have accumulated adequate resources to enjoy a satisfactory quality of life in their old age, in the absence of extensive geriatric care facilities and support networks. Female participation (aged 15 years or over) in the labour market is 34.7 per cent compared to 74.6 for men.^{18 19}

Human mobility denotes a human migration rate (per 1000 people) for the period of 2010-2015 as being -3 per cent; and immigration rising to 1.5 per cent during 2013. The Middle East constitutes the largest source of remittances to Sri Lanka. Almost 60 per cent of remittances came from the Middle Eastern region in 2010 (8 per cent of GDP). Since the late 1970s, the Middle Eastern region has maintained its position as the major market for Sri Lankan labour. In 2009, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan alone absorbed over 86 per cent of Sri Lanka's labour migrants.²⁰ The majority of migrant workers are comprised of those between the ages of 25-29 and consist of balance between men and women, with women employed as domestic labour. With the implementation of compulsory registration of all migrants at the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment as the establishment of a help line, Sri Lanka has made efforts to prevent trafficking.²¹

This migration however has labor market impacts in Sri Lanka. While migration provides economic benefits, female migration in particular has had both positive and negative effects on families and children. Money earned by women often go toward food, education, health care and improving the living standards of family. However the lack of presence can also result in negative social impacts on the families and children left behind, exposing them to new vulnerabilities.²²

Violence

Gender based violence is significantly high. Underpinning all these facets of development are the gendered norms and gender role assumptions that affect the unequal allocation of resources and labour, the inequitable distribution of skills and opportunities among women and men, and unequal gender relations in the family, economy and society. The above inequalities mentioned deprive women of their rights and increase their vulnerability to gender based violence and the gendered norms of socialization in the family, education system and society. Violence has increased in recent decades despite consideration of The UN Conference on Human Rights (1993); the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the inclusion of this issue in the Women's Charter in 1993; amendments to the Penal Code in 1995 and 1998; and the Domestic Violence Act of 2005²³. There has been increasing incidence or visibility of rape, incest, domestic violence and sexual harassment with minimal services to support victims or potential victims.

¹⁷ Jayathilake, R. Policy Dialogue of the International Conference on Promoting Socio Economic Equity in South Asia. Colombo Sri Lanka

¹⁸ Labour Force Survey Annual Bulletin 2014

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

²⁰ Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, Migration Profile Sri Lanka http://www.ips.lk/ips_migration/publication/migration_profile/migration_profile_ips.pdf

²¹ Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, Migration Profile Sri Lanka http://www.ips.lk/ips_migration/publication/migration_profile/migration_profile_ips.pdf

²² Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, Migration Profile Sri Lanka http://www.ips.lk/ips_migration/publication/migration_profile/migration_profile_ips.pdf

²³ Gender dimensions of the Millennium Development Goals in Sri Lanka http://www.undp.org/content/dam/srilanka/docs/mdg/Gender_Dimensions%20of%20Sri%20Lanka.pdf

Gender Inequality Index

Through the years, several indices have developed to quantify the concept of gender inequality. The United Nations Development Programme uses the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Gender Development Index (GDI).²⁴ GII is a composite measure that shows inequality in achievement between women and men in reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market while with a measures achievement in human development in three areas: health, education, and command over economic resources. The GDI considers the gender gaps on human development between men and women.

Sri Lanka has a GII of 0.383 (2013) and ranks 75 out of 149 countries assessed. The GDI value (2013) is 0.961 with a ranking of 66²⁵

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of the World Economic Forum examines the gap between men and women in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival; and political empowerment.²⁶ Out of 142 countries, Sri Lanka's rank based on GGGI in 2014 is given below²⁷:

Description	Score	Rank
Economic participation and opportunity	0.591	79
Educational attainment	0.994	59
Health and survival	0.980	1
Political empowerment	0.196	50
Gender Gap Index 2014	0.690	79

* Inequality = 0.00; Equality = 1.00. Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2014

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), a composite index that scores countries (i.e., 0 to 1) on 14 indicators grouped into five sub-indices: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties to measure the discrimination against women in social institutions across 160 countries. The 2014 SIGI value for Sri Lanka is 0.1894 suggesting that discrimination against women is medium.²⁸

III. Legal and Administrative Framework Protecting Women and Protecting Gender Equality

The *Rights of Women* component of the *National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2011 – 2016*²⁹, identifies the goal of 'Improving the earning capacity of women' within the focus area of Economic Empowerment. Under representation of women in elected bodies at local, provincial and national levels is acknowledged as an issue within the focus area of political representation.

