

Annex 8a

Gender Assessment

GCF Funding Proposal

*Thai Rice:
Strengthening Climate-Smart Rice Farming*

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Version 1

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
GmbH

Title of the project:	Thai Rice: Strengthening climate-smart rice farming
Country/countries:	Thailand
Sector:	Agriculture (rice production); Climate change
Commissioning party:	Green Climate Fund
Recommendation for gender policy marker ¹ :	If the marker has already been determined, this should be stated here. In case the recommendation based on the gender analysis deviates from the previously assigned marker, this should also be noted.
Purpose for conducting the gender analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for a new project <input type="checkbox"/> for a follow-on project <input type="checkbox"/> for a modification offer <input type="checkbox"/> for the GIZ portfolio in a country <input type="checkbox"/> other: Click here to enter text.
Status of the gender analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provisional gender analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Finalised gender analysis
Method conducting the gender analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Desk study <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desk study + data collection (e.g. on-site appraisal mission, interviews etc)
Involved Gender FP	<p>More than one option can be selected::</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> at the project level: Enter name <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *at the country level: Veena Ngarmpring <input type="checkbox"/> *at the level of the department or regional division: Enter name <input type="checkbox"/> *of the responsible unit in GloBe: Enter name <u>and</u> unit <input type="checkbox"/> of the sectoral department: Enter name <u>and</u> unit </p> <p>* Please note: The Gender FP must be copied into all emails sent to the S+G Desk. For bilateral projects, the Gender FP of the country of-fice should be involved; for regional projects, either the Gender FP of the country or area where the project has its headquarters, or the Gender FP of the department; for sectoral and global projects, the Gender FP of the responsible unit in GloBe.</p>
Other persons involved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> officer responsible for the commission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> project member <input type="checkbox"/> appraisal mission team member <input type="checkbox"/> planning officer <input type="checkbox"/> external consultant
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Date	19 December 2022

¹ According to the OECD DAC, all ODA-financed projects should be assigned a marker. The gender marker is requested for BMZ projects and EU co-financing arrangements. Other public German commission parties do not currently request it.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This gender assessment serves as an input to the Funding Proposal for the project “Thai Rice – Strengthening climate-smart rice farming” to the GCF that will include elements of technical cooperation as well as financial cooperation. The project aims at strengthening the resilience of rice farmers in Thailand and to contribute to mitigating GHG emissions from rice farming through the promotion of low-emission, sustainable rice production. During the Concept Note development, a preliminary identification of gender-related risks indicated that female rice farmers are largely overlooked in the policy arena and consistently underserved by agricultural and rural support services. In consequence, women are often at risk of being excluded from training and climate finance initiatives, deepening existing gender inequalities. To meet GCF’s gender-related requirements for Funding Proposals, this gender assessment has been developed.

This report was written based on desk review of reports as well as academic papers, and a series of key informant interviews of government officials, NGOs and GIZ field officers. It is also based on information gathered during field visits to Chiangrai province and Roi-et province to meet women’s groups and mega farmers. Please see appendix for the list of respondents.

Chapter 2: Information on gender dimensions in the country or the region

2.1 Meta level (norms)

Gender equality in statistics

Thailand ranks 79 out of 191 countries in the 2021 Gender Inequality Index (UNDP, 2021). In comparison with other countries in the Southeast Asian region, Malaysia was ranked 57 and Vietnam 71. Compared with Vietnam, Thailand's gender gap in labor force participation rate was wider - Vietnam is 69.6% for women and 79.4% for men, while in Thailand, it is 59.0% for women and 75.0% for men. Compared to the East Asia and Pacific region², there are fewer women seated in parliament (22% for the region and 16% for Thailand) (World Bank, 2021). The adolescent birth rate was considerably high in these two countries (Thailand 32.7, Vietnam 34.6 births per 1,000) compared to countries like Malaysia (9.3) (UNDP, 2021).

UN Women observe that the challenges faced by Thailand in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment include: Lack of gender-disaggregated data, violence against women (including trafficking of women and girls), vulnerability of women self-identifying as pertaining to an ethnic group and rural women, HIV/AIDS prevalence, low participation of women in the area of politics, and the traditional norms and beliefs that underlie this discrimination against women (UNDP, 2021).

With the limited sex-disaggregated data available, gender gaps can be seen in Table 1. Women outperform men in some areas (such as reading and basic ICT skills). According to Thailand's Voluntary National Review, the proportion of companies that had at least one female executive increased from 74% in 2017 to 86% in 2020 (Thailand, 2021³). Women spend disproportionately longer time on care work compared to men. On average, women spent one hour more on care work and household work per day than men (Thailand, 2021).

Table 1: Gender gaps in Thailand*

Indicator	Women	Men
Literacy rate age 15+	93.8%	92.4%
Proportion of children and young people achieving a minimum proficiency level in mathematics (lower secondary)	51.05	43.04
Proportion of children and young people achieving a minimum proficiency level in reading (lower secondary)	49.18	30.54
Proportion of youth and adults with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills (finding, downloading, installing, and configuring software)	17.09	14.47
Connecting and installing new devices	9.76	9.2
Writing a computer program using a specialized programming language	0.76	1.02
Proportion of individuals who own a mobile phone	87.9	88.4
Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment	65.2	51
Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a financial institution or mobile money service provider (% of adults aged 15 years and older)	79.78	83.69
Proportion of their time spent on unpaid care and domestic work	11.8%	3.8%

² Excluding high-income countries. For a detailed list of countries, please visit: [Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments \(%\) - East Asia & Pacific \(excluding high income\) | Data \(worldbank.org\)](#)

³ Thailand's voluntary national review on the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development 2021.

Women aged 20-24 old who were married or in a union before age 18	20.2%	
Women of reproductive age (15-49) whose need for family planning is satisfied with modern methods	88.2%	
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (in 2021)	15.8%	
Proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government	17.9%	
Proportion of women in managerial positions	35.1%	
Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions	31%	
Women aged 15-49 years old reported that they had been subject to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months.	9.3%	

Source: UN Women, n.d. a.

*Data between 2018 to 2021

Violence against women

Violence against women is still prevalent in Thailand. The number of women who experienced violence and received the support of One Stop Crisis Center (OSCC⁴) under the Ministry of Public Health increased from 26 women per day in 2007 to 36 women per day in 2015⁵. More than half (55%) of these cases involved their intimate partners as abusers (Sumano, 2020). The number of domestic violence cases reported has risen from 25,767 to 31,866 between 2010 and 2013, respectively (Chuemchit et al., 2018). Of the 30,000+ cases of violence against women reported to the OSCC, only around 5,000 cases are recorded by the police, and only about 1,500 cases result in an arrest of the abuser (Skinnider et al., 2017). A report in 2011 indicates a higher proportion of violence cases in the North and Central regions compared to other regions (OWAFD, 2011; UNDP, 2021).

The entrenched culture of shame in Thailand makes reporting of these incidents of violence, as well as reporting of harassment cases, difficult. The Thai Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) calls sexual harassment in Thailand “ubiquitous” – too many and too widespread to count. Men’s strong public image and authority are used to threaten the victims, and the abusers can be teachers, politicians, government officials, and even fathers or male relatives. Often the perpetrator has more power than the victim, the latter being too scared to report since they are afraid that no one will believe her. The stigmatisation of female victims of sexual harassment or abuse is still strong in Thailand, and women are often blamed as the cause of the problem. The Thai justice system is not well equipped to support the victims (Bunnag, 2022).

In Thailand, and especially in the lowlands, most communities practise matrilineal patterns of living and inheritance (Curran & Meijer-Irons, 2014). That is, men marry into the women’s house, and women stay with or near their own parents and relatives. Women, or often the youngest daughter who would take care of the old parents, tend to inherit the larger part of the land and property. Matrilineal patterns of living have their advantages. Living near their own parents reduces the chances of domestic violence (as seen by Sigalla (2018) in Tanzania), and being away from such living patterns by moving into urban areas can diminish women’s position since they lose their support system that is available in their place of origin (Mills, 1997). Matrilineal living patterns provide protection to women but also lead to expectations

⁴ OSCC is a multidisciplinary unit that provides comprehensive services for victims of violence in Thailand. The centers are equipped not only with medical doctors and nurses, but also representatives from the Royal Thai Police, the Office of the Attorney-General, non-governmental organisations, emergency shelters, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. There are currently approximately 108 One Stop Crisis Centres in hospitals in Bangkok and provincial areas of Thailand.

⁵ Although this is a matter of concern, it is not clear whether more cases are reported since more women dare to do so, or whether it is because the absolute number of cases has increased.

towards women to be more responsible for their elderly parents. When women and men migrate from rural to urban areas in search of work, women tend to remit more regularly because of their socially-expected responsibility to look after their parents (Rungmanee et al., 2021).

