

Gender Assessment

FP304: Enhancing Sustainable Land Management and Climate Resilient Agri-food Systems in Côte d'Ivoire (LARACI)

Côte d'Ivoire | CGIAR System Organization | B.45/02/Add.05

12 June 2026



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Côte d'Ivoire is a country in West Africa. It is in the northern hemisphere, between the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator, precisely between the 4th and 10th degrees of the north latitude and between the 8th and 9th of west longitude. Its surface area is 322,462 sq. km. The country is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the south. It shares land borders with Ghana to the east, Burkina Faso and Mali to the north, and Guinea and Liberia to the west.

The 2021 General Population and Housing Census¹ estimates the total population living in the territory of Côte d'Ivoire at 29.4 million. 78% (22,840,169 people) of this population were national. They are divided into six (6) major sociological groups, namely the Akan (38.0%), the Gour (22.0%), the Mande of the North (22.0%), the Kru (9.1%), the Mande of the South (8.6%) and the naturalized (0.3%). At the time of the census 6,435,835 migrants resided in the country, constituting 22 per cent of the total population. On the religious level, two major religions are practiced in Côte d'Ivoire namely Islam practiced by 42.5% followed by Christianity with 39.8%. People who do not practice any religion represent 12.6% and animists, 2.2%. A very small number of people (0.7%) practice other religions.

At the national level, the annual population growth rate was 2.9% between the census periods of 2014 and 2021. The average household size is 5.2 people for a population density of 91.1 inhabitants/sq. km. The gender distribution is 52.2% men and 47.8% women. According to the age structure, 75.6% of residents in Côte d'Ivoire are young people who are under 35 years old while 55.1% are 18 years old and over. The active population aged 15 to 64 is 59.2%, that of those under 15 is 38.2%, and 2.6% is over 65. Côte d'Ivoire is also experiencing accelerated urbanization with 52.5% living in cities, compared to 47.5% in rural areas. The urbanization rate increased from 32.0% in 1975 to 52.5% in 2021².

1.2 Context

Côte d'Ivoire is a lower middle-income country³. The Human Development Index 2023-24⁴ places the country on the edge of the "low human development" category and ranked 166th out of 191 countries and territories. Between 2008 and 2021, the country recorded a decrease in poverty at the national level, from 48.9%⁵ to 37.5%⁶ in 2021. The country is often considered as a pole of socio-political stability in West Africa.

Placed on a path of sustained growth since 2012, the Ivorian economy has remained robust in the face of the combined effects of inflationary pressures caused by the COVID pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the growing political and security instability in the sub-region. The GDP growth rate, which averaged 8% over the period 2012-2019, slowed to 2% in 2020,

¹ Kaba, N., 2022. Final overall results of the RGPH 2021: the population usually living on the Ivorian territory is 29,389,150 inhabitants, <https://www.gouv.ci/actualite-article.php?recordID=13769>

² UN-Habitat, 2023. Côte d'Ivoire Country Report – A Better Quality of Life for All in an Urbanizing World, https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/07/presentation_programme_cote_d_ivoire_fr.pdf

³ OECD DAC list of ODA recipients 2025: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/oda-eligibility-and-conditions/dac-list-of-oda-recipients.html#oda-recipients-list>

⁴ Human Development Index (HDI) : <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>

⁵ Kaba, N., 2018. Further on with Niala Kaba on poverty reduction, <https://www.gouv.ci/actualite-article.php?recordID=9149>

⁶ AfDB, 2024. Country Report: Driving Côte d'Ivoire's Transformation through Global Financial Architecture Reform, https://vcda.afdb.org/en/system/files/report/cote_ivoire_final_2024.pdf

before recovering to an average 7.2% in the 2021-2022 period⁷, a level nevertheless higher than the average performance of West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) states, which stands at 3.9%⁸.

Agriculture occupies an important place in the Ivorian economy. It contributes approximately 20–25% of national GDP and accounts for around 60% of the country's export receipts in recent years. The sector employs about 45% of the total workforce, with the majority of these workers in rural areas dependent on farming and related activities for their livelihoods. At the regional level, agriculture represents one of the largest economic sectors in ECOWAS, contributing on average around 22–29% of regional GDP and underpinning food security and trade across member states.⁹

This sector is mainly made up of small producers who work in difficult and unproductive conditions. It remains very dependent on weather conditions. However, Côte d'Ivoire is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change due to its economy's high dependence on agriculture and low adaptive capacity. In 2023, it was ranked 133 out of 187 countries according to the ND-GAIN climate change vulnerability index¹⁰. The recurrence of extreme weather events, including droughts, disruptions in rainfall patterns, heatwaves, and floods, has a serious impact on agricultural productivity and food security in some regions. If no action is taken, this will have negative macroeconomic effects on economic growth and poverty.

1.3. Project rationale

The project “Enhancing Sustainable Land Management and Climate- Resilient Agri-food Systems in Côte d'Ivoire (LARACI)” promotes the adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in order to: (i) strengthen the resilience of rural communities to climate risks, (ii) increase agricultural productivity and value chain profitability to improve food security and the incomes of agricultural households; and (iii) reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) footprint to initiate a shift to a low carbon development pathway. The project's focus is particularly on the resilience and management of climate risks and reduction of the GHG emissions footprint associated with three key value chains: rice, cassava, and yam. These crops have a high potential for resilience to climate change, strongly contribute to food security, and have potential for mitigation gains to reduce GHG footprints typically associated with these value chains.

Unlike cocoa, which is predominantly cultivated and controlled by men as a traditional cash crop in Côte d'Ivoire, the cassava and yam value chains present a markedly different gendered structure. Women play a central role across multiple nodes of these value chains, from production and post-harvest processing to marketing and trade. Studies in the West African context consistently show that women account for a significant share of cassava and yam farmers and dominate processing and retail activities. In the LARACI target regions, preliminary consultations confirm that women represent an important proportion of producers in these two value chains, and are particularly active in processing (gari, attiéké, fufu) and local market sales. This differentiated gender dynamic justifies a tailored approach in project design: interventions

⁷ AfDB, 2023. Country Strategy Paper 2023-2028. 136 p. <https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/cote-divoire-document-de-strategie-pays-2023-2028-0.pdf>

⁸ Swiss Confederation, June 2023. Economic Report 2022 – Côte d'Ivoire. 21 p.

⁹ https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/cote-divoire-agro-processing-agricultural-services-and-products?utm_source=chatgpt.com

¹⁰ ND-GAIN Country Index Ranking, 2022: <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>

targeting cassava and yam must explicitly recognize women's existing roles, address the specific constraints they face (including lack of access to improved inputs, mechanized processing equipment, and storage infrastructure), and ensure that productivity gains and technology adoption benefits accrue equitably to women participants. A gender-differentiated value chain analysis is therefore incorporated into the assessment framework to capture these nuances and design appropriately targeted support measures.

The LARACI project will focus its field interventions on the regions of N'Zi, Moronou, Iffou, La Mé, and Gbêkê. These areas of central-eastern and central Côte d'Ivoire, constituting the former "*cocoa belt*", are experiencing severe environmental degradation caused by strong anthropogenic pressure on resources, such as bush fires, deforestation, agricultural land clearing, and artisanal gold panning. These actions have led to landscape change, biodiversity loss, soil depletion, pollution of water resources, and reduced capacity to absorb carbon emissions. Rural communities in the targeted regions are thus particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change (variability in rainfall, decrease in rainfall, rise in temperatures, etc.), and in turn, these conditions lead to lower productivity, impoverishment, household food insecurity, rural exodus, and inequalities accessing natural resources. Consequently, farmers and national stakeholders are looking for more climate-resilient alternatives to improve food security and livelihoods in the long term.

In this context, the LARACI project provides an opportunity to improve the adaptive capacity and build resilience of rural communities in the Central-Eastern area. The project is also committed to reducing sex and age-based discriminatory inequalities and practices regarding access to capacity building and extension, information, agricultural inputs, land and water, agricultural tools and equipment, labor, and financial resources. This commitment should make it possible to improve the economic and social empowerment of women and young people in the agrifood sector of the Center-East of Côte d'Ivoire.