IV. Gender issues in the resilience of smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone to climate variability and extreme events

Sri Lanka is a developing island nation highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Prolonged dry periods resulting in water scarcity exacerbate the vulnerabilities of women in the country, further adversely impacting both environmental the socio-economic activities³⁰ directly affecting livelihoods.

The Dry Zone is one of three climatic zones (dry, intermediate and wet) that divide Sri Lanka on the basis of variations in rainfall. The Dry Zone receives less rainfall than average, and has pronounced dry

²⁴ United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index>.

²⁵ <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>

²⁶ World Economic Forum. The Global Gender Gap Report 2014 Country Profiles. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CountryProfiles.pdf.

²⁷ <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=LKA>

²⁸ OECD. Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014. Country Profiles <http://www.genderindex.org/ranking/South%20Asia>

²⁹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/NHRA/NPASriLanka2011_2016.pdf

³⁰ The National Climate Change Policy of Sri Lanka
http://www.climatechange.lk/CCS%20Policy/Climate_Change_Policy_English.pdf

periods. Sri Lanka is heavily dependent on agriculture and both rain-fed and irrigated agriculture form the backbone of rural livelihoods. The Dry Zone covers 70 per cent of the island's land area and is the country's agricultural heartland. Many forms of employment in the Dry Zone are related to agriculture. Two-thirds of the countries cultivated areas are rain fed or irrigated by numerous minor reservoirs and diversions, collectively referred to as village irrigation schemes. These semi rain-fed systems include over 15,000 village reservoirs scattered across the Dry Zone. Studies confirm that smallholder farmers cultivating under village irrigation systems are poorer³¹ and more vulnerable than their Dry Zone counterparts who have access to major irrigation.³² They have very limited market access, poor basic infrastructure such as roads, drinking water and communication, and are also disadvantaged due to other social and health issues such as conflict and chronic disease. Such farmers are much more vulnerable to impacts of seasonal changes than farmers cultivating under larger irrigation systems. A delayed monsoon or heavy rainfall during the sowing or harvesting period can damage an entire cropping season.

As productivity and crop yields decline with low water availability and unseasonal rains, farmers are vulnerable to deeper poverty and face food deficits, which have to be met by buying food for consumption, and increasing the level of indebtedness among smallholder farmers.

While the impacts of the conflict were experienced throughout the country (e.g. suicide bombing and attacks on public places, economic downturn, social issues with war casualties), several districts in the Dry Zone were directly affected by the fighting and resultant large-scale displacement. The five districts of the Northern Province, three districts in the Eastern Province and peripheral districts such as Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Moneragala and Polonnaruwa were directly impacted by the war. This is about 60 per cent of the country's land area and around two-thirds of the coastline of the country. The end of the war in 2009 has allowed many of these districts to re-enter the economic mainstream. However, serious challenges remain in completing resettlement and meaningful resumption of economic activities in this region, complicated by frequent and recurrent climate-induced disasters and extreme weather events in the last five years. Recurrent floods and droughts in the last five-six years have battered all the districts struggling to overcome the direct impacts of conflict, with severe impacts on food security, income, and water for drinking and sanitation of displaced/resettled communities, as well as those living in remote border districts.

As rain falls only three to five months of the year in the Dry Zone, at a household level women have an imperative role in the management of water and often cover long distances by foot to collect water for drinking, washing and bathing. Women are members of farmer's societies for the maintenance of reservoirs and distribution of irrigation water.³³ however they are not in decision-making roles hence water allocation decisions and crop selection is largely male dominated.