Gender stereotypes and women's political participation

Although the statistics and reports point to the fact that gender inequality persists in Thailand, gender issues are manifested in a subtle way in daily life. On the surface, women in rural areas of Thailand seem to enjoy considerable freedom and social position. However, there still exist strong gender stereotypes that are degrading towards women. Women are not able to become monks since the religion deems women to be contaminated. The gender stereotype that women lack physical strength can affect women's choices of work or can be used as an excuse for gender wage gaps. Although women work outside the home side by side with men, women are expected to keep their skin fair and beautiful, and are expected to be delicate and feminine (Richardson and Roberts, 2020). Even when women and men work together outside the home, women still have to do most of the household work. However, even with such a clear division of labor, there is a strong sense of equality among Thai women in general, and women believe that they are able to do whatever men do. Women are often perceived to be good at business and communication and it is widely believed that women are more patient and hence better able to do "tedious" tasks (Richardson and Roberts, 2020).

Women face cultural barriers to political participation. For example, "patriarchal norms pose challenges to women who run for office at the local level – norms that expect them to stay at home." (UNDP 2021:12). The complex relationships and negotiations that are involved in politics complicate women's advancement in the political arena.

Women self-identifying as pertaining to an ethnic group

Ethnic groups self-identifying as indigenous people mainly reside in the hilly areas of Northern Thailand, although some are forced to move out of their communities because they have lost cultivated lands to outside investors (IWNT, 2011). Although many hill community people have ID cards, there are fewer women who have Thai nationality, since there are fewer women who can read, write and speak the Thai language well (IWNT, 2011).

Women who have no official nationality must endure a form of imprisonment in their own communities. When there are limited economic opportunities in the communities and the traditional security measures fail to protect these women, many of them decide to enter into the sex industry or perform illegal work in order to make a living and have access to the resources that will help them obtain nationality for their families and themselves, particularly for those who are widows and have children to take care of (IWNT, 2011).

Traditional belief systems limit the way women in the hill communities express themselves and their opinions, and women are solely responsible for reproductive work. In Thailand, there are many migrant workers from neighboring countries, who in many cases stay for an extended period of time. These migrant workers are considered to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Thailand. Their precarious legal status is exacerbated by the fact that women migrants are more vulnerable to security issues (both in the community and in the household in terms of gender-based violence). Women are paid less than men because of gender discrimination and sex segregation in types of work they do, and women bear the heavier burden to look after family and children (both physically when the children are with them, and through remittances when they have left children behind) (Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012).

2.2 Macro level (policies and laws)

Thailand ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and further ratified the optional protocol in 2000. It adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BFPA) in 1995. Recent improvements in gender equality-related laws include:

- The Name Act was amended to allow women the right to choose a family name (2005).
- Amendment to Civil Code to provide women and men equal grounds for divorce (2007).
- Rape was criminalized by the Penal Code of 1965, and the subsequent Criminal Code Amendment Act of 2007 criminalized marital rape.
- The Labor Protection Act of 2008 and the Penal Code foresee legal protection in the workplace and the Labor Protection Act extends protection against sexual abuse, harassment or nuisance by superiors to cover all workers, both female and male, with penalties up to THB 20,000 baht. Sexual harassment nonetheless continues to be an issue in the workplace (UNDP, 2021).
- Anti-human trafficking Act B.E. 2551 (2008) was introduced as a measure to prevent and suppress the trafficking of women and children.
- The Domestic Violence Victim Protection Act of B.E. 2550 passed in 2007, and the associated criminal code was amended, to criminalize marital rape to combat gender-based violence.
- Amendment to the Thai Penal Code to relax currently restrictive regulations on abortion by decriminalizing the termination of pregnancy during the first 12 weeks (2021).

The Gender Equality Act was introduced in Thailand in 2015. The Act establishes three committees for driving gender equality: namely, the gender equality promotion committee, the committee on unfair gender discrimination, and the gender equality fund executive committee. This is the first Thai law to promote gender equality, which aims to provide protection to all people from gender discrimination, including transgender people. Although the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development recognizes challenges faced by transgender people, "the Act has been criticized by the CEDAW Committee for making exceptions on issues related to religious principles and national security" (UNDP 2021:15).

The 2017 Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex and affirms the principle of equality between women and men. UNDP (2021:16) hailed that this is "the first that calls for Gender Responsive Budgeting, determining that the government when allocating the budget, shall take into account the different needs of people based on gender, age and other conditions in order to ensure fairness"⁶. Following this, the Budget Bureau has asked spending ministries to indicate on their budget request forms whether individual budget requests have a gender impact (OECD, 2021). In line with the SDG 5 (Gender equality) and aligning with the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037), the Thai Women's Development Plan or the Women Development Strategy (2017-2021) was established with the vision to create social equality without discrimination. It is the main mechanism for Thailand to promote women's development (UNDP, 2021).

The three-year Action Plan to promote gender equality (2020-2022) of the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security covers four main areas: (i) Awareness raising to improve understanding of gender equality; (ii) strengthening gender empowerment; (iii) all organizations to have policies on

⁶ The Government of Thailand's National Review: Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2020.

gender equality; and (iv) promote research and development on gender equality. The monitoring at the ministry level is done through the Chief Gender Equality Officer (CGEO) and the Gender Focal Point (GFP) appointed under each ministry. Since March 2015, the Cabinet has made all permanent secretaries to serve as their ministries' CGEO.

The weakness in Thailand's policy on gender equality was summarized by UNDP (2021:16) as below:

"In CEDAW's 2017 Concluding Observations on the state of gender equality in Thailand, the Committee expressed particular concern for the situation of rural Thai women, including indigenous women and those ethnic and religious minorities, remain disproportionately affected by poverty and limited economic opportunities. CEDAW spells out that Thai women, in particular rural women, are also excluded from participation in the elaboration and implementation of policies and action plans on climate change and disaster risk reduction, despite the fact they are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change and disasters. Besides the lack of clear policy directives on the integration of gender equality and limited participation of women in the formulation and implementation of climate policies and plans, another key challenge in gender and social inclusion in on climate change action is lack of sex-disaggregated data."

The lack of data prohibits the government's ability to design specific interventions. Thailand considers the development of a sex-disaggregated database as the next step in its effort to achieve gender equality (UNDP, 2021). As of 2020, only 45.9% of the indicators needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective were available, with gaps in key areas such as: labor market indicators such as the gender pay gap, gender and poverty, physical and sexual harassment, women's access to assets (including land), and gender and the environment. Data lacks comparable methodologies for regular monitoring (UN Women, n.d.a). Thailand has developed laws and policies as well as gender mainstreaming mechanisms, but still needs to translate it into action. To achieve this goal, strengthening the collection of sex-disaggregated data, as well as capacity building of organizations, remain an urgent task.

2.3 Meso level (institutions)

The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has tasked the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development as the national women's machinery responsible for promoting gender equality, empowerment of women, and social inclusion. The Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development is responsible for formulating policies and processes to enhance social security for women and girls, setting up mechanisms for promoting coordination among concerned government offices and non-government organizations. It is also the secretariat of the National Inter-ministerial Committee on Policy and Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Women, which is chaired by the Prime Minister. The Office implements the five-year National Women's Development Plans (UNDP, 2021). There are Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in 131 government departments and agencies who are responsible for providing and coordinating gender mainstreaming support in the various subnational government agencies (ADB, 2013). Other government agencies that play an important role in gender equality are the National Human Rights

Commission⁷ as well as Law Reform Commission of Thailand⁸. The National Human Rights Plan (2019-2023) determines a women's human rights plan to achieve gender equality goals.

The Thai government has constituted a Working Group for the Implementation of SDG 5. The Working Group includes representatives from government agencies and civil society such as the Thailand Sustainable Development Foundation, the Association to Empower the Potential of Women with Disabilities (AEPWWDs), the Foundation for Women, Homenet Thailand Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion and WeMove. The Working group exchanges information and discusses future directions on gender equality (UNDP, 2021).

Other important non-government institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on gender equality work especially around gender-based violence and LGBTQ issues. These include the Health and Opportunity Network (HON) in Pattaya, M Plus (HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ), Gender and Development Research Institute (GDRI) (Bangkok), Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand (Bangkok), Teerarat Kanjana-aksorn Foundation, ProRights Foundation, Sisters Foundation (Pattaya), SHero (on domestic and gender-based violence), Thai Transgender Alliance (Thai TGA), Transgender People Association of Thailand, Transmen Alliance of Thailand (TMAT), Transpiration Power, and Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTAN).