Three categories of structural barriers disproportionately constrain women's participation and benefit-sharing in the agrifood sector of the target regions, and the LARACI project is designed to address them explicitly. First, land tenure: customary land tenure systems in Côte d'Ivoire largely exclude women from land ownership and long-term usufruct rights, limiting their ability to invest in soil improvement, access agricultural credit, or adopt climate-resilient practices requiring multi-season commitments. The project will advocate with local authorities for gender-equitable land allocation procedures, if not individually, at least to women associations to enable collective action. Second, access to credit and financial services: women in rural areas face significant barriers to formal financial services due to lack of collateral, low literacy, and distance from service points. LARACI will address this by strengthening village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), facilitating linkages with microfinance institutions, and supporting the design of gender-responsive financial products adapted to the seasonal income patterns of women farmers and processors. Third, decision-making power: women are systematically underrepresented in farmer cooperatives, village development committees, and value chain governance structures, limiting their influence over collective resource management decisions. The project will implement a minimum 40% women's representation target in all project-supported governance bodies, provide leadership training for women, work with women/youth cooperatives or engage with mixed-cooperatives to revise membership and voting rules that currently disadvantage women and youth.

This Gender and Social Inclusion assessment is carried out as part of project design to support these objectives. It is based on an analytical process that is evidence-based, informed by an understanding of the social organization of the targeted communities, the conditions of access to productive resources, and considers the expectations of all stakeholders. The aim is to promote a fair distribution of the opportunities and benefits associated with the project.

For the implementation of this project, the CGIAR System Organization, as the Accredited Entity (AE) will engage two Executing Entities (EEs): Fonds Interprofessionnel pour la Recherche et le Conseil Agricoles (FIRCA) and AfricaRice (a CGIAR Center). AfricaRice will engage two other CGIAR Centers (the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and IITA) as Service Providers to provide specialized services for the project implementation. During implementation, the EEs will coordinate implementation with Government agencies, NGOs, private sector entities and farmer organizations as key project stakeholders, or as procured parties selected through a procurement process for the provision of specific services and activities.

1.4 Targeted geographic areas

The LARACI project covers five regions in the Center-East of Côte d'Ivoire: Iffou, Moronou and N'Zi, which are administratively dependent on the district of Lacs, the region of Mé (in particular the department of Akoupé) which is part of the district of Lagunes, and the region of Gbêkê in the district of Vallée du Bandama (see table 1). These regions belong to Agro-pole 4, as defined in the National Agricultural Investment Plan II. These are areas where many rural communities live, whose main activity is agriculture.

TABLE 11: ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS COVERED BY LARACI

DISTRICTS	REGIONS	REGIONAL CAPITALS	DEPARTMENTS
District des Lacs	Iffou	Daoukro	Daoukro; M'Bahiakro; Prikro
	Moronou	Bongouanou	Bongouanou; Arrah; M'Batto
	N'Zi	Dimbokro	Dimbokro; Bocanda; Kouassi-Kouassikro
District des Lagunes	La Mé	Adzopé	Adzope; Akoupé ; Alepe; Yakasse-Atobrou
District de la Vallée du Bandama	Gbêkê	Bouaké	Bouaké; Béoumi; Botro; Sakassou

1.5 Methodology

The scoping phase of the Gender Assessment combined a desk review with stakeholder consultations involving CGIAR technical experts and national institutional partners to ensure contextual relevance and alignment with national gender priorities.

Institutional partners engaged during this phase included representatives from key Government ministries, notably the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as gender-focused public agencies such as the Ministry of Women, Family and Children. Additional partners included research institutions, agricultural extension services, and implementing entities, namely FIRCA and CGIAR Centers.

Particular attention was given to incorporating women's perspectives throughout the scoping process. Women experts from partner institutions participated in technical consultations,

including gender focal points from Government agencies and female specialists from CGIAR and other stakeholders. In addition, inputs from women stakeholders were captured through stakeholder consultations conducted during project preparation, including engagement with women's producer organizations, cooperatives, and associations in the target regions. These consultations provided critical insights into gender-specific constraints, risks, and opportunities within climate-resilient agricultural value chains.

Overall, the scoping approach sought to integrate institutional gender expertise with field-level perspectives from women and youth stakeholders to inform the design of the Gender and Social Inclusion Assessment and ensure its relevance to local socio-cultural contexts.

The review of secondary data covered available literature around gender concerns in agriculture in general and in relation to climate change in particular. Furthermore, the review informed the analysis of data that was previously collected in the project intervention regions, around issues of social inclusion, access to productive resources, climate vulnerabilities, and gender-related constraints.

1.6 Report structure

The report is structured in two main sections: the study frameworks and the analysis of the situation of women and youth in agricultural settings. It will be complemented by an action plan, which outlines a list of activities, indicators, and key resources necessary for the successful implementation of the project.

2. Gender assessment framework

The information described here focuses on the policy and environmental frameworks that are relevant for gender assessment. It provides a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges for the LARACI project.

2.1. Regulatory framework

2.1.1 International conventions and agreements

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has signed, consented to and/or ratified several international conventions and agreements relating to gender and the environment. The concerned multilateral commitments include:

- **International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions**, including **Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Wage** and **Convention No. 111 – on Employment and Occupational Discrimination**. These two conventions were ratified by Côte d'Ivoire on 5 May 1961.
- **Agenda 21** is a comprehensive multilateral agreement that emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio, Brazil, in 1992. It makes recommendations in various areas such as poverty reduction, agriculture, and ecosystem management to achieve sustainable development. Agenda 21 calls on States to carry out the reforms necessary to eliminate inequalities to achieve this goal.
- The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979, was ratified by Côte d'Ivoire on 18 December 1995. This convention establishes gender equality as a fundamental human right and requires States Parties "to take all appropriate measures" to "protect women from sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV)" and "establish an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming in all sectors of public and private life and in terms of access to and control of resources".
- **The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**, known as the **Maputo Protocol**, was ratified by Côte d'Ivoire on 5 October 2011. The Charter encourages States to reaffirm their determination "to ensure the promotion, fulfilment and protection of women's rights in order to enable them to fully enjoy all their human rights. The protocol emphasizes the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment. It emphasizes the need to take gender into account in environmental management, research, and access to sustainable technologies.
- The **African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063** and the **Sustainable Development Goals** were adopted by Côte d'Ivoire in 2015. These agreements include poverty eradication, the fight against hunger, gender equality, the reduction of inequalities, and the fight against climate change, as priorities in the trajectory of economic and social development on the continent.
- The **Gender Action Plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** adopted in 2017 aims to foster gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the promotion of climate policies at all levels, including adaptation and implementation.

All these agreements and conventions related to gender and climate change serve as a guide for national policies in Côte d'Ivoire.

2.1.2 National legal and policy framework

2.1.2.1 Legal provisions

Côte d'Ivoire has a large and rich legal framework related to gender and/or the environment. The main national texts are contained in the table below.

TABLE 2: GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION

LAWS	COVERAGE	
	GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	ENVIRONMENT
Law 98-750 of 23 December 1998 (amended by Law No. 2004-412 of 14 August 2004, by Law No. 2013-655 of 13 September 2013, and by Law No. 2019-868 of 14 October 2019), on the Rural Land code	The Law provides for equal access to and control of land by all natural or legal persons without restriction of sex.	This text recommends using land in an environmentally friendly manner and in accordance with the regulations in force.
Law No. 2014-138 of 24 March 2014 (repealing Law No. 95-553 of 18 July 1995) on the Mining code.	The Law stipulates that the mining exploitation can be carried out by any physical or moral person, Ivorian or foreign, if they have an exploitation permit from the competent authorities.	The mining code requires that mining be carried out in a rational manner and in a way that protects the quality of the environment and that involves local communities.
Law No. 2015-532 of 20 July 2015 on the Labour Code	The Law states that all employers are required to ensure, for the same work, equal remuneration between employees, regardless of their sex, age, origin, religion, opinions, etc. It strengthens the protection of pregnant women at work.	
Law No. 2015-537 of 20 July 2015 on agricultural direction.	The Law stipulates that the State shall ensure, in accordance with the land legislation in force, equitable access to land resources for all farmers, whether physical or moral persons. However, for agricultural development operations initiated by the State or local authorities, preferences are granted to vulnerable groups, including young people, women and people with disabilities.	
Law No. 2015-635 of 17 September 2015 amending Law No. 95-696 of 7 September 1995 on education.	This text establishes compulsory schooling for all children aged 6 to 16. This law came into force at the start of the 2015-2016 school year accompanied by an accelerated plan to prevent early marriages in schools (2013-2015).	
Law No. 2016-886 of 8 November 2016 (repealing the 2000 Constitution) on the Constitution of the Third Republic.	The Law underlines the intent of the public authorities to make the promotion of human rights and the protection of women a priority. It prohibits discrimination based on sex (Article 4) and violence against women (Article 5). This law prescribes gender equality in access to employment (article 14) and in terms of working conditions and remuneration (article 15).	The Côte d'Ivoire constitution articulates the State's commitment to the preservation of a healthy environment for future generations. Article 27 guarantees everyone the right to a healthy environment throughout the national territory. Article 40 emphasizes that the protection of the environment and the promotion of quality of life are duties both for the community and for each physical or moral person