Climate change impacts differently on women and men. In rural communities in Sri Lanka women's role in the household care economy makes them more vulnerable to climate change and disasters due to impacts on household water availability, health of family members and safety of domestic assets such as livestock. Women traditionally manage household water, family gardens and livestock and are in the frontline of managing impacts of reduced water availability and disaster impacts. This affects their own intra-household food security, which can be exacerbated during extreme climate events and in the aftermath of a disaster³⁴. Women take full responsibility for the care of children, persons living with a disability, and the elderly. In the Dry Zone districts of Sri Lanka the impact of war and disease has left a number of women widowed resulting in a significant number of female-headed households. War further increasing women's carer responsibilities to those living with a disability. It has also resulted in pushing other women into precarious work, in Sri Lanka and overseas, as domestic migrant labour. Having access to participation and decision-making about livelihoods support systems is not always accessible.

³¹IWMI 2010 and Sri Lanka Water Partnership 2012

³²Aheeyar M.M.M Climate change adaptation in water management for food security: Recent developments in Sri Lanka-A review of Existing Knowledge and Information. Sri Lanka Water Partnership 2012

³³ Country Gender Assessment Sri Lanka, An Update <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/172710/sri-lanka-country-gender-assessment-update.pdf>

³⁴ibid

The Government of Sri Lanka's Climate Change Policy³⁵ acknowledges that by increasing opportunities for women, a diversified role for women in agricultural activities expands, thereby promoting opportunities for women's entrepreneurship and transformational change.

It is important to note that in order to create transformational change, women are not just seen as climate change victims or beneficiaries. Women are imperative to climate change adaptation efforts. They practice adaptive measures as a part of daily life – through farming and in the face of increasing risks – through disaster recovery and preparation.³⁶ By utilising these existing skills into project design and implementation and by providing a platform in which to empower women to lift this influence from a household to a community and national level, leadership and decision-making capacities and opportunities increase.

Children, girls and boys are part of vulnerable groups; there are many child headed, child supported (children engaged in livelihood activities as parents are either dead or severely disabled) households due to conflict as well as CKDu. Further, in Sri Lanka, after age 16, the percentage of children attending school drops significantly, this is visible especially in CKDu affected areas. According to the MDG Country Report 2014, the percentage of children attending school after the age of 16 is as follows; Anuradhapura and Puttalam (48.9%), Mullaitivu (47.5%) and Mannar (48%). It should also be noted that a significant number of boys drop out of school at an early stage in order to work as laborers in farms. Girls' education is also affected as they are mostly burdened with increased household chores, including collection of water from distance such as looking after younger siblings, cooking, taking care of elderly and sick etc.

Reduced water availability also poses challenges for children, especially the girls. A recent study conducted³⁷ shows that a third of school children in Sri Lanka do not have safe sanitation, despite the island's overall sanitation coverage reaching about 89 percent of the population. A main reason for this seems to be low or lack of water availability, as there are reports of children being advised not to drink water to avoid visits to toilet and especially girls, are being discouraged from using toilets resulting in increased absenteeism during menstruation and children and teachers falling sick. Given considerable disparities identified between urban and remote rural areas³⁸, many schools in Dry Zone would lack toilets or have toilets without water supply. The Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage had made a child-friendly school sanitation with sustainable care and maintenance to be tenth out of 16 priority areas in a new blueprint that acknowledges school sanitation as a challenge. Ministry of Health is also engaged in an island wide programme targeting sanitation improvement at schools. Further, CSO and private sector too, are engaged in providing sanitation facilities for rural schools.

The [stakeholder engagement](#) component of this annex, under section [VI. Recommendations](#) - lists the specific issues and difficulties that women face in accessing water in the Dry Zone. An additional annex to this proposal shows the full results from the stakeholder consultations outlining how women's security is affected by these issues.

[V. Recommendations](#)

[Gender analysis](#)

The gender analysis undertaken at the onset and design of this project acts as an entry point for gender mainstreaming throughout implementation. Stakeholder consultations took place on the 26th February 2016 at the United Nations Compound in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Results from the consultations are detailed below in the [Stakeholder engagement](#) section and [Gender Action Plan](#) and are included in full as an additional annex to this proposal.