The United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) for Thailand 2017-2021 was signed by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Thailand and the Royal Thai Government (RTG) in July 2017 with a single outcome: "By 2021, inclusive systems, structures and processes advance sustainable people-centred, equitable development for all people in Thailand". UN Women chaired the Gender Theme Group in 2017, serving as an advisory group to the UNCT on gender issues in support of the implementation of UNPAF as well as strengthening the UN's collective impact in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment; and led the 2017 UNCT CEDAW Reporting.

Since July 2019, the theme group has been changed to the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), chaired by UN Women and UNDP, with the aim to not only advise UNCT on gender issues but to support the implementation of UNCT accountability frameworks and recommendations including facilitation of the System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It also provided training as well as monitored implementation through performance indicators (the "scorecard"). UN Women co-leads the UNCT SDG Results Group on Peace and Governance with UNDP (since February 2018) and the COVID-19 and Gender-based Violence (GBV) Sub-group in Thailand (since May 2020) (UN Women, n.d. b).

2.4 Micro level (target groups)

Discrimination against women

According to the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women, discriminatory practices against women still exist in many areas in Thailand, especially in rural areas. These include employment practices, unfair treatment of women workers, and access to resources. More specifically, there is a lack of policies promoting economic empowerment and access to financial services for disadvantaged groups of women. Only 13.67% of women have borrowed

⁷ The National Human Rights Commission examines and reports facts in cases of human rights violation, promotes awareness of human rights, provides advice to relevant agencies and government to promote and protect human rights and prepares a human rights situation assessment report for submission to the parliament and the cabinet.

⁸ The commission considers and prepares a draft law assigned by the Prime Minister or the Council of Ministers, gives opinions or performs other legal matters to a State agency, trains and develops civil servants in the field of law, and coordinates with relevant agencies to develop legal principles and the administration of State affairs, among other tasks.

from a financial institution. Under the 20-year Master Plan, Thailand aims to maximize the use of digital technologies across all socioeconomic activities. Many women in rural areas, however, are not able to fully benefit from progress in information technology as the number of internet users in rural areas is on the low side and online business skills need to be improved (UN Women, n.d. b). UN Women (n.d. b) also noted that privatization and development policies translate into more difficulties for women, especially those living in rural or conflict-affected areas, in gaining access to natural and economic resources especially because they are affected by poverty, discrimination, and exploitation as well as their lack of presence in decision making positions.

Women's representation in decision-making bodies

Women are under-represented in both public and private decision-making bodies. There is only one female governor from 76 provinces (1.32%), women Chiefs of Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAO) account for 8% and Sub-district Administrative Organizations (SAO) account for 6.45% only (UNDP, 2021). These figures rank Thailand as one of the lowest in Asia and the Pacific region in terms of gender equality in politics. Women in leadership positions work harder than men since women who aim for an active role in the community are still expected to fulfill their household tasks before they go beyond their household (Homenet interview, 19 September 2022).

Women's access to reproductive health services

Thailand's primary health care, including reproductive health care services, is provided through a network of sub-district health centers. UNDP (2021:11) notes the achievements of reproductive health care services in Thailand:

“80% of all pregnant women used prenatal care in 1987, 92% in 2000, and 100% in 2012 when Universal Health Care (UHC) was in place. Birth attendance increased from 90.8% in 1990 to 99.7% in 2012. Further, the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) increased from 14.8% in 1970 to 79.3% in 2012. The total fertility rate per woman fell from 5.9 children in the 1970s to 1.6 children in 2011.”

However, there are some remaining challenges, such as a high level of teenage pregnancy. The adolescent birth rate increased from 42 per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years in 2007 to 52 in 2012 but then fell to 44 in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). Unmet need for contraception knowledge is higher among younger women (11.6% for women aged 15-19 years old) than for older women (8.3% for women aged 45-49 years old) (UNDP, 2021). Teenage pregnancy puts more stress and burden on women than men. Pregnant girls continue to be prohibited from going to school and face stigma. Teenage pregnancy becomes a problem for the girls and their families, while the boys and their families usually do not face any consequences (Homenet interview, 19 September 2022).

Women in Thailand still face a number of challenges accessing safe abortions, though from October 2022 abortion has been allowed up to the 20th week of pregnancy. Abortions during the first 12 weeks became legal in Thailand in February 2021. Previously, abortion had been illegal, with limited exceptions made for cases in which the mother's physical or mental health was threatened, the woman was under 15 years of age, became pregnant as the result of rape or incest, or the fetus had serious disabilities or deformities (AP News, 2022). It is officially estimated that about 30,000 abortions occur each year (including induced, spontaneous and therapeutic abortions), but this can be under-estimated, and other figures suggest 200,000-300,000 annually (UNDP, 2021).

Women in vulnerable situations

One of the sub-groups of women who are in a vulnerable situation is young mothers, especially young mothers (including teenage mothers) with small children. They frequently face difficulties because their education has been disrupted and they face obstacles in obtaining employment because of childcare responsibilities. Furthermore, they often face stigma, although since there are more teenage mothers in the villages nowadays, people are becoming more used to seeing young mothers (Interview with Homenet, 19 September 2022). In 2013, there were 1.4 million single-parent households (7.1% of all households).

Another sub-group of women in vulnerable situations are older women in skipped-generation households. Skipped-generation households are those households that consist of grandparent(s) and grandchildren whose parents are working and living elsewhere. Because of the lack of affordable childcare in many urban areas, parents often send their children back home under the care of their grandparents. There were 400,000 skipped-generation households (elderly women or men with grandchildren) in 2013, which accounted for approximately 2% of the total households, with an increasing trend (UNDP, 2021). Among the skipped-generation households, there are more women who head such households (more elderly women with grandchildren), and they tend to be more vulnerable. About 20% of elders in skipped-generation households have income below the poverty line – more than twice the national poverty rate (UNDP, 2021).

A third sub-group are women elders. A growing number of Thai elders are living in vulnerable family situations – living alone, with elderly spouses or with grandchildren. 63% of them live in rural areas (UNDP, 2021). Senior citizens living alone increased from 8% in 2014 to 10.8% in 2017, and it is estimated that 20% of elders will soon be living below the poverty line, the majority being female (Charoensuthipan, 2019).

A fourth sub-group of women are disabled women as well as women who take care of the sick and the disabled. Disabled people receive only 800 baht per month as monthly support from the government. Women face double discrimination because of their gender and because of their disability and have difficulties finding employment. As a result, they are excluded from compensation measures that are available through the employment social security scheme of the government. Women are often the ones who take care of the disabled, both financially and physically, which puts a disproportionately larger responsibility on them (Protection international, 2020).

A fifth sub-group of vulnerable women are women self-identifying as pertaining to an ethnic group. Most of the ethnic groups in rural Thailand live in remote hilly areas⁹. They experience significant health inequities, as a recent study in Northern Thailand revealed (Thummapol et al., 2018). Ethnic groups face discrimination in access to health care, especially since older women have difficulty speaking in Thai and they feel more uncomfortable accessing services. As a result, women self-identifying as pertaining to an ethnic group are more vulnerable to preventable diseases (e.g. cervical cancer and HIV/AIDS). Ethnic groups in Thailand tend to be more patriarchal than lowland Thais, which increases women's workload, depriving them of time to access health services (UNDP, 2021).

A sixth sub-group consists of migrant women from neighboring countries. Even when they do similar jobs as Thai citizens, women migrant workers tend to be paid less and have less access to training and careers. This situation persists despite the Labor Protection Act 1998 guaranteeing equal treatment of all employees and equal treatment and remuneration between women and men in employment.

⁹ Since indigenous people (ethnic groups) live in the hilly areas, there are very few living in the lowland paddy production communities.

Care work

In Thai society, care work is carried out almost solely by women – both childcare and elderly care. As mentioned above, much of the vulnerability of women comes from their care work responsibilities. There are government mechanisms that seek to ease such work, although they are limited in scale and scope. For example, Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) are introduced and trained in each village, visit people who are sick or old and conduct health checks of small children. They are trained and receive a small stipend for their work. Most VHVs are women. Recently, all sub-districts have introduced a care worker scheme, with the municipality government paying for care workers who visit bed-ridden elderly people (Interview with women's group in Roiet province, 1 October 2022).

There are also some sub-districts that have introduced day-care centers. Around 85% of children aged 3- - 5 years attend Early Child Development Centers or pre-primary education. However, the lack of affordable childcare services for children under three is still a problem (Unicef, 2019).

COVID-19 pandemic has led to close down of schools, which increased women's childcare work. It has also increased women's healthcare work at home, as well as other reproductive activities as family members spend longer time at home (UNDP, 2021).