Law No. 2019-675 of July 23, 2019 ¹¹ (repealing Law No. 2014-427 of July 14, 2014) on the Forest Code.	The Law promotes the active participation of local populations in the sustainable management of forest resources for the improvement of their incomes and living conditions.	This law is in line with international commitments in terms of environmental preservation, the fight against climate change as well as the need to continue the socio-economic development of the country, through the sectors of agriculture and the timber industry.
Law No. 2019-570 of 26 June 2019 (replacing Law No. 64-375 of 7 October 1964) on marriage.	These provisions essentially preserve equality between men and women in the management of the household, protect women's inheritance rights and strengthen their status. They facilitate women's access to assets such as land or plantations.	
Law No. 2019-574 of 26 June 2019 on the Criminal Code	These legal provisions provide for custodial sentences of up to 20 years in the event of the death of the victim of gender-based violence.	
Law No. 2019-870 of 14 October 2019 on the representation of women in elected assemblies. The decree on the modalities of its application was signed on November 25, 2020.	This law encourages a better representation of women in elected assemblies. It sets a minimum quota of 30% of women out of the total number of candidates running in any national election with the aim of achieving parity.	
Law No. 2021-894 of 21 December 2021 on measures to protect victims of domestic violence, rape and sexual violence other than domestic violence.	This text proclaims measures to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV).	
Law No. 2023-900 (replacing Law No. 98-755 of 23 December 1998) on the Environmental Code.	This law affirms that all stakeholders, including vulnerable people such as women and young people, have the right to participate in the management of the environment with a view to sustainable development.	It recommends protecting the environment by eliminating the factors and effects of its degradation.
Law No. 2023-902 (replacing Law No. 98-755 of 23 December 1998) on the Water Code.	It recognizes the need for integrated water resources management by involving all relevant stakeholders, including users.	This text insists on the management of water resources by preserving the quality of water sources, preventing waste and maintaining their availability. The Water Code prohibits and sanctions anthropogenic activities likely to degrade or pollute water resources.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is in a constant dynamic of supporting reforms in favor of respect for human rights and those of women.

2.1.2.2 Policy Arrangements

Since the early 2000s, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has initiated many actions aimed at addressing the main environmental and/or gender challenges. Particular attention is paid to these aspects in the actions developed in **the National Development Plans (NDPs)** (2012-2015; 2016-2020; 2021-2025).¹² This same commitment is also observed in the **National Agricultural**

¹¹ Ministry of Water and Forests, [January 2020]. Côte d'Ivoire adopts a new forest code, In MINEF Information Magazine, Issue 8, <https://eauxetforets.gouv.ci/sites/default/files/mag8.pdf>

¹² Ministry of Planning and Development, 2021. National Development Plan, 2021-2025, Volume 1, 189 p., https://dcf.ci/dcf.ci/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PND-2021-2025_Tome-1_Diagnostic-strate%CC%81gique.pdf

Investment Programs (NAIP) (2012-2017 and 2018-2025).¹³ These programs propose measures to restrain the drivers and effects of environmental degradation at the national level, in rural areas and also in the agricultural sector in particular.

Political actions concerning the commitment of the State of Côte d'Ivoire to the environment are coordinated and supervised by the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition through the Directorate for the Fight against Climate Change (DLCC), the Directorate for Nature Protection and the Directorate for Sustainable Development Policies and Strategies. Among the most recent and important actions promoted by these directorates are:

- **The National Environmental Action Plan - PNAE¹⁴** - This Plan, dated 2011, defines the political future of the environment in Côte d'Ivoire around three (3) main strategic axes, which are: (i) poverty reduction without further depleting and degrading natural resources; (ii) the preservation or restoration of the capacity of ecosystems to provide goods and services essential to the maintenance of economic activities; (iii) the improvement of the quality and internal performance of the environment. These different axes integrate actions to safeguard biological diversity, and fight against desertification and climate change.
- **The National Climate Change Program (NCCP)** - This is an operational body set up in 2012 to coordinate, propose and promote climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2014, the PNCC developed a National Strategy Document for the Program - 2015-2020¹⁵ which integrates the challenges of climate change in all sectors in Côte d'Ivoire and contributes to improving the living conditions and resilience of the population. This strategy was followed by a process to develop the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NAP). Between 2018 and 2023, several actions were made to integrate gender into climate action and NAP process at the level of policy documents, institutional arrangements, capacity building, partnerships and collaboration between gender and climate stakeholders¹⁶.
- **The NDC Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)¹⁷** - Developed in 2015 and revised in 2020, the NDCs provide for measures to adapt to and to mitigate the negative impacts of GHG emissions and of climate change. The NDCs identify the sectors most vulnerable to climate change that need to be supported, including agriculture, livestock, aquaculture, land use, energy, and coastal areas. Gender mainstreaming is reflected in all the actions proposed in these priority sectors.
- **The National Gender and Climate Change Strategy (SNGCC 2020–2024)¹⁸** - This strategy aims to integrate gender issues in all sectors vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including health, agriculture, water resources, etc. The Strategy campaigns for the promotion of women's rights in the context of the fight against climate change, including aspects of gender-based violence and women's participation in decision-making bodies.

¹³ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2017. Second Generation National Agricultural Investment Program (2017-2025), 156 p., <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/IVC176030.pdf>

¹⁴ Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, 2011. National Environmental Policy of Côte d'Ivoire, 83 p. <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/IVC176029.pdf>

¹⁵ Dje, K., B., 2014. Strategy document of the National Programme to Combat Climate Change, 84 p., <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/IVC188167.pdf>

¹⁶ Tiemoko, M., D. & D., Kouassi, V., 2023. Gender Integration in Côte D'Ivoire's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process between 2018 and 2023 - Progress, Good Practices and Lessons Learned, 12 p. <https://napglobalnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/integration-genre-pna-cote-divoire-fr-v5.pdf>

¹⁷ Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, 2022. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of Côte d'Ivoire, 46 p. <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/IVC219858.pdf>

¹⁸ Tiemoko, D. & D., Kouassi V., 2023. Mid-term evaluation of the National Strategy on Gender and Climate Change (SNGCC 2020–2024) of Côte d'Ivoire, Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of Côte d'Ivoire, 56 p., <https://napglobalnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/napgn-fr-2023-cote-ivoire-sngcc-mid-term-evaluation-report.pdf>

2.1.2.3 National Initiatives

Gender initiatives are the responsibility of the **Ministry of Gender, Family and Children in its Directorate for the Promotion of Gender and Equity (DPGE)** and **Directorate for Economic Empowerment of Women (DAEF)**. With a view to optimizing gender equality results, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire also set up the "National Fund for Women and Development" by Decree No. 94-219 of 20 April 1994, which was transformed into the Innovative Management Project of the National Fund for Women and Development with the engagement of the Decentralized Financial Systems (DFS). Since 2013, the Fund has focused on strengthening women's entrepreneurship and assisting women victims of the post-election crisis.

Gender units within the technical ministries have also been promoted since 2008; currently 14 such units are in force, mainstreaming gender at the sectoral level. These units contributed to the development of the National Policy on Equity and Equal Opportunities and the National Strategy to fight GBV. Furthermore, a **National Committee for the Fight against Gender-Based Violence (CNLVBG)** was created in 2000 to fight against all forms of violence against vulnerable populations. Actions are thus carried out for the populations in the context of prevention, the care of GBV survivors, and the coordination of interventions.