The gender analysis, through stakeholder engagement and consultation enabled:

³⁵ The National Climate Change Policy of Sri Lanka
http://www.climatechange.lk/CCS%20Policy/Climate_Change_Policy_English.pdf

³⁶ An Online Sourcebook, Integrating Gender In Climate Change Adaptation Proposals <http://asiapacificadapt.net/gender-sourcebook/wp-content/themes/iges/pdf/integrating-gender-sourcebook.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99017/sri-lankan-schoolchildren-miss-out-on-sanitation-gains>

³⁸ http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/activities_883.htm

- Assessment of the gender-related activities in water resource management in the Dry Zone, including gender roles and responsibilities, resource use and management, and decision making raised by the project;
- Engagement, development and input into the design of the *strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers in the Dry Zone to climate variability and extreme events through an integrated approach to water management* project and the approach moving forward;
- Demonstration of the need for gender-disaggregated data and indicators to establish a baseline in which to measure improvements and identify areas of focus; and
- Establishment of recommendations to incorporate into the Gender Action Plan.

Project design and implementation

Addressing gender dimensions within the project design and implementation, this proposal works to identify and integrate interventions to provide gender responsive and transformative results. As women are key players in agricultural sector and therefore food security, livelihoods and water management, this proposal seeks to address the issue that women own fewer assets and have access to less land, have less input, and access to fewer financial services.³⁹

Female-headed households account for 23.5 per cent of households in Sri Lanka⁴⁰ and higher in those areas affected by war. Female-headed households are socially marginalized, are less empowered and have to work harder to access shared resources.

The proposed project supports the Government of Sri Lanka to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers, particularly women, in the country's Dry Zone who are facing increasing risks of rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and extreme events attributable to climate change. The impact of changing seasons, increased floods and droughts and high temperatures are affecting the lives and livelihoods of poor, conflict-affected farmers in the Dry Zone. Variability of rainfall is severely compromising existing village irrigation systems, as well as the availability and quality of water for agriculture and drinking use, further eroding the coping capacity of Dry Zone communities.

To do this, the project will invest in improving the community irrigation water infrastructure and associated agricultural practices, scaling-up decentralized drinking water systems and strengthening Early Warning (EW), forecasting and water management systems to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmer livelihoods to climate-related impacts.

The project design and implementation will take into consideration the following gender implications:

- Project interventions account for gender differences in how water resources are accessed, used and managed;
- Women's roles as primary homestead and resource manager, in addition to primary income earner in female-headed households;
- Specific strategies to include/target female-headed households;
- Differing conservation incentives faced by women;
- Analysis of gender division of labour in water resource management (e.g. gender-differentiated roles, responsibilities, and needs);
- Women's access to, and control over, water resources and the goods and services that they provide;
- Identification of gaps in gender equality through the use of sex-disaggregated data enabling development of a gender action plan to close those gaps, devoting resources and expertise for implementing such strategies, monitoring the results of implementation, and holding individuals and institutions accountable for outcomes that promote gender equality.
- Access to drinking water and water to support sanitation facilities provided by government and from other agencies to schools;
- Advocacy and targeting for specific at-risk subgroups more explicitly including children and girls, in addition to women. (for instance, children tasked with household duties; neglected

³⁹ The National Climate Change Policy of Sri Lanka

http://www.climatechange.lk/CCS%20Policy/Climate_Change_Policy_English.pdf

⁴⁰ Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2012-2013, Ministry of Policy, Planning, Economic Affairs, Child Youth and Cultural Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka http://www.statistics.gov.lk/HIES/HIES2012_13FinalReport.pdf

children not attending school irregularly; girls forced to care for the sick; etc.)

- Advocacy and awareness is adjusted to most effectively reflect gender-specific differences. Strategies used in the project are then tailored, taking into account such differences;
- Inclusion of a Gender Specialist position / provision of advice within the project to implement gender related activities.

Further, during project implementation, qualitative assessments will be conducted on the gender-specific benefits that can be directly associated to the project. This will be incorporated in the annual Project Implementation Report, Mid-Term Report, and Terminal Evaluation. Indicators to quantify the achievement of project objectives in relation to gender equality will include men and women who had access to affordable solutions, number of men and women employed from the jobs created by the project, training opportunities, knowledge management and information dissemination.