Conclusions for the project

- Thailand is a matrilocal society, and women have a certain level of resources and power within the household. However, gender discrimination and inequality persist. Gender-based violence endures, teenage pregnancy stigmatizes girls, and women in leadership positions earn much less than men. Gender stereotypes are widespread, and gender norms expecting women to be good mothers and wives are strong.
- Because of the lack of gender-disaggregated data, it is difficult to understand the extent of the gender inequality problem. Although there have been a number of laws that were introduced to improve gender equality, the mechanisms and operationalization of gender equality still remain weak.
- Thai women in general have a good education, have relatively good basic ICT skills compared to men, and are active in productive activities. There are many opportunities that women can explore if given appropriate recognition and support.
- Some particularly vulnerable groups of women include single mothers with young children, elderly women in skipped-generation households, elderly women living alone, disabled women and women with care responsibilities (elderly, sick, disabled), women self-identifying as pertaining to an ethnic group, and women migrant workers.
- There is little support for women's care work responsibilities. There is a lack of affordable childcare services for children under three.

Chapter 3: Gender dimensions in the sector

3.1 Meta level

Women's employment in agriculture

According to the World Bank (2020), estimated women's employment in agriculture as a share of all female employment declined from 60.8% in 1991 to 27.6% in 2019 in Thailand. Thai women are actively involved in agricultural groups, have equal access to the family's productive resources, and have greater control over household income than men (Akter et al., 2017). Women and men have the same rights over land, and equal rights to inheritance are guaranteed by the Civil and Commercial Code, although those who take care of the parents (who tend to be daughters) tend to get more (UNDP, 2021). Historic and ethnographic studies describe women's relations with their husbands as relatively egalitarian (Curran & Meijer-Irons, 2014). Women and men have the same economic rights including in relation to opening bank accounts, obtaining credit, and accessing formal financial services. The Thai government has put in place a number of measures, such as the National Village and Urban Community Fund, to extend loans to villages and urban communities and provide vocational training to women and men alike (UNDP, 2021).

Women as unpaid family workers

Despite such a positive trend, gender inequality in Thailand persists in a more subtle way. One of the issues is the invisibility of women's contribution. The majority of women (53%) workers in the agriculture sector are considered unpaid family workers. Having women's work categorized as unpaid family work makes women's farming activities invisible. Men might be engaged in rice farming together with women, but women might also be engaged in other backyard farming activities as part of their unpaid family work. In this case, the farming household will be counted based on the men's farming activity, since women are supposed to be "assisting" men. Such invisibility of women's work leads to a deficiency in policy/ program action to support women's farming activities. Hence, policy measures such as agricultural trade expansion might not be benefiting women unpaid workers as much as it should, since their work is not fully taken into consideration, making unpaid women workers relatively more vulnerable than men in the agriculture sector (Korwatanasakul, 2020).

In Thailand, 27% of women legally own agricultural land, which is higher than the average for OECD member countries (18%). However, it is also noted that Thai women make up 41% of the agricultural workforce. Women put in more work relative to their land ownership in Thailand (OECD, 2021).

Gender division of labour in agriculture in Thailand

There is a clear gender division of labour in agriculture in Thailand. Men do the so-called physically strenuous work, which includes operating machinery (tractors, harvesters, etc.) as well as spraying chemicals. Agricultural labour is often paid by work done, and the types of work that men do are often paid more per hour. Women's work, such as supplementary transplanting, is paid by day and is almost universally paid at a lower rate. This is especially the case for migrant agriculture workers. Women migrants often do packaging work, while men migrants do the harvesting and other strenuous work, so men are paid higher wages than women (Focus Group Discussion with women in Chiangrai September 30, 2022). Such gender division of labor is based on the perception that women are better at "tedious" tasks (Richardson and

Roberts, 2020). Women are regarded as secondary farm laborers rather than principal earners (Nguyen et al., 2019). Women also tend to be more concentrated in lower-value produce production, such as backyard vegetable production, small animal raising, food preparation and processing, retail trade of agricultural goods or non-farm income-generating activities. Even when these activities earn a higher income than the main agricultural production, women's activities are most of the time considered as supplementary income.

Despite the continued prevalence of gendered roles and gender stereotypes, both women and men in rural areas hold a sense of gender equality in agriculture. A study investigating the thoughts and feelings of Thai women participating in agriculture, using semi-structured interviews and researcher observation, found that there is a feeling of partnership between women and men (Richardson & Roberts, 2020). This might stem from the fact that women tend to be in charge of financial management at the household level in Thailand. However, it could also be grounded in a sense of collectivism, which has historically been high in Thailand (Pimpa, 2012; Hofstede, 1984). This higher level of collectivism, which has manifested itself in the importance people place on the commitment to groups such as "... family, extended family, or extended relationships" (Pimpa, 2012), makes it difficult for women to separate their personal interest from that of their family and/or to perceive their individual contribution separately. Such cultural values make gender issues in rural Thailand more difficult to identify and to problematize. Gender issues exist but they are internalized into everyday practices in rural areas.

3.2 Macro level

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) is responsible for food security in Thailand. Its 20-year agriculture and cooperative plan (2017-2036) includes SDG 5 (gender equality) as one of the guiding SDGs. It mentions gender equality and women's empowerment in public-private partnership under one of the five key strategies (Strategy 2: Enhancing the management efficiency of agricultural commodities throughout their supply chains).

In other plans related to agriculture, gender equality is mentioned sporadically. The Action Plan of the Department of Agricultural Extension (2020-2022) includes gender equality-related action under "Development of agricultural group and community enterprises into Smart Groups" (Activity 1.3, page 9). It outlines an objective to strengthen women's groups and women farmers to increase household income for food security and to add value to agricultural products. The subsequent Action Plan of the Department of Agriculture Extension (2023-2027) also refers to farmers' wives groups under Section 4.1, "Strong agricultural organization". The Plan aims to register farmers' wives groups and transfer agricultural knowledge through these groups.

Although MOAC does not have a separate gender policy or gender strategy, it follows the national policy on gender equality. It recognizes women's role in agriculture, but with a greater emphasis on post-harvest and community enterprise development activities. It works in coordination with the Community Development Department of the Ministry of Interior to develop and to promote "One Tambon One Product" (OTOP)¹⁰. Many OTOP products are produced by women's groups. But, in general, issues of gender equality and power balance are not incorporated into existing agricultural policy (Nguyen et al., 2019). Despite higher levels of women's

¹⁰ One Tambon One Product (OTOP) is a local entrepreneurship stimulus program which aims to support the unique locally made and marketed products of each Thai tambon (sub-district) all over Thailand. Superior products from sub-districts are selected to receive formal branding as a "starred OTOP product" and are provided with promotion support locally and internationally.

engagement in agriculture in Thailand, significant barriers to gender equality and empowerment still exist that need to be addressed through extension programming (Richardson & Roberts, 2020). Most of the policies and plans do not fully recognize women's leading role in agriculture, problematize the unpaid work that they put in, nor do they problematize that women's work is seen as supplementary income.

The Plan to Drive the Promotion of Gender Equality 2019-2021 by the Gender Equality Promotion Committee (Sor Tor Por) of Thailand placed importance on women's engagement in agriculture. The Plan noted, under its commitment to SDG 2 (zero hunger), that agricultural activities that women are engaged in are important for sustainable agriculture – taking care of small animals, collection and processing of food from the forest, mixed crop agriculture, and producing food for the family. With globalization and commercialization, women's traditional ways of agriculture are destroyed, and cash income is accorded greater importance than household food security and sustainable agriculture. Therefore, the Plan argues that in order to help the environment and implement sustainable agriculture, improving women's decision-making power is important.

3.3 Meso level

The Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development sent a directive to all ministries to appoint a Chief Gender Equality Officer in November 2020. However, such appointments have not been fully implemented across departments¹¹.

The Rice Department promotes and supports rice farmers to obtain the Sustainable Rice Platform certification. It is noted that the Sustainable Rice Platform Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation include women's empowerment as one of the indicators. According to the "Sustainable Rice Platform Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation" (version 2.1, January 2020), the assumption is that empowerment of women leads to improved maternal health, improved family health and well-being. Women's empowerment is expected to lead to higher levels of productivity and profitability (page 35). The measurement of women's empowerment is based upon a scorecard covering the following topics:

- Women's control over decisions regarding household agricultural production
- Women's control over decisions regarding their own labor input
- Women's satisfaction regarding their labor input
- Women's access to information and capacity building
- Women's access to seasonal resources for farm activities
- Women's control over long-term resources for farm activities
- Women's control over decisions regarding household income
- Women's control over their personal income
- Women's participation in collective decision-making
- Violence against women.

The Department of Agricultural Extension works closely with farmers. In the past, most extension workers were men. However, with the improvement of infrastructure, travel to villages has become easier and faster. Moreover, as women tend to perform better academically, more women are coming in to work as government officers in MOAC. As a result, there are now more women extension workers and, in some districts, all the extension workers are women¹².

¹¹ Many Rice Department staff do not seem to be aware of the existence of CGEO.