At the request of the President of the Republic to enhance women's participation in public life, the Compendium of Women's Skills of Côte d'Ivoire (COCOFCI) was created in 2011. It has been established as a national program since March 2, 2016, by the Council of Ministers decree with a supervisory committee comprising a dozen technical ministries. Moreover, a dedicated **Unit for the Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour (CLTTE)** was established in August 2013, by Ministerial Decree to allow the Ministry of Family Solidarity and Child Protection of yesteryear, to take an active part in the conduct of actions to combat the phenomenon of trafficking and the worst forms of child labor within the Interministerial Committee. To monitor, evaluate and formulate proposals to promote gender equality in public policies, the National Observatory for Equity and Gender (ONEG) was set up on 17 December 2014.

2.2. Overview of the status of gender in Côte d'Ivoire

2.2.1. Gender and agriculture

Women's participation is essential to the functioning of farms and agricultural enterprises. Women have always been an integral part of production activities, but unfortunately their participation is still not up to the expected visibility¹⁹.

Role of women in Ivorian agriculture – key figures:

- 41% of women in Côte d'Ivoire worked in agriculture in 2016, compared with 54.9% of men²⁰. Women are involved in a variety of agricultural systems and sub-sectors of Ivorian agriculture.
- Women represent 90% of the actors in the food crops subsector, which employs 85% of the agricultural workforce²¹.

¹⁹ Bouquet, B. 2012. Les femmes dans le monde agricole. Centre d'études et de prospective. Vie sociale, 2018/2 n° 22, 2018. p.151-155. <https://doi.org/10.3917/vsoc.182.0151>.

²⁰ World Bank Group (2017)

²¹ Leadafricaines, 2012, Egalité hommes-femmes : Protection et promotion des droits et de l'émancipation sociale et économique des femmes, non publié, Côte d'Ivoire, Réseau régional pour l'étude et la promotion du leadership féminin

- 70% of the National Federation of Horticulture Cooperatives members are women²². 74% of Ivoirians performing unpaid work including in subsistence agriculture are women.
- 75% of basic food production in rural areas is shouldered by women²³.

While men tend to focus their activities on cash crops, women generally grow lower-value crops for consumption. However, women have taken an increasingly strong role in the cashew nut, cassava, and rice value chains. Significant progress has been made for women's access to agricultural inputs. However, for women with lower incomes, productivity remains hindered by high costs and limited land size and rights. Women dominate micro food processing activities, often through cooperatives.

2.2.2. Gender and finance

Access and use of affordable financial services by individuals and businesses is a key driver of economic development. In Côte d'Ivoire, although financial inclusion has progressed in recent years, significant gender disparities remain, limiting women's economic empowerment.

The gender gap in financial account access remains significant in Côte d'Ivoire, with women 27 percentage points less likely than men to have access to a bank or digital account in 2021. The disparity between urban and rural populations is another obstacle to financial inclusion, with the account ownership rate 12 percentage points higher in cities than in rural areas.²⁴

Ivorian women face several interrelated barriers to financial inclusion. Many women have lower income levels and are engaged in informal employment, limiting their eligibility for formal financial services. In addition, limited financial literacy hampers their ability to effectively use and benefit from available financial products. Social and cultural norms often restrict women's economic autonomy, reducing their decision-making power over financial matters. Furthermore, access to essential identity documents and collateral—critical requirements for opening bank accounts or securing loans—is especially limited for women in rural areas, compounding their financial exclusion²⁵.

Between government strategies, international initiatives and innovation in the financial technology (fintech) segment, Côte d'Ivoire is set to increase its banked population and improve citizens' spending capacity as the economy grows. In response, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has adopted several strategies to improve financial inclusion:

- National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) launched with the support of BCEAO and international partners²⁶
- Digital transformation efforts through partnerships with telecom operators and fintechs²⁷
- Gender-sensitive programs: Some donor-supported initiatives specifically target women's access to finance, including village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) and entrepreneurship training²⁸

²² AfDB and ESPartners (2018)

²³ *Fashionomics* (2019),

²⁴ [Digital financial inclusion is reshaping payments in Côte d'Ivoire](#)

²⁵ [Les femmes dans l'agriculture.pdf](#)

²⁶ [livre-snif.pdf](#)

²⁷ [Microsoft Word - Cote d'Ivoire fintech landscape report - FINAL](#)

²⁸ [giz2024-fr-guide-accès-au-financement-des-femmes.pdf](#)

As part of the support for women's empowerment, mechanisms are made available by the Government, in particular the Innovative Management Project of the National Fund Women and Development (PGNFD) led by the Ministry of Women, Family and in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The project specifically aims to: (i) finance women's income-generating activities through the microfinance institutions; (ii) enable women's access to credit; and (iii) raise awareness women to save to encourage and promote women's entrepreneurship. In 2022, the PGNFD granted loans to 1,617 beneficiaries for an amount of XOF 495,150,000. The reimbursement rate is estimated at 69.56%²⁹.

In recent years, non-bank financial institutions have also been primarily responsible for improving access to financial services in the region. Some 36.7bn mobile money transactions took place across the continent in 2021.

Recently, to boost access to finance for women-led SMEs in Côte d'Ivoire, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Africa Local Currency Bond Fund (ALCB Fund) and Ecobank Côte d'Ivoire launched an anchor investment for the first gender bond in the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) for a total issuance of XOF 10 billion³⁰. The bond will help Ecobank Côte d'Ivoire provide almost 1,200 loans to women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (WMSMEs) in Côte d'Ivoire, supporting growth and job creation and helping to address the large credit gap women-owned businesses face in the country.

2.2.3 Financing challenges for women in agriculture

Women farmers are often excluded from accessing financial services, inputs, and productive resources in the agricultural sector. In the microenterprise sector, the informal nature of women's businesses disqualifies them from most forms of finance. Younger women also face challenges establishing businesses, while rural women have lower access to business support networks and programs³¹.

Therefore, collectives, cooperatives, savings groups, and mobile money have become instrumental for women's access to markets, training and finance, with great opportunity to extend their impact on girls' and women's education. Ivorian women have been increasingly and successfully organizing themselves into savings groups and using mobile money to improve access to finance. These efforts have helped address challenges for them in their access to education, training, networking, and financial resources. Women are key borrowers from MFIs (micro-finance institutions) in Côte d'Ivoire. MFIs encourage women to organize into groups to provide "solidarity documents" to receive funding. Mobile money is also helping widen women's access to finance and money management.

Moreover, several initiatives and programs have been launched to support and increase women and youth rural access to financing in agriculture and other activities.

- **CARE International's VSLA:** 260k women in Côte d'Ivoire participate in Cooperatives and village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) have allowed women to fund their businesses collectively, become financially independent, and establish a track record for future financing needs³².

²⁹ Rapport Annuel sur l'Inclusion Financière - 2022, APIF CI

³⁰ First Gender Bond in West Africa: Ecobank Cote d'Ivoire, SMEFINANCE FORUM (2025)

³¹ Pathways To Gender-Inclusive Economic Development In Sub-Saharan Africa: A Sectoral Analysis, Ecomonitor, 2023

³² OECD. (2019). Social Institutions & Gender Index.

- **HortiFRESH Innovation Fund:** funds women's and young people's innovations in the agriculture sector. The project has extended EUR 50,000 in funding to an association of 120 women farmers to process fruit juice. Women's role in the agricultural value chain varies across sub-sectors.

3. Women and youth in agricultural communities in the center-eastern region of Côte d'Ivoire

The section draws from the data that was previously collected as described in section 1.5.

3.1 Social context

3.1.1 Demographics

There is a profound disparity in the demographic weight of the areas of the center-east of Côte d'Ivoire. According to the General Population and Housing Census in 2021, the Gbêkê and La Mé regions had a much higher human density and household size than that in Iffou, Moronou, and N'Zi regions. Overall, these regions have more men than women. However, the sex ratio remains higher in Moronou than in other regions.

TABLE 2: POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF IN THE REGIONS OF IFFOU, MORONOU, N'ZI, LA MÉ AND GBEKE.