Stakeholder engagement

The stakeholder consultations and engagement of women's organizations promote gender equality at the local as well as the national level. The involvement of women's organizations in the project design, aided in identifying relevant gender issues within the country's social context, and implementing and monitoring the gender aspects of the project.

Consultations with Community-Based Organisations took place on the 26th February 2016 at the United Nations Compound in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The target population were farmers working with small tanks and minor irrigation systems in the Dry Zone. The three target river basin locations are Yan Oya, Malwathu Oya, and Mi Oya. An additional annex to this proposal shows the full results from the stakeholder engagement, which details the specific issues and difficulties that women face in accessing water in the Dry Zone and how this is related to women's security.

Specific issues raised include:

- Drinking water- both access and quality- is a major issue in all surveyed areas and common problem in rural areas of the target river basins. In a water scarce situation as women must spend more time on collecting water for the household they have less time to spend on their own income earning opportunities.
- Women also lack access to irrigation to cultivate home gardens, fields and also tend to livestock (cattle/chickens/goats). Water requirements for these activities are not considered priorities in general by male farmers who manage village irrigation systems.
- Exposure to kidney disease and the increase in care burden.
- Conflict impact resulting from domestic abuse and elephant human conflict.
- Burden of care for those living with a disability and the chronically ill.
- Access to natural resources, i.e. firewood, grazing land.
- Sanitation for women during the dry period when tanks and wells dry up and they have to travel long distances to access water.
- Flood impact on household assets, livestock and persons living with a disability.
- Women engage in supplementary income earning activities, including examples such as thatching, mat weaving, handicrafts, and food preservation.
- These districts have a larger percentage of female-headed households. Female-headed households become further marginalized. The children of such households are more pressured to assist with household income activities at the expense of their education. Older boys and girls livelihoods and education are affected as they take on the role of caring for their younger siblings.
- Often children who are tasked with assisting their mother with household duties or are subjected to neglect only attend school irregularly. These children become the focus of negative attention by their teachers and student peers. This results in the children not wanting to attend school.
- Teenage boys are influenced by peers to join young drinking cliques. Girls are often harassed, including sexually, in or on the way to school.
- There are incidences of incest and sexual abuse at home and in surrounding target neighborhoods. People marrying at a young age, particularly girls, has become the norm within the target district neighborhoods.
- There have been instances where young girls are persuaded to marry outsiders of the

neighborhood for better and more promising lives, only to find their husbands disappear after a few weeks or months with no trace. This is a problem in the post-conflict district which also saw a large number of child marriages during the conflict to avoid recruitment in to militia. These marriages crumble early leaving young women with children abandoned in these villages.

Monitoring and evaluation

Through onset analysis, data has been collated to establish a baseline. This data shall be monitored against throughout implementation and evaluation.

The analysis identified the differences between men and women within at-risk populations. In order to monitor and evaluate progress of the project, the following indicators can be measured:

Quantitative outcomes:

- Female-headed households as beneficiaries;
- Improvements in health and well-being;
- Improved livelihoods;
- Business development services component targeting rural women entrepreneur groups.

Qualitative outcomes:

- Opportunities to generate additional income. Women are more likely to respond to incentives that address their family's basic needs, such as better health and nutrition, linking to agriculture and food security improvements;
- Time-saving for women as a result of lower hours in labour required for agricultural and water management practices prior to the implementation of the project;
- Contribution to improved self-esteem and empowerment of women in the community;
- Expanded involvement in public and project decision-making as a result of initiation of women into active participation in income generating activities;
- Opportunities to address water and sanitation issues at schools to target children and girls by linking with and supplementing the water and sanitation programmes of the Provincial Education Authorities/Ministry of Health and National Water Supply and Drainage Board;
- Support for training and educational activities which may include activities related to climate change, agriculture, water management, leadership, business, finance, entrepreneurship and decision-making, thereby enabling empowerment and involvement (or increased involvement) of women to participate with confidence in community meetings; this would include relevant educational activities targeted at children and girls at schools;
- Effectiveness of awareness raising.