¹² This has been repeatedly mentioned in the interviews with GIZ field officers and during field visits in Chiangrai and Roiet.

The Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) is implementing several projects targeted at the rural populace, some of which promote gender mainstreaming and support national gender policies. They have gender-disaggregated data and use the data to analyze and identify those who have difficulty in repaying loans, although such gender-disaggregated data is only for internal use and is not shared publicly¹³. BAAC was awarded the Honorable Discharge Plaque as an outstanding organization that protects rights and promotes equality between the genders on International Women's Day 2016 (BAAC, 2015).

BAAC offers both life insurance and agriculture insurance. Whoever holds an account in BAAC is covered by the insurance. There is no evidence to show that women have difficulty in accessing BAAC loans. At the same time, BAAC does not currently have any women-focused financial schemes. It is noted that BAAC is one of the committee members of the Thai Women Empowerment Funds under the Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior. A Women's Development Fund¹⁴ (WDF) has been established in each province, where women can borrow money for income-generating purposes. A committee is organized with women leaders in the province to manage the fund. The funds are not used for rice cultivation, but for other agriculture and non-agriculture activities of women¹⁵. WDF uses 80% of its funds for loans and 20% for subsidies, with a maximum of 200,000 baht for support. The experience of learning about women's credit needs from the WDF might be useful in reflecting on a women-focused financial scheme of BAAC itself.

3.4 Micro level

Women's active engagement in agriculture

Men used to be dominant in agricultural work, but the economic situation and the need for cash have pushed women to take up a larger role in Thai agriculture. Nowadays, women usually perform a large fraction of the management and financial management tasks for the farm and the household while men work in the field as well as earn money outside the village. Women also supplement the household income through their income-generating work both on-farm and off-farm. Hence, women have increasingly assumed a decision-making role alongside their husbands. However, due to the gender-based division of labour and gender roles in the family and community, as well as women's lower social location in society and lack of women in leadership roles, the role of financial management is actually more of a burden and responsibility for women and does not always increase their power and freedom (Rungreangkulkij et al. 2019).

Women's time burden and care work

As noted above, women are in charge of almost all of the household work and men only "help" with household chores. Even though women are doing ever more work in agriculture, their workloads within the household have not changed. However, in the rural setting, women normally do not perceive household work as a burden. Agriculture is perceived by women as an ideal livelihood to allow them to balance their household work and care work with productive work. Women, as well as men, frequently seek employment in the cities after finishing their

¹³ According to the interview on October 6, 2022 with Mr. Jameekorn Rangmanee, BAAC Kanchanaburi Office by Dr. Areeya Obidiegwu, Kasetsart University.

¹⁴ Women's groups register with the District Community Development Office. Fund is managed by a provincial committee that is composed of one elected representative per district (<http://www.womenfund.in.th/>).

¹⁵ Although the fund contributes to women's economic activities, it has been pointed out that without accompanying program to raise awareness on gender equality, the loan itself has a limited impact to change gender relations (Akkasaeng, 2020).

education, but when women have children or when their parents need care, women are the ones who come back to take up the care work alongside agricultural work¹⁶.

Gender division of labour and wage gap

As far as rice production is concerned, the workload has diminished since much of the work has been mechanized. Ploughing that used to be men's work is now done using tractors (albeit driven by men). Transplanting, which used to be women's work, has now been largely eliminated because of the use of broadcasting techniques or drum seeders. Harvesting, which used to be done by both women and men, but more frequently by women, is now done by harvesters. But the gender division of labour in agriculture remains strong, and men normally do physically strenuous work (including the operation of machinery) and spraying chemicals, while women are responsible for the management of the field. There is still a need to do supplementary transplanting since there are some areas where rice seeds do not sprout. In some places, there is a need for weeding. Both of these activities are done by women. Weeding is more difficult when rice is broadcast and cannot be mechanized. In Roiet, farmers cut the rice together with weeds in order to eliminate the weeds. Such cutting is done by men using mechanical grass cutters.

Although the agricultural workload has diminished for both women and men, agriculture is still physically hard work. The most commonly experienced health problem of rural women is back pain or, more generally, body pain. According to Akter et al. (2017), about 70% of the respondents in their focus group discussions mentioned these problems as being caused by their workload. Despite this, most women did not seek medical help to reduce the pain. They only rest or use home remedies such as medicated patches or body massages to reinvigorate the strained muscles. Further, all women farmers in Thailand undergo state-sponsored monthly medical checkups and biannual blood tests to check for pesticide contamination (Akter et al., 2017).

Youths tend to leave rural villages for education and for non-farming employment. This is the case for both women and men. However, when women have children and/or when their parents become old, it is often women who come back home to take care of children and the elderly, and, alongside their care work, start to be engaged in agriculture. These returnee women have to manage the household and agriculture themselves. Women's rice farming workload in female-headed households does not necessarily increase, since most of the rice production work is mechanized and women will hire labour for land preparation, spraying chemicals and harvesting. Women heads of households say that the difficulty of not having men around is that they are not able to consult – that is, there is no one to help in their task of farm management. Women have to manage the day-to-day farm activities and make crop management decisions in addition to daily household management (FAO, 2010). Still, there are some people who do have difficulty finding time to balance both household labour and agriculture. For example, young women with young children are considered to have more difficulty juggling different activities¹⁷.

There is a severe labour shortage in agriculture, and farmers often hire workers. Sometimes, the workers are other villagers, but often they hire Burmese migrant workers. Especially in the North, they prefer to hire Thai Yai Burmese workers since they speak the Thai language. Women migrant workers are often paid less than men. For example, for one harvesting job, men earn 500 baht while women earn 300 baht. This discrepancy is explained as being due to different work – men do the harvesting work and women do the packaging work¹⁸.

¹⁶ These points have been repeatedly mentioned during group discussions with women's groups in Chiangrai and Roiet, but especially Roiet (where there are more young people who migrate out to work).

¹⁷ Mentioned during the group discussion with women in Chiangrai Province.

¹⁸ Mentioned during the interview with women farmer and also during the group discussion with women in Chiangrai Province.

Technology adoption

During trainings organized by the Rice Department as well as NGOs, it is often observed that it is the women who best learn new agricultural technologies. Not only are the majority of training participants women, but they also contact extension workers more often than men. Women also tend to do better in classroom learning sessions. Although the decision whether to adopt technologies is not made only by women, women can take the lead in the adoption. Women's decisions can be given higher importance, since most often women are the ones who will be implementing the technologies. The detailed tasks that are associated with new agricultural practices are deemed to be carried out by women¹⁹. As a result, women tend to be better in guiding household decisions to adopt different ways of doing things, as was expressed during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with women in Chiangrai, during the discussion on agriculture technologies:

“Many male farmers have been brain-washed that they need to use chemicals to do agriculture. But we are starting to realize that it is better to use fewer chemicals and go organic. Women are working hard to use less chemicals and advocate for organic methods. Men feel that it is a loss of face and were not very cooperative, but they are starting to understand. Men are more for chemicals than women, since men do not want to work on details and want to just use physical strength to apply chemicals. Women are more patient in going into details to manage the farm. Women are sacrificing for the family and community. They are working harder and harder.” (FGD, 20 September 2022)

Women - as the financial managers of the household - are sensitive to the cost of new technologies. Before even thinking about the potential yield increase, their first reaction to technology such as Land Laser Levelling (LLL) is that it is too expensive. The New Theory Agriculture²⁰ is popular among women farmers, not only because it is advocated by the former King, but also because it is not costly. The whole idea is how to minimize expenditure. This suits women farmers' preferences, and it is easier for them to adopt and embrace²¹. When introducing new technologies, it is important that the initial cost is minimized in order to catch the attention and interest of female farmers.

Women are often keen to embrace new technologies, but there are some areas over which they do not have control. For example, tractors are operated by men. These male operators do not like to plough the land when there is still widespread rice stubble, since it will damage the tractor. So, they will burn the stubble, sometimes without even discussing this action with the land owner or with their wives²².

Both women and men use social media to obtain information on new technologies. As seen in the earlier section, there are fewer women in computer program development, but women are slightly better in terms of using applications. In Roiet province, women are the ones who help the elderly by downloading apps and registering for various support programs²³. They google when they have questions, and they watch YouTube to learn how to implement new agricultural technology practices²⁴. Such internet-based learning serves as supplementary knowledge

¹⁹ This point has been echoed throughout the field visits for this report – both in Chiangrai and in Roiet, both by GIZ field staff as well as the women leaders that were interviewed.

²⁰ The King Bhumibol Adulyadej revealed in 1994 how his ideas on Sufficiency Economy should apply to agriculture. The New Theory Agriculture is a system of integrated and sustainable agriculture, embracing his thoughts and efforts in water resource development and conservation, soil rehabilitation and conservation, sustainable agriculture and self-reliant community development. The aim is to optimize farmland (TICA, 2019).