REGION	SURFACE (KM ²)	HUMAN DENSITY (IN HABITANT/KM ²)	POPULATION IN 2021 CENSUS					
			MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	FEMALE PROPORTION	HOUSEHOLD	HOUSEHOLD SIZE
Iffou	8,955.05	42,2	196,717	181,843	378,560	48%	74,416	5.1
Moronou	6,670	65,9	237,458	202,297	439,755	46%	86,425	5.1
N'Zi	19,560	13,01	129,386	125,237	254,623	49%	48,625	5.2
La Mé	8,237	88,2	382,827	343,838	726,665	47%	108,044	6.7
Gbêkê	9,136	131.3	699,816	653,085	1,352,900	48%	38,022	5,7

Source: General Population and Housing Census 2021

The population of center-east and center regions of Côte d'Ivoire are cosmopolitan. They belong to different ethnic groups and backgrounds. The Iffou region is mostly composed of Baoulé and Agni groups, the Agni group is majority in Moronou, the Baoulé group in N'Zi and Gbêkê, and the Akyé groups in Mé. These communities host non-native populations (Malinké, Yacouba, Bron, Senoufo, etc.) and other foreigners (Burkinabés, Malians, Ghanaians, etc.) on their territory.

Throughout Côte d'Ivoire, Islam and Christianity are the main religions practiced – as well as in the five targeted regions. Other non-Orthodox religions are also represented, such as animism and Buddhism.

3.1.2 Local economy

The central-eastern and central regions of Côte d'Ivoire contain numerous natural resources: forest, river watersheds, and land. These resources encourage the development of activities such as agriculture. Local production is mainly dominated by food crops such as rice, yams, cassava, plantains, vegetables and fruits. Oil palm, rubber, and cashew nuts are also increasingly becoming alternatives to coffee-cocoa cropping systems. Micro-processing units for agricultural products (rice, cassava, etc.) are also observed in some localities.

In addition to crop production, fishing is also an economic activity carried out by Malian or Ghanaian fishermen on rivers such as the Bandama, N'Zi and the Comoé. In addition, some national operators have fish farms to supply the population with fish. Poultry, cattle, sheep and

goat farming is also carried out on a small scale in villages and camps. Other important economic activities include trade, transport, crafts, and tourism.

It should be noted that in Gbêkê, Iffou, Moronou, N'Zi, and La Mé, women play a key role in the local economy. They are major economic actors within their communities. In rural areas, women are the main users of natural resources and are responsible for supplying households with water and fuelwood. They are predominantly involved in food crop production, while men are more engaged in cash crops, resulting in differentiated climate impacts depending on activities and livelihoods³³.

Young people who have dropped out of school are also increasingly returning to their land to practice agriculture. With the massive rush of gold miners from neighboring countries (mainly Burkina Faso and Ghana), many young people are also becoming more interested in this activity. However, artisanal gold mining has a harmful environmental impact. Its intensification and unregulated practices risk negatively impacting arable and farmers living spaces through degradation and pollution.

3.1.3 Employment

The labor market in Côte d'Ivoire is characterized by structural inequalities that strongly shape people's capacity to adapt to risks, particularly climate-related ones. In 2018, Côte d'Ivoire's working-age population (i.e. individuals aged 16 and over) was relatively young and poorly educated, similar³⁴ conditions in low-income countries. This population resides mainly in the country's urban centers (54%), although the spatial dimension shows that rural areas had slightly higher employment levels (61%) than urban areas (58.7%). This employment pattern is observed across all regions, especially in the central-eastern part of the country.

An age-based analysis highlights two groups that are largely out of work: young people, between 16 and 24 years old (68%), many of whom are still in "school", and older individuals aged over 64 (60.2%), probably because of retirements or physical health reasons.

Gender disparities remain particularly pronounced. Women still face significant barriers to accessing the labor market, which is a key determinant of their economic autonomy and adaptive capacity. Men are more likely to be employed (74.3%) than women (46.2%). Moreover, women are overrepresented in vulnerable employment³⁵, with a rate reaching 78.9% compared to 64% for men, revealing a differentiated socioeconomic fragility³⁶. Their limited presence in decision-making spheres and concentration in precarious activities further increases their exposure to shocks, particularly environmental and climate-related ones.

3.1.4 Poverty

Despite the relatively good economic performance since the end of the crisis in 2011, Côte d'Ivoire remains marked by persistent socio-economic disparities. According to the results of the 2021 Harmonized Survey on Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), poverty had decreased

³³ <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/BUR2%20Cote%20dIvoire.pdf>

³⁴ National Institute of Statistics, 2021. Summary of studies carried out from 2016 to 2020 in Côte d'Ivoire in the field of nutrition, <https://nutridata.gouv.ci/dcollect/documents/61d4537dd6a41.pdf>

³⁵ https://www.environnement.gouv.ci/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Rapport-national-sur-le-climat-et-le-developpement-2023_Banque-Mondiale.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

³⁶ <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/BUR2%20Cote%20dIvoire.pdf>

overall but still affected 37.5% in 2021 compared to 39.4% in 2018³⁷ or 51.7% in 2011³⁸. Poverty is generally higher among the most uneducated and poorly educated populations and among women. The incidence of poverty is twice as pronounced in rural areas (54.4% in 2021 compared to 54.7% in 2018) compared to urban areas (from 24.7% to 22.2% between 2018 and 2021).

The center-east and center of Côte d'Ivoire is also touched by poverty, although disparities are observed across the regions³⁹. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on production activities due to lockdown measures (inability to obtain inputs, difficulty in marketing, decline in purchasing power, etc.). This vulnerability of peasant households has also been reinforced with the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and has led to a surge in input and raw material costs, which has become unbearable for many producers.

3.1.5 Food security

The economy of Côte d'Ivoire is based on agriculture. However, food production does not always contribute to a certain level of food self-sufficiency in some regions⁴⁰. In the center-east of the country in particular, the food balance remains structurally in deficit⁴¹ at many levels, particularly among rural households. N'Zi (37%) and La Mé (33%) have high proportions of households that are food insufficient. N'Zi is also affected (70%) by weak food diversification whereas Iffou has a high proportion of households (58%) spending more than 65% of their income on food. These trends are generally more pronounced in female-headed households than in male-headed households. Except in Moronou center-east and center⁴², due to agricultural productivity limited by climatic shocks, poor access to inputs and adapted technologies, high post-harvest losses and poverty.

3.1.6 Primary services

Access to basic services such as water, electricity, education, health, and energy is essential to reducing people's vulnerabilities. In Côte d'Ivoire, the rate of access to electrification is nearly 92%⁴³ while that of access to a water source is 82%.⁴⁴ The proportion of literate populations is 48.5%.⁴⁵ The rate of access to health services increased from 44% in 2012 to 69% in 2019⁴⁶. Overall, the specific share of women who have access to these services remains lower than those of men, as do those living in rural areas compared to those living in cities.

3.2 Social inclusion

3.2.1 Roles/responsibilities

In the rural communities of the center-east and center regions of Côte d'Ivoire, gender-based division of activities begins at a very young age. Boys and girls are introduced to their future roles within the community. Young girls learn to become mothers from the women, while young

³⁷ ADB, 2024, op.cit.

³⁸ Coulibaly, A., 2018. Development: The poverty rate in Côte d'Ivoire fell by 5.2% from 2011 to 2015, <https://www.gouv.ci/actualite-article.php?recordID=8494&d=4>

³⁹ National Institute of Statistics, 2021, op.cit.

⁴⁰ Côte d'Ivoire - Global Hunger Index 2020

⁴¹ Yabile, R., K., 2011. Food insecurity of populations in four regions of Côte d'Ivoire, In African Agronomy, Vol. 23 N°2, pp. 179 - 192 (2011)

⁴² National Institute of Statistics, 2021, op.cit..

⁴³ Yao, O., [February, 2022], In Côte d'Ivoire, 92% of Ivorians have access to electricity, In Sikafinance, https://www.sikafinance.com/marches/en-cote-divoire-92-des-ivoiriens-ont-acces-a-l-electricite_33084

⁴⁴ Kamgaté, I., [February, 2020], Drinking water: Côte d'Ivoire wants to raise the rate of access, In Sikafinance, <https://www.financialafrik.com/2020/02/14/eau-potable-la-cote-divoire-veut-relever-le-taux-dacces/>

⁴⁵ Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training, 2021, Pocket School Statistics: 2020-2021, Abidjan, Directorate of Strategies, Planning and Statistics, 157 p.

⁴⁶ Sidi T., 2019. Communiqué of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, Government of Côte d'Ivoire <https://www.gouv.ci/actualite-article.php?recordID=10768&d=5>

boys work alongside men and learn to become men. In adulthood, the division of roles becomes very pronounced.

Women perform most household tasks such as maintaining the home, fetching water, collecting firewood, washing clothes, gathering raw materials, cooking, heating water, and looking after the children, among other things. On farms, they participate in collective fieldwork. Women play an active role in agricultural production, providing a significant workforce for crop maintenance and harvesting. They usually work land plots made available to them by men for food production. Most women in rural areas are involved in marketing agricultural products, and their income provides financial support for their households.

In contrast to women, men participate less in domestic activities. They focus on high-value-added production activities. Married men have a social obligation to cover family expenses (healthcare, food, children's schooling, and other bills). Men also take part in raising children. Customs and traditions are clearly structured around male dominance in communities in the Center-East of Côte d'Ivoire. Men hold power and authority within the communities. They are the heads of families and the community. They ensure cohesion and settle family disputes. Men inherit property and manage the lineage's assets. The organization and execution of agricultural work also depend on them.

This gender-based division of roles on the farm reveals inequalities in terms of workload. Regardless of their professional or marital status, women have a significantly heavier workload than men. They dedicate a lot of time to family farming as well as domestic chores. Compared to men, they have less free time and, most importantly, less time to rest. The heavy workload faced by women reduces their agricultural productivity.

3.2.2 Participation in decision-making

The family and community spheres are the primary spaces where women and young people participate in decision-making within rural communities in the center-east regions of Côte d'Ivoire. However, their participation is still subject to the will of the male elders. In many households, women and young people are considered less capable of making decisions. According to social norms, the privilege of decision-making is reserved for male elders, as they are seen to embody wisdom and experience—qualities deemed essential for decision-makers. Thus, tradition grants them authority and decision-making power.

Many farmers believe that women and young people are not legitimate decision-makers, as only the male elders are considered capable of making decisions. This explains the low representation of women and young people in community decision-making bodies. This situation is also a result of the gerontocratic system that characterizes the farming societies in the center-east of Côte d'Ivoire. In this type of society, authority is exclusively exercised by social elders, who are men. The dominance of male elders in decision-making encompasses speech, mobility, the use of income, access to productive resources, credit, etc. This situation hinders the development of leadership and empowerment for women and young people in rural areas.

3.2.3 Membership in a group

Farmers have a positive view of belonging to community groups. These groups facilitate mutual assistance and solidarity among members to address their problems. Membership can also allow them to benefit from financial or labor support to carry out their agricultural activities.

The benefits of belonging to groups with common interests are particularly well-perceived by women and young people in rural Côte d'Ivoire. However, these groups are often under the exclusive control of male elders, which means that the specific concerns of women and young people are not always considered. Even when women and young people are allowed to form associations, these are sometimes controlled by the elders. In addition, women's and youth associations face many organizational and financial challenges, which limit their leadership potential.

3.2.4 Violence against women

Violence against women and girls (VAWG), including risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEA/SH), remains a significant concern in rural agricultural communities in the center-eastern regions of Côte d'Ivoire. The gender assessment identified that cases of violence are often managed through informal community mechanisms, including mediation by traditional leaders or family elders, while more severe cases may be escalated to formal authorities such as police or social services. However, these pathways may not always guarantee survivor confidentiality, safety, or access to appropriate support services, and social stigma frequently discourages reporting, particularly among women engaged in economic activities or leadership roles.

The LARACI Project recognizes that women's economic empowerment and increased participation in value chains may, in some contexts, inadvertently elevate exposure to risks such as domestic tensions, economic control, harassment in public spaces, or workplace-related SEA/SH. To mitigate these risks, the project will adopt a prevention- and response-oriented approach aligned with international best practices and national GBV frameworks.

Specifically, the project will implement the following measures, as reflected in the Gender Action Plan:

- Conduct a GBV risk assessment during early implementation to identify context-specific risk factors associated with project activities.
- Establish and operationalize a survivor-centered SEA/SH protocol integrated within the project grievance redress mechanism.
- Develop referral pathways linking survivors to existing national GBV service providers.
- Train project staff, service providers, and community facilitators on GBV prevention, ethical conduct, and survivor-centered response.
- Conduct awareness-raising activities at the community level to promote safe participation of women and youth in project activities.
- Engage men, traditional leaders, and community structures as champions to support women's rights and reduce gender-based violence risks.

Through these measures, the project will contribute to strengthening local capacity to prevent and respond to violence against women while ensuring that women's participation in climate-resilient agricultural systems occurs in a safe, inclusive, and enabling environment.

3.3 Access to productive resources

3.3.1 Access to finance

Finance is a critical lever for improving the productivity of farmers in the center-east regions of Côte d'Ivoire. It primarily comes from two main categories of sources: community/informal sources and institutional/formal sources.

Community financing includes loans from relatives (family, friends), tontines, or informal lenders. As for institutional sources, they include formal structures such as banks, microfinance institutions, and government programs. Access to credit varies significantly depending on the type of lender. Tontine systems, for example, allow members to obtain funds on the basis of rotative contribution. Loans between individuals are often based on trust, integrity, and the reputation of the borrower. These informal sources are generally preferred by farmers because of their flexible repayment terms and low or non-existent interest rates.

On the other hand, access to institutional financing remains particularly complex for smallholder farmers. Banks and microfinance institutions lend only to clients who are formally registered, excluding many farmers who are often unbanked. Furthermore, the required conditions—such as preparing a business plan, having guarantors, high-interest rates, and short repayment deadlines—are often ill-suited to their reality. These requirements are justified by the perceived risks surrounding agricultural investments, due to the sector's vulnerability to many uncertainties.

In rural communities, cultural obstacles persist. For example, married women are not always recognized as legitimate borrowers, as this responsibility is traditionally reserved for their husbands. Similarly, young single individuals living with their parents face similar difficulties. However, joining community savings groups can sometimes allow them access to funds, although the amounts are limited.

It is worth noting that community loans, though accessible, are insufficient to finance large-scale agricultural investments. Thus, resorting to financial institutions becomes essential. However, due to the rigid conditions imposed, these financing mechanisms remain unattractive to many women and young farmers, whose socio-economic situation is often precarious.

This difficulty in accessing financing thus represents a major obstacle to their financial autonomy and the sustainable improvement of their living conditions.

3.3.2 Access to land

In Côte d'Ivoire, land remains a resource controlled by certain families, under the authority of traditional chiefs or heads of families who manage it. Access to land is typically based on a transfer in exchange for compensation, negotiated between the landowner and the farmer. More and more, these land transactions are formalized through written contracts signed in the presence of witnesses to prevent potential disputes.

In the center-east region of the country, several land-related challenges affect farmers, particularly women and young people. The sometimes-excessive demands of landowners present a significant barrier. Many producers complain that landowners tend to prioritize the most lucrative offers, often from gold miners, at the expense of farmers. This preference exacerbates the already limited access to land and fuels local tensions.

Conflicts related to land boundaries between communities or landowners are also on the rise. These conflicts increase social tensions and undermine community cohesion. Illegal gold mining, which is widespread, further exacerbates pressure on agricultural lands, leads to soil pollution, and results in the destruction of arable land, with farmers unable to effectively oppose these practices. Moreover, other factors such as the expansion of cash crops, pastoralism, rapid urbanization, and population growth contribute to the scarcity of available land.

Women's access to land remains structurally limited, despite the formal recognition of their right to land ownership within the national legal framework. In the target regions, societies although organized along matriarchal traditions continue to prioritize men in the control and ownership of land assets. Dominant social norms hold that women, expected to join their husband's family after marriage, pose a risk of transferring land outside the family lineage. This perception constitutes a major barrier to transmissions of land to women. As a result, land is typically passed from father to son or from uncle to nephew, following a patrilineal logic that effectively excludes women from land inheritance. Women can only access land indirectly, usually through their natal family or in-laws. Young men also face obstacles, particularly due to the exclusive control exercised by elders over family land.

These multiple constraints significantly hinder the empowerment of women—who are key players in food production—and discourage young people from engaging in agriculture. As a result, their participation in the local agricultural economy remains limited, as does the impact of this activity on improving their living conditions.

3.3.3 Access to inputs and equipment

Farmers in the center-east of Côte d'Ivoire face significant challenges in accessing essential inputs and equipment, whether modern or traditional, for activities such as plowing, harvesting, processing, or packaging.

Seed supply is a major challenge: availability on local markets is often insufficient. In the absence of improved seeds, producers resort to regular seeds, whose quality and yields are uncertain.

In addition to seeds, access to fertilizers, pesticides, and biochemical products remains limited, mainly due to their high cost. These essential inputs for crop productivity are rarely subsidized, making them inaccessible to a large portion of smallholder farmers.