²¹ These points were mentioned during the group discussion with women farmers in Chiangrai and Roiet provinces (interviewed on 29 September and 1 October 2022).

²² According to the women's group in Roiet Province, interviewed on 1 October 2022.

²³ According to the women's group in Roiet Province, interviewed on 1 October 2022.

²⁴ According to the women's group in Chiangrai Province, interviewed on 29 September 2022.

acquisition to support what they hear during training and increases their understanding of the technology.

Both women and men are selected and trained as smart farmers and soil doctors by the sub-district agriculture officers. But, since they do not receive any support other than the initial training, farmers bring their soil samples to the center themselves (with a recommendation from the sub-district agriculture officer) to check the soil quality, rather than go to the soil doctors. If the farmers then go to a cooperative with the soil diagnosis result, the cooperative will provide farmers with an ideal mix of fertilizer. Contacting government offices is often done by women²⁵.

Certification

The respondents during the field visits all noted that even when the farmers produce better quality rice, it is often not reflected in the market price. There is a small market for organic rice as a niche product for certain groups of buyers in the urban area. Some rice mills buy Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) rice with a small bonus. In Roiet province, women leaders said that even those farmers who were able to produce organic rice are selling their rice as SRP rice for the small bonus that the project provides for SRP rice, instead of selling it as organic rice (which should obtain a higher price)²⁶. The premium rice market is still small and underdeveloped.

There are efforts by women's group to develop such a premium rice market. Some women's groups use the Good Agriculture Practices (GAP)²⁷ certificate as a story for their products to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers²⁸.

Income generating activities of women

Since agriculture is a volatile occupation, farmers prefer to diversify. This is especially the case for women farmers, who often serve as both the farm manager and the household's financial manager. As is seen in the Department of Agriculture Extension's Plan²⁹, there are women's groups in all villages. Especially in villages where cohesion among the villagers is strong, there are active women's groups that are engaged in joint income-generating activities, and more cohesive ones are organized into community enterprises and are registered as such.

Some of these groups also make compost and bio-fertilizers using earthworms. They tend to operate on a small scale, so they produce only enough for backyard gardens. Women's groups in Chiangrai Province³⁰ shared that if they had a machine to mix the materials and sieve the worms, they would be able to increase the production of bio-fertilizer³¹. Currently, these activities are treated as women's small-scale secondary income-generating activities and as an extension of household work. Women are not generally considered entrepreneurs; hence they tend to be neglected for support to grow or expand. If these women producers were to be supported as entrepreneurs and service providers, there would be considerable potential for them to increase their incomes and be recognized as entrepreneurs.

²⁵ According to the women's group in Roiet Province, interviewed on 1 October 2022.

²⁶ According to the women leaders of mega farm in Roiet Province, interviewed on 1 October 2022.

²⁷ Good Agricultural Practices for Rice is a voluntary standard that certifies that the rice is safe for consumption with good quality. It provides requirements for every production steps to produce rice.

²⁸ According to the women's group in Suphanburi Province, 15 September 2022.

²⁹ The Action Plan of the Department of Agriculture Extension (2020-2022) and (2023-2027). See Section 3.2 of this report.

³⁰ Discussion with women's group in Chiangrai Province, 29 September 2022.

³¹ According to one of the women leaders interviewed in Chiangrai (30 September 2022), she buys 25-30 kg of cow dung with 30 baht to make earthworm fertilizer. After one month, she can produce 20 kg of earthworm fertilizer, which she can sell with 20 baht per kg.

It is important to note that lower cost of production and diversity of income sources create a sense of security among women farmers. Women in Chiangrai emphasized the importance of diversification for their livelihood security. The sense of security obtained through diverse income sources was stronger than that obtained from insurance³².

Most women's groups focus on income-generating activities. It is only when NGOs are present that they start to be engaged in other aspects, such as environmental issues and basic rights (Homenet interview on 19 September 2022). Taking note of the women's higher awareness of the environment and health, as well as of new technologies, there is an untapped opportunity to involve women more strongly in climate-smart agriculture.

Women in leadership

The numbers of female heads of village or heads of farmers' groups are rising. This also coincides with the fact that men are frequently busy working outside the village and with the fact that with stronger Sub-district Administrative Offices (that are in control of budgets), the heads of the villages are slowly losing their political influence and resources. Regardless of the reasons, with more women being visible in official leadership positions, they serve as good role models.

Being in leadership positions is more difficult for women than men since women working for the community need to fulfil their household chores before they work outside the household; otherwise, they will be exposed to criticism from both family and community members³³.

It is noteworthy that many of the strong women leaders in the villages are women who had gathered experience outside their home villages through education and work before returning after some time. They display a more confident demeanor and are often more knowledgeable and more articulate compared with those who have spent all their lives inside the same village. These women also run for local elections and win seats. For example, in Suvarnaphumi District in Roiet province³⁴, a number of women have become members of the sub-district council. This has created changes in the way the sub-district utilizes the budget. These women were able to highlight the importance of women's groups' activities and were able to allocate more budget support to the women's groups. The sub-district leadership is supportive of women's groups, but the fact that women were in leadership positions did make a difference.

Aging farmers and young farmers

Youths tend to leave the village for education and work and the remaining smallholder farmer population is, on average, ageing as a consequence. Because of mechanization, it is still possible for older farmers to continue farming, especially for rice production. There is a pattern of young couples asking family members, mostly parents and/or siblings, to look after their children while they seek employment elsewhere (Rungmanee et al., 2021). This leads to an increase in skipped-generation households. There are more single elderly female-headed skipped-generation households than male-headed skipped-generation households (UNDP, 2021). These households commonly encounter difficulties, both financially and in terms of labour availability.

There are some people who come back from the cities and start farming. These older returnee farmers tend to be more open to new technologies and can serve as good role models or

³² According to group discussion with women's group in Chiangrai province on 29 September 2022.

³³ According to group discussion with women's group in Chiangrai province, 29 September 2022.

³⁴ Interview with women's group on 1 October 2022.

demonstration farmers in the future. There might be greater opportunities that they would be interested in adopting new agricultural practices and showing other farmers their benefits.

In order to encourage younger generations to take up farming, it is important to inspire youths on the exciting dimension of agriculture through knowledge of new scientific information and technology. Currently, agricultural technology teaching is not in the curriculum and is done as limited extra-curricular activities. If there are more opportunities for youths to become inspired by agricultural technologies, there might be more young generation farmers who can lead climate-smart agriculture in the future.

Migrant workers

Survey data generated prior to COVID-19 pandemic found that migrant workers' incomes in Thailand varied significantly depending on several factors, including gender, agricultural crop, nationality, type of labour, and the province of employment. Around 58% of migrant worker respondents who reported working full time made less than the statutory minimum wage of the province in which they are employed. While 50% of men were paid less than the minimum wage, the proportion was 66% for female migrant workers (ILO, 2022). Key recommendations made in the ILO report include developing regular migration channels that are less costly, time consuming and complex; amending the Ministerial Regulation concerning Labour Protection in Agricultural Work to cover all workers in agriculture; a review of the ways in which the border employment scheme is used; as well as addressing the significant gender wage gap (ILO, 2022).

In summary, women in rural Thailand play a prominent role in agriculture, but their contribution is less visible since they are generally regarded as being unpaid family workers. Such lack of recognition of women's independent contributions and needs is reflected in the lack of specific attention to women and gender differences in agriculture-related policies and plans. Women still need to juggle their time and effort with their care work responsibilities. Women are interested in new technologies and can be a strong driver of new agricultural practices, but they might have different priorities regarding what kind of technologies they would like to adopt than men or external experts, hence there is a need to pay attention to their needs. Women play a large role in stabilizing the fluctuating income from agriculture by being engaged in non-farm or off-farm income-generating activities. However, their activities are seen more as an extension of household work rather than a serious business, hence the potential to grow their business is still untapped. Women in leadership positions can support this effort of better recognition of women's activities in the community and economy, and can make a difference by changing resource allocation.

Conclusions for the project

- Women play a prominent role in agriculture, but they are perceived as unpaid family labour. It is important that gender-disaggregated data is properly collected and monitored so that women's contributions are correctly reflected in policies and plans.
- Women play a prominent role in agriculture but, at the same time, they take almost the entire responsibility for care work at home. It is important that a balanced workload is achieved between women and men in the household and community through sharing of household work as well as by providing social services such as daycare services.