The need for modern or mechanized agricultural equipment is also high. However, due to financial constraints, few farmers have access to such equipment. Consequently, agricultural tasks—such as sowing, plowing, and harvesting—are mostly done manually, making the work arduous and time-consuming.

These constraints particularly affect women and young farmers, who perceive them as major obstacles to the development of their agricultural activities and the sustainable improvement of their living conditions.

3.3.4 Access to labor

One of the main concerns for farmers is the shortage of skilled and affordable labor, which significantly limits their production capacity. This situation is largely a result of the gradual decline in available arable land, which has led to increased migration of agricultural labor — especially young people and agricultural workers — towards other agricultural regions or more attractive sectors.

3.3.5 Access to capacity building

Capacity building for farmers plays a crucial role in acquiring skills that can improve their socio-economic conditions. In the center-east regions of Côte d'Ivoire, the need for training is particularly evident among women and young people in the agricultural sector, many of whom have little or no formal education. However, these groups are generally underrepresented in agricultural training and advisory services. This low level of participation is due to limited access to information, a lack of membership in professional organizations, and admission criteria that are often unsuitable for their profiles, such as proficiency in French or a minimum education level. As a result, training sessions and advisory services are mostly reserved for community leaders, to the detriment of the most vulnerable beneficiaries. This exclusion of women and young people from capacity-building opportunities is a significant barrier to their access to sustainable economic and commercial opportunities in the agricultural sector.

3.3.6 Access to economic and commercial opportunities

Agricultural value chains represent a key lever for economic and commercial opportunities for women and young people in the rural communities of the center-east of Côte d'Ivoire. Agricultural production — particularly rice, yam, and vegetable crops — is seen as one of the main outlets accessible to these groups. Additionally, promising opportunities exist in the processing of agricultural products (parboiling rice, producing food flour, packaging), as well as in commerce and catering. These various opportunities could generate sustainable jobs and significant sources of income for women and young people. However, their access remains highly limited, mainly due to a lack of information on promising markets and difficulties in accessing financing. Women show a strong interest in entrepreneurship but are often confined to low-profit activities, such as small-scale trading or small-scale vegetable farming in villages. On the other hand, young people, in search of better living conditions, are gradually disengaging from family farming, often seeing it as a field reserved for older men. This socio-cultural context hinders the economic inclusion of women and young people and limits their active participation in local development dynamics.

3.4 Differentiated vulnerability of women and youth

Vulnerability assessments conducted during project preparation reveal that women and youth in the five target regions (Iffou, Moronou, N'Zi, La Mé, and Gbêkê) face structurally higher climate sensitivity than the general smallholder population, driven by a combination of biophysical exposure and socioeconomic exclusion. Three categories of vulnerability indicators are particularly salient.

First, production system exposure: the majority of women farmers in the target regions practice rainfed agriculture on marginal plots, often in low-lying areas susceptible to seasonal flooding and drought. Women are disproportionately concentrated in cassava and yam production, which are crops with longer growing cycles and higher sensitivity to rainfall variability than many male-managed cash crops, making their yields more volatile under projected climate scenarios.

Second, asset poverty and collateral exclusion: women farmers in the target regions have significantly lower asset ownership than men, particularly with respect to land (where customary tenure systems restrict women's formal ownership rights), mechanized equipment, and livestock. This asset gap translates directly into reduced capacity to absorb climate shocks,

lower creditworthiness in the eyes of formal lenders, and limited ability to invest in climate-resilient inputs or technologies without external support.

Third, financial exclusion: access to formal financial services among rural women in the target regions is markedly lower than among men. This exclusion prevents women from accessing credit to smooth consumption after climate shocks, purchasing drought-tolerant varieties, or investing in post-harvest storage that reduces losses during price downturns.

Youth (18–35 years) face an overlapping but distinct vulnerability profile: they have the highest rates of land insecurity (as non-inheriting household members), the highest unemployment and underemployment rates, and the greatest dependency on agricultural day labor, a livelihood that is highly sensitive to seasonal climate variability. At the same time, youth have relatively higher digital literacy and mobile phone access, representing an entry point for climate information service delivery that the project explicitly leverages.

The GESI Action Plan translates this vulnerability profile into concrete, measurable interventions targeting each of these three constraint categories across all project outputs and activities.

3.5 Climate vulnerabilities

3.5.1 Climate profile

The climate in the center-east and center of Côte d'Ivoire is humid tropical. It consists of four (04) seasons: (i) two dry seasons from November to March and from July to August and (ii) two rainy seasons from June to October and from March to May. Temperatures oscillate between 20°C and 30°C. The average annual precipitation is 1,200 cubic millimeters.

The regions of Iffou, La Mé, Moronou, Gbêkê and N'Zi have been experiencing a climate deterioration since the 2000s⁴⁷. There are serious concerns about the resurgence of extreme weather events experienced by both rural⁴⁸ and urban communities. According to national climate models, the effects of climate change are expected to intensify in the future⁴⁹. By 2080, temperatures are projected to increase by about two degrees, water availability to 55 per cent and heavy precipitation to increase by 2,000

Climate change also exposes populations to many risks⁵⁰. In some farming communities in Côte d'Ivoire, climate variations are already impacting land quality, water supply, and food security. Knowing that agriculture in the country is mainly rainfed, yields are subject to the unpredictability of rainy seasons and drought, in a context of limited access to inputs, irrigation equipment, agricultural technologies and public investment⁵¹. In rural areas, this is expected to exacerbate inequalities faced by vulnerable groups such as women and youth, who often have fewer opportunities to access agricultural resources due to social norms.

3.5.2 Perception of climate change effects on agriculture

In Côte d'Ivoire, the impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly evident, particularly in the agricultural zones of the center-east. Among the most common manifestations are

⁴⁷ Brou Y. T., 2005. Climate, Socio-Economic Change and Landscape, Synthesis Thesis, University of Science and Technology of Lille (France), 204 p.

⁴⁸ Noufé, D., ahé, G., Kamagaté, B., Servat, A., Goula B., T., A. & Savané, I., 2015. Impact of Climate Change on Agricultural Production: The Case of the Comoé Basin in Côte d'Ivoire, Hydrol. Sci. J., 60 (11), 1972–1983, 2015

⁴⁹ GIZ & KFW, Profil de risque climatique : Côte d'Ivoire, https://www.pik-potsdam.de/en/institute/departments/climate-resilience/projects/project-pages/agrica/giz_climate-risk-profile-cote-d2019ivoire_fr_final_2

⁵⁰ . Country Gender Profile, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, African Development Bank, 2015

⁵¹ FAO, Adapting Irrigation to Climate Change (AICCA): Côte d'Ivoire. <http://www.fao.org/in-action/aicca/country-activities/cote-divoire/background/en>

prolonged droughts, irregular rainfall, floods caused by intense rains, and an increase in bushfires. Farmers in these regions are directly affected by climate change, which undermines their production capacity. Among the specific effects reported by farmers, are poor seed germination or slowed crop growth.

These disturbances have significant repercussions on agricultural productivity. Most stakeholders in the sector report a general decline in yields and greater uncertainty in the timing and reliability of growing seasons. Poorly equipped to face these challenges, many farmers lack the technical and financial resources to adapt their practices. Yet, solutions do exist: scientific research and technological innovations have led to the development of numerous climate-smart approaches aimed at strengthening the resilience of agricultural systems.

3.5.3 Dissemination of agro-climatic practices and technologies

In response to the growing threats of climate change, agro-climatic practices and technologies have emerged as key tools for ensuring food security and the sustainability of agriculture in the center-east of Côte d'Ivoire. Farmers generally identify two main categories of solutions: traditional practices and modern innovations.

Among the most commonly used traditional approaches are seasonal-based planting, crop rotation, and conservation agriculture. On the side of modern technologies, farmers recognize the value of irrigation systems, drought-resistant crop varieties, and short-cycle crops that are better adapted to new climatic conditions.

The adoption of modern agricultural technologies and innovative practices represents a key opportunity to improve productivity, ease workload, and boost farmers' incomes and increase resilience to climate change. However, the dissemination of certain innovations remains very limited. Agro-climatic tools such as localized weather services, digital farming applications, or agricultural information platforms are still largely unknown or unused in rural areas. Also, many smallholder farmers in Côte d'Ivoire struggle to access irrigation techniques, or agricultural equipment. This lack of access represents a significant barrier to the modernization of their farms and optimizing their yields.

The low level of outreach, combined with insufficient communication and limited access to agricultural advisory services, hinders the adoption of these solutions by rural communities. It is therefore urgent to implement an effective large-scale strategy for the dissemination of agricultural technological innovations. Such an approach would enhance farmers' resilience to the effects of climate change while contributing to the improvement of their living conditions. In addition, although climate change impacts the entire development sector, there are, however, gender-based differences with respect to unequal decision-making processes and to access to resources (information, training, credit, finance and social protection)⁵². Women farmers have limited access to fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, agricultural equipment and machinery, etc. It is therefore essential to train and develop skills among women smallholder farmers and policy makers. These skills relate to improving productivity and enhancing resilience to change and crisis. They should also facilitate the diversification of livelihoods to manage risks. These skills are rare in rural areas⁵³. Transformational adaptation in favor of gender equality can improve food and nutrition security and have other benefits, such as improved economic and

⁵² [FLASH PNUD.ai](#)

⁵³ Op.cit

social well-being and reduced poverty. It also helps build a learning and knowledge base on integrating gender into adaptation measures, both at the community and institutional levels⁵⁴.

3.6 Challenges and recommendations

PROJECT COMPONENTS	CONSTRAINTS	TARGETED SOLUTIONS FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE
Component 1: Managing climate risks	▪ Poor access to localized and up-to-date climate information. ▪ Increased vulnerability of crops to climatic hazards (floods, droughts, etc.). ▪ Low knowledge of adaptation practices. ▪ Weak integration of women and youth in resilience strategies.	▪ Establishment of a local operational agrometeorological advisory system (Activity 1.1.1) ▪ Establishment of a local operational agrometeorological advisory system. (Activities 1.1.2, 1.1.3) ▪ Capacity building through targeted training. (Activity 1.1.4) ▪ Active inclusion of women and youth in adaptation arrangements (Activity 1.1.5)
Transitioning to a low-carbon development trajectory	▪ Widespread use of unsustainable agricultural practices (slash-and-burn, deforestation). ▪ Low adoption of low-carbon farming techniques.	▪ Extension of environmentally friendly agricultural practices (conservation agriculture, composting, agroforestry) (Activities 1.2.4, 2.1.3) ▪ Capacity of extension agents (Activities 1.2.1, 1.2.2) ▪ Promotion of sustainable land management with reduced GHG emissions (Activities 2.1.1, 2.1.2)
Increasing agricultural productivity and value chain profitability	▪ Limited access to inputs (improved seeds, fertilizers, finance) and mechanized agricultural equipment. ▪ Lack of structuring of value chains (rice, cassava, yams). ▪ High post-harvest losses due to inadequate storage and processing infrastructure. ▪ Producers' weak bargaining power in markets.	▪ Facilitating access to inputs (including finance) and small-scale agricultural mechanization (Activities 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 3.1.1) ▪ Strengthening of value chain actors (rice, cassava, yams) (Activities 3.1.2, 3.1.3) ▪ Strengthening storage facilities and supporting processing companies (Activities 3.1.3, 3.1.4) ▪ Leadership training (Cross-cutting)
Improving food security and incomes of farm households	▪ Land tenure insecurity limiting investment by small-scale producers, especially women and youth. ▪ Difficult access to appropriate financial services (microcredits, agricultural insurance). ▪ Lack of viable local economic opportunities. ▪ Inefficient food production systems.	▪ Support for the formalization of land rights, especially for women and youth (Cross-cutting) ▪ Creation and strengthening of innovative financial mechanisms (revolving funds, adapted credit) (Activities 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.4, 1.3.5) ▪ Development of integrated value chains with added value and promotion of rural entrepreneurship, especially women and youth (Activity 3.1.3) ▪ Dissemination of improved agricultural practices and technologies (Activity 1.2.5)

The project anticipates at least 40% women and 30% youth beneficiaries in the different interventions. The approach considers the constraints that women /and youth face in exercising their roles and benefiting from their activities in the various targeted value chains and consequent differentiated climate and economic impacts depending on livelihoods. The action plan reflects this reality by targeting interventions to the specific needs of women and youth,

⁵⁴ CARE Gender-Transformative-Adaptation Publication French FINAL Web.pdf

particularly in agricultural advisory, varietal selection, dissemination of CSA technologies, and training activities.

4. Protocol for Handling Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) Cases

4.1. Survivor-Centered Approach

The project adopts a **survivor-centered, confidential, and gender-responsive approach** to the prevention and management of SEA/SH complaints through the activity-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). All actions shall prioritize the dignity, safety, rights, and informed choices of survivors, with the objective of supporting their protection, healing, and recovery.

In this regard, the project will ensure that:

- Survivors are treated with dignity, respect, and non-discrimination at all stages of case management. Their needs, rights, and preferences will guide all decisions, and assistance will never be imposed.
- Survivors retain full agency and informed choice regarding whether to pursue further action, except in cases involving minors where mandatory reporting obligations under national legislation apply.
- In cases involving children, the best interests of the child principle shall prevail.
- Survivor safety, security, and protection from retaliation are paramount throughout the process.
- All SEA/SH information will be handled with strict confidentiality, and disclosure to third parties will occur only with the survivor's informed consent.
- Survivors will receive clear information enabling **informed decision-making** regarding available support and options.
- Personnel managing SEA/SH cases will be trained in **culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and non-judgmental handling** of complaints.

4.2. Intake and Registration of SEA/SH Complaints

All GRM channels described in Section 5 of *Annex 7 Stakeholder consultations and engagement plan* will be open to SEA/SH complaints. When a survivor reports an incident:

- Complaints will be recorded in a **private and secure setting** by designated Safeguard/SEAH focal persons only.
- To protect confidentiality and minimize stigmatization, only essential information will be documented, including:
 - Age and sex of survivor.
 - Type of alleged incident (as reported).
 - Whether the alleged perpetrator is associated with the project.

- Whether referral to services was provided.

SEA/SH cases will be reported to the AE and relevant oversight bodies within 24 hours, in line with applicable reporting protocols, while ensuring survivor anonymity.

All SEA/SH records will be stored in secure, restricted-access logbooks maintained exclusively by designated focal persons.

Where complaints are submitted by third parties, focal persons will encourage direct survivor engagement while respecting confidentiality and survivor autonomy.

4.3. Referral and Survivor Support Services

All survivors will be offered referral to appropriate support services, subject to their informed consent (or guardian consent for minors or persons with disabilities).

Services may include:

- Medical services: clinical care, forensic examination, post-exposure treatment.
- Psychosocial support: counseling, emotional support, and social reintegration.
- Legal support: legal advice, access to justice processes, and representation.
- Safety and protection services: survivor protection measures, and risk mitigation.

Service providers linked to the Project will:

- Apply established GBV case management protocols.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and survivor-centered standards.
- Notify the Project focal person upon case resolution.

The project may provide financial support for essential survivor services, subject to approval procedures and applicable financing guidelines (Appendix 1 GBV/SEA-SH Service Providers for LARACI Project).

4.4. Case Assessment and Resolution Process

Upon receipt of a complaint:

1. The GRM will assess whether:
 - The allegation falls within the definition of SEA/SH; and
 - The alleged perpetrator is associated with the Project.
2. If confirmed, the case will proceed through referral and appropriate disciplinary or administrative processes.
3. Survivors may choose whether to pursue formal disciplinary action. Regardless of survivor preference, Project-related perpetrators will be subject to institutional codes of conduct and national legislation.

Possible disciplinary measures may include warnings, mandatory training, suspension, salary penalties, or termination of employment.

Throughout the process, survivors will continue receiving support services as needed.

4.5. Confidentiality, Reporting, and Follow-Up

- The Safeguard/SEAH focal person will acknowledge receipt of complaints within three working days.
- Cases will be monitored continuously until closure, in coordination with service providers.
- Mandatory reporting to law enforcement will occur only where required by national law, and survivors will be informed accordingly.

4.6. Case Closure

SEA/SH cases will be closed when:

- The survivor declines to pursue further action after receiving support;
- The allegation is determined not to fall within SEA/SH scope or project association;
- Appropriate disciplinary actions have been fully implemented; or
- Service providers confirm completion of survivor support.

Closure may include survivor confirmation of satisfaction where appropriate.