- The female share of participants in agricultural training is high. It is helpful if there are follow-up supplementary learning materials made available online. Noting that often women farmers like using online applications even more than men, such online materials will be useful for their learning.
- Women are interested in agricultural technologies but might have different priorities or interests than men. For example, they might be more interested in the cost reduction dimension of a technology. It is important to be sensitive to gender differences in the needs and interests of farmers when introducing climate-smart technologies and practices.
- Young women and men leave farming but, when women have children or when their parents are old/sick, women tend to return to the rural villages. Such women who have been exposed to outside experience and knowledge might be more open to adopt new agricultural practices. Encouraging and providing support to these returnee women to apply climate-smart technology could be an effective strategy.
- Women play a prominent role in off-farm and non-farm income-generating activities. However, these activities are often seen as an extension of their household work rather than as serious business. Such low recognition of women's activities leads to a lower position of women in society. It is important that women's income-generating activities are treated as serious business, are given proper support and are provided with business opportunities. For example, women producers and women's groups can play a role as service providers in the project, notably in the context of bio-fertilizer production.
- Some women's groups sell their premium rice in small packages directly to consumers. However, the premium rice market is still underdeveloped. There is a need to support the development of premium rice markets and link women's groups to access such markets.
- Facilitating women's leadership is important. Women's presence in leadership roles is still low and women face higher barriers in taking up leadership roles compared to men. Women can make a difference in resource allocation to support other women if they are in decision-making positions. To ensure that gender equality efforts can be sustained in the project area, promoting women into leadership positions is essential.
- Women's groups tend to focus on income-generating activities. With external support and encouragement, they have the potential to play a key role as environmental and climate-smart technology advocates.
- Migrant workers are essential for agricultural work, but it is noted that women migrant workers are paid less than men. It is important to ensure gender equality in wages among migrant workers.
- Young people frequently leave the community for education and then do not come back. It is important to introduce opportunities for young

women and men to be inspired by climate-smart agricultural technologies so that they might be interested to take them up in the future. Supporting young couples who are just starting a family to stay in, or return to, their villages to start up agriculture could serve as a complementary approach to supporting climate-smart rice farming adoption.

Chapter 4: Gender responsiveness and expertise, as well as gender equality in the partner organization(s)

Rice Department (RD)

The RD of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives applies the national policies/strategies to promote gender equality: e.g., the Gender Equality Act, B.E. 2558 (2015), the 20-Year National Strategy, the National Economic and Social Development Plan and the Gender Equality Promotion Plan. However, RD does not have a gender action plan developed specifically for its own purposes, and staff members do not seem to be aware of who the Chief Gender Equality Officer (CGEO) is. The Department has not promoted gender equality issues and the awareness of gender equality in the rice sector is not commonly shared among staff members³⁵.

The Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWAFFD) of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has included in its Strategy (2017-2036) several gender-specific points, including strengthening the mechanism of women's development, ensuring that government agencies create sex-disaggregated data in their monitoring and evaluation system, as well as allocating funds to research into gender needs and differences. With support from DWAFFD, the Rice Department can identify gender issues to focus on their programs, make sure that the data they collect are sex-disaggregated, and identify and train personnel for their monitoring and evaluation positions.

Since the involvement of women in rice production in Thailand is high, the Rice Department should be able to collect good practices of women's engagement in successful climate-smart agriculture, for learning and sharing with communities. It would also be able to identify opportunities that are created by its programs to empower women to be more active at the leadership level, noting that the number of women in leadership positions is still very low, especially at higher hierarchical levels above the village (sub-district, district, etc.).

It is also noted that the Rice Department is currently supporting the development of a Thai Agricultural Standard (TAS) for sustainable rice, a national standard based on the global SRP standard. It is strongly recommended that the TAS standard adopts the SRP approach of including a women's empowerment performance indicator in its monitoring and performance framework (see Section 3.3 of this report).

Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC)

In its Sustainability Report 2020, BAAC has included the following orientation with regard to SDG 5 (gender equality):

While operating its business, BAAC has paid respect to human rights by upholding and practising the relevant principle of laws. There is no discrimination in recruiting bank personnel: both males and females have an equal chance of being recruited. Welfare is provided, and career paths are clearly developed together with human resource maintenance and development. There is no discrimination against race or religion. The ultimate goal is to be able to deliver financial services and create sustainable value for all stakeholders. With respect to financial access, when registering household representatives as clients, BAAC is also equally open to both men and women being accepted (BAAC, 2020:5).

In its Business Strategy for the fiscal year 2022, BAAC notes the importance of equipping its personnel with higher capabilities to deal with different generations, especially young farmers.

³⁵ Based on the response from RD during the interview by ESS team on 10 September 2022.

It also emphasizes compliance and provides a grievance procedure for complaints and misconduct of employees, although there is no specific mention of sexual harassment. The compliance and governance sub-committee have equal numbers of women and men (3 women out of 6 members).

While BAAC has a policy for inclusiveness and respect for human rights, there is no concrete gender action plan. Its board and management are male-dominated. According to its Annual Report 2021, the gender disaggregation of management members is as below:

- Of the 15 Board members, 3 are women.
- Of the 21 Management Committee members, 2 are women
- All of the Relation Affairs Committee (which consists of both employer and employee representatives) members are exclusively men
- All Appeal Sub-Committee members are men (total 7 members)
- Of the Sub-Committee on the Development of Grassroots Economy and Social Environmental Responsibility members (8 in total, 7 men and one woman), the only woman is one of the two senior experts.

Although the lack of women in management does not necessarily mean that BAAC's operation is gender-blind, there is room for more effort to be made to increase the number of women in higher management positions.

BAAC collects sex-disaggregated data on clients and service operation recipients, but such data is not made available to the public. The gender balance among clients seems to differ from one location to another. This is an improvement from earlier days, when most BAAC clients were male (as they were the household heads and the land was registered under their names). Nowadays, women are better at dealing with paperwork, and hence more women are contacting BAAC themselves³⁶. Women clients seem to be aware of the insurance/compensation that they are entitled to from the government through BAAC.

A number of BAAC projects support gender equality. For example, the Microfinance Linkage Project (ended in 2009) supported women indirectly by providing access to formal credit and supporting alternative income-generating activities such as small-scale vegetable production³⁷. BAAC's "Tree Bank scheme" was established to encourage members to plant trees on their own land, helping members earn income to improve their financial security while increasing the number of trees in the community. The scheme is currently operated in over 800 communities. Half of the participants are women, and 90% of the committee members are women (The Government of Thailand National Review, 2014). However, other BAAC projects – such as the Land Ownership Fund³⁸ – disregard gender when targeting beneficiaries and may, therefore, not be responsive to the needs of rural women.

In order to make sure that BAAC is able to meet the needs of female clients, as well as encourage more young clients, BAAC needs to train its staff members to engage with women and youths and reflect their needs in its operations. As seen in Section 3.3 of this report, BAAC is one of the committee members of Thailand Women's Empowerment Fund. The experience in operating the Fund can be used to further develop its own women-focused programs.

³⁶ According to the group discussion with women leaders in Chiangrai province (29 September 2022).

³⁷ https://www.thai-german-cooperation.info/en_US/history_rural_2/

³⁸ https://www.baac.or.th/en/content-product.php?content_group_sub=2

Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)

ONEP is a public entity under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) and is responsible for the Environmental Fund Division (EFD) and serves as the focal point for international environmental conventions, including the GCF. ONEP employs a total of 272 government officials, 72% of whom are women. More than 70% of those at the executive level are women (GIZ, 2021). “ONEP implements a gender-neutral approach in its recruitment and career growth policy at all levels” (GIZ, 2021).

ONEP serves as the government’s gender focal point for climate change together with the Department of Women’s Affairs and Family Development (DWAFD). Although ONEP has started to recognize the importance of gender aspects for climate policy development by reaching out to DWAFD, its mission statement does not explicitly refer to gender. ONEP administers the national EIA guidelines, but they do not include gender either. The Environmental Fund that is administered by ONEP does not apply gender criteria when making funding decisions (GIZ, 2021).

Since ONEP is an entity under MoNRE, it falls under the government’s national plans on gender equality in Thailand. ONEP is supposed to have its own gender focal point, which the DoWAFD requires, but does not in fact have one as yet. ONEP also lacks a Gender Action Plan (GAP). But since the Thai government itself has a gender equality policy, ONEP is subject to its provisions.

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

IRRI, as a member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), has a strong commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women, as it believes that when women are empowered, not only women benefit, but it leads to the improvement of health and sustainability of food systems as a whole (interview on 8 September 2022 with Dr. Jean Balie, the IRRI regional director of Southeast Asia and the Pacific). During the meeting between IRRI and the Thai government on 15 October 2020 on “One CGIAR”, IRRI Director General Matthew Morell assured the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives that One CGIAR will “bring together a holistic agenda across food and nutritional security, climate change, the environment, livelihoods and prosperity, and gender and youth empowerment in agriculture” (IRRI, 2020).

IRRI regularly publishes research on gender topics in rice production and has become a research leader in gender and livelihoods. IRRI is an equal-opportunity employer that values diversity: women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Designing and implementing gender equality at IRRI overall is generally under the governance of the executive team, which is composed of research, human resource and operations divisions³⁹.

IRRI implements the “IRRI Gender in the Workplace Strategy”. Further, IRRI's Code of Conduct explicitly states the non-acceptance of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religious belief, sex and gender. Currently, IRRI, being part of the One CGIAR⁴⁰, is bound by the One CGIAR's policy and guidelines, including the “Framework for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion in CGIAR’s Workplaces”⁴¹. As of 30 September 2022, the data shows that IRRI employs

³⁹ Information from Ms. Jocelyn Amarante, senior manager - grants, contracts and compliance, IRRI.

⁴⁰ One CGIAR aims to a reformulation of CGIAR's partnerships, knowledge, assets and global presence, aiming for greater integration and impact. It aims to have unified governance, institutional integration among other transformation. See <https://www.cgiar.org/food-security-impact/one-cgiar/>.

⁴¹ Framework for gender, diversity and inclusion in CGIAR's workplaces was put in place in August 2020. It states the shared vision for gender, diversity and inclusion. It puts in place roles and responsibilities in implementing the framework across the system at all levels, sets principles, focus area and objectives. See <https://gdi.cgiar.org/2020/08/31/framework-for-gender-diversity-and-inclusion-in-cgiars-workplaces/>.

541 men and 407 women, making it a ratio of 1:0.7 (men to women), which is equal to 43% women among IRRI staff.

While IRRI does not have any project deliverables that specifically target gender research, IRRI applies a 'gender lens' in all its activities. IRRI has identified some challenges for gender equality, as follows: 1) Access to information about climate change and related impacts on water and agriculture; 2) Decision-making related to water management and agriculture; 3) Access to technology and related training to advance climate-smart agriculture; 4) Access to finance to invest in climate-smart agriculture.

Although IRRI has established itself as a thought leader on gender-livelihood linkages in the agricultural context, it is based in India. The Thai local staff who will be responsible for gender and livelihoods for the Thai Rice GCF project are not yet clearly assigned (as of October 2022). Gender issues in Thailand are subtle, and less obvious compared with South Asia or Africa. Women are very active in agriculture. However, the gender gap in leadership, as well as household and care work responsibilities and wage differences, persists, as seen in previous sections. This gap is generally perceived as reflecting natural differences and problematizing it can be challenging. IRRI needs to assign a gender officer who is not only appropriately trained but who also receives strong support from IRRI's research lead on gender and livelihoods and also from the top management of IRRI Thailand.

Conclusions for the project

RD:

- The Chief Gender Equality Officer (CGEO) does not seem to be widely known to staff members. Better awareness raising on the roles of the CGEO and his/her visibility is needed.
- There is no Gender Focal Point (GFP) in RD. It would help the functioning of the CGEO by having GFPs at the department, office and project levels.
- There is no RD Gender Action Plan. Having an action plan would help facilitate the gender equality efforts of the project.
- The RD follows the standard protocols and regulations of the Thai government for ethical conduct. Setting an anti-discrimination and sexual harassment policy for RD would highlight the importance of gender equality in RD.
- Although women play a large role in agriculture, gender issues in Thailand are subtle and not easily identifiable. Training and awareness raising to clarify the subtle and hidden gender inequality issues for all levels of RD can help RD to monitor – and, ultimately, steer – gender equality issues in the rice sector.
- It is noted that SRP includes women's empowerment indicators that are an important tool to monitor the status of women's empowerment in the rice sector. Such good practices need to be continued in the Thai Agricultural Standard for Sustainable Rice (TAS) as well.

BAAC:

- BAAC has more women clients than in the past. BAAC can strengthen its services to contribute to gender mainstreaming efforts by designating a GFP as well as through developing a Gender Action Plan. BAAC management can receive training to effectively guide the process and give clear direction for gender equality in BAAC's organization and services.
- As was discussed in the earlier section, women farmers tend to have different needs and different drivers of a sense of security than male farmers. BAAC can strengthen its outreach so that it can better capture female farmers' needs – in terms of both financial support (lending) as well as for insurance products.

IRRI:

- IRRI as an organization has declared a strong commitment to gender equality and operates a code of conduct for non-discrimination. Designating a GFP at the Thailand Country Office level could effectively translate such organizational commitment to country operations.
- Although there is a clear commitment to the topic, there is currently no IRRI gender equality action plan developed for Thailand. An action plan would help guide in-country operations.
- In order to have the action plan effectively implemented, IRRI Thailand staff members need to be trained on gender equality concepts. Their Terms of Reference (TORs) need to include working for gender equality so that tackling gender issues becomes everyone's responsibility.

ONEP:

- ONEP has recognized the importance of gender perspectives and is one of the government's two GFPs for climate change in Thailand. However, it has still not yet operationalized gender integration into its operation, such as including gender equality in its mission, gender guidelines in EIA guidelines, or gender criteria in Environmental Fund disbursements.

Chapter 5: Gender responsiveness and expertise in the project/among project staff in the country

5.1 Equal opportunities in the team

The project is still at the proposal stage, so the personnel selection of the team members is not yet concluded. According to GIZ's Gender Strategy, the Human Resources Department monitors action on equal opportunities within GIZ. New staff are given orientation on GIZ's Gender Strategy, on sexual harassment policy and the functioning of the Gender Working Group in GIZ Thailand.

Currently, the GIZ Thailand office is finalizing its own sexual harassment policy.

5.2 Gender expertise of the team members

GIZ Thailand office currently has a part-time GFP (10% of the total time allocated to work as GFP). In principle, all GIZ projects need to designate GFPs, but not all have yet done so. The country GFP and the project GFPs constitute the GIZ Gender Working Group and meet once a month. They exchange their experiences as well as discuss joint activities. This has been an effective forum for peer-to-peer learning⁴².

GIZ Thailand ensures that all proposals include gender considerations and improve gender equality wherever possible. All GIZ proposals need to be assessed by the country GFP against the GIZ Safeguards + Gender checklist. The country GFP provides recommendations on whether a proposal will need a gender analysis prior to the project or not. However, most projects developed by GIZ Thailand to date have been designated the level of G-0 for the gender marker (do no harm). The aim is to bring most projects up to GG1 level (include gender equality in objectives). Some projects already have successful achievements in terms of gender equality⁴³, and this was attributed to including a gender-related indicator in the design of these projects.

GIZ Thailand central office staff receive gender training from an external resource person. However, not all field officers receive such opportunities. Integrating gender in projects is still a new topic for GIZ Thailand staff, and they are currently introduced to the "reach-benefit-empower" framework of gender integration.

GIZ Thailand project staff need to work with their partners, and sometimes they face difficulty advocating for gender since the partner institutions frequently do not have gender equality policies or action plans. The first step that they are taking is to introduce GIZ's gender strategy and code of conduct to partners.

It seems that there is a certain level of gender awareness among GIZ Thailand staff, but there is still a need to improve capacity in terms of operationalizing their gender knowledge into practice in project implementation and management. How to influence and guide partners to take up gender-integrated/transformational approaches in project implementation and monitoring is an additional challenge.

⁴² According to the Gender Focal Point of GIZ Thailand, 2 November 2022.

⁴³ Such as the Sustainable and Climate-Friendly Palm Oil Production and Procurement in Thailand project (see https://www.thai-german-cooperation.info/en_US/five-female-leading-farmers-thoughts-on-sustainable-palm-oil-production/).

Conclusions for the project

- During staff recruitment, gender balance among staff in general and in relation to specific positions needs to be kept in mind. Staff TORs need to include adoption of a gender-transformative approach in their work.
- A GFP needs to be recruited for the Thai Rice Project. If more and more GIZ projects are to adopt gender integration seriously, a part-time overall GFP would not be able to handle the workload and a full-time employee would be of benefit.
- Assign GFPs for all projects. By having all projects participating in the Gender Working Group, peer-to-peer learning will be even more effective.
- Gender training for all levels of staff needs to be conducted. Regular gender training for all levels – from management to field staff – is needed. Training for managers is needed so that they will be able to exercise leadership in a gender-transformative approach. Project staff need to be trained to identify gender issues in the field and how to monitor gender equality in projects. Also, gender communication training is needed so that project staff will be able to effectively deliver the message of gender equality to national partners and to final beneficiaries.
- Develop gender monitoring indicators for all projects. This will facilitate project management to keep a constant focus on gender equality issues.
- Sharing gender experiences with other agencies and with other GIZ country offices would be effective to motivate the country team to further develop gender-related practices and to promote the development of projects with strong gender dimensions.

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