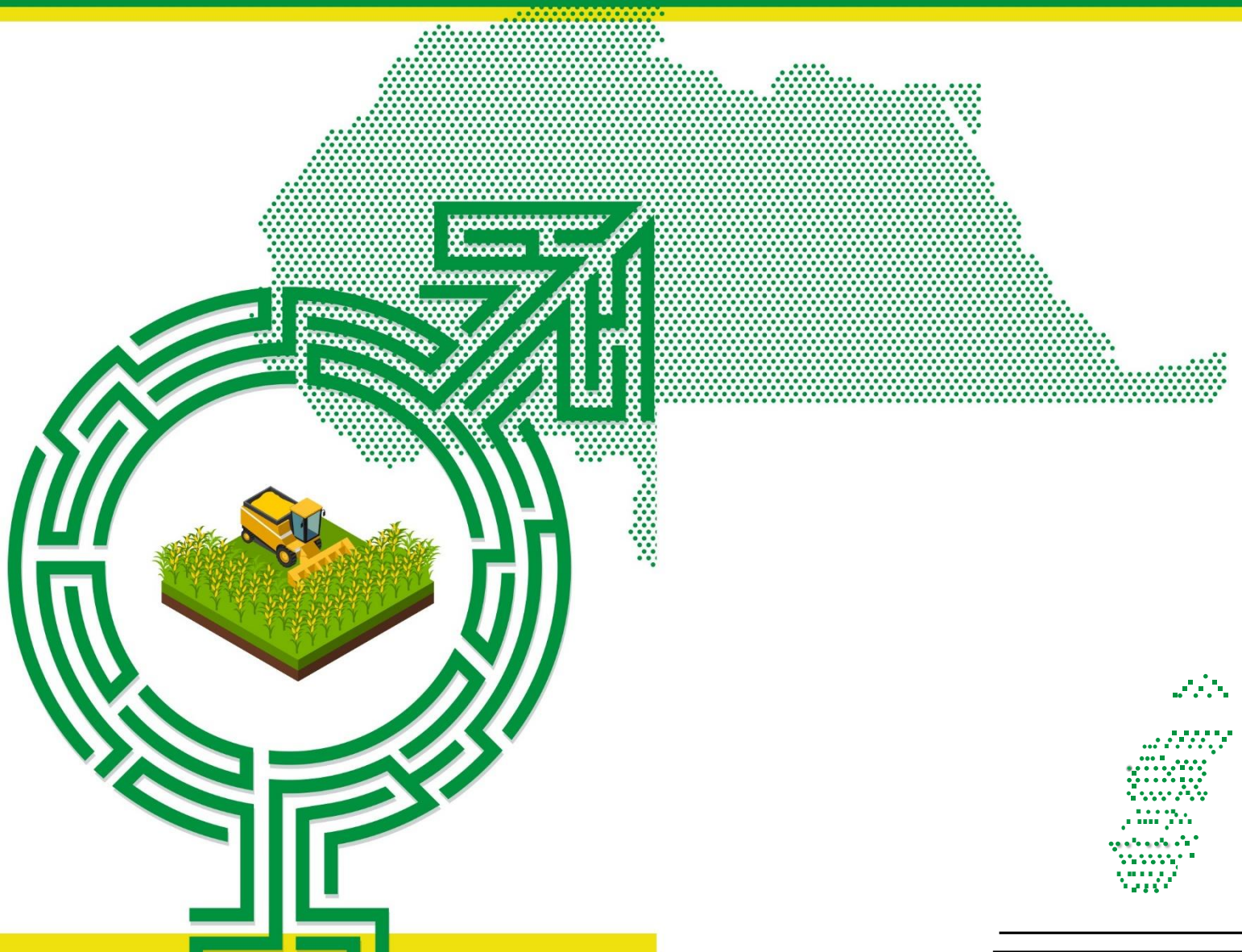


# CONCEPT NOTE

## Gender-Responsive Investments in Africa's Agriculture for Inclusive Food Systems



## Background

Women make significant contributions to the economy in their role as entrepreneurs, on-farm workers, employees, or through unpaid care work at home. Women farmers play a vital role in African agriculture, doing most of the work to produce, process, and market food. For instance, women produce 60-80 percent of the world's food and in comparison, to men, face the burden of unpaid work as well as lower wages compared to their male counterparts. To better address their priorities and challenges, there is an urgent need to strengthen the voice of African women in the agricultural sciences.

An appreciation of gender issues cannot be overemphasized in the consideration of strategies to improve Africa's AR4D through private-sector engagement. It is important to note that the engagement of unique groups of actors in the value chains is hampered by the constraints these groups face. Women are also underrepresented, unacknowledged, and under-resourced with regards to their involvement in specific value chains. Similarly, female participation in agricultural research and higher education has been particularly low in Africa and currently stands at 24%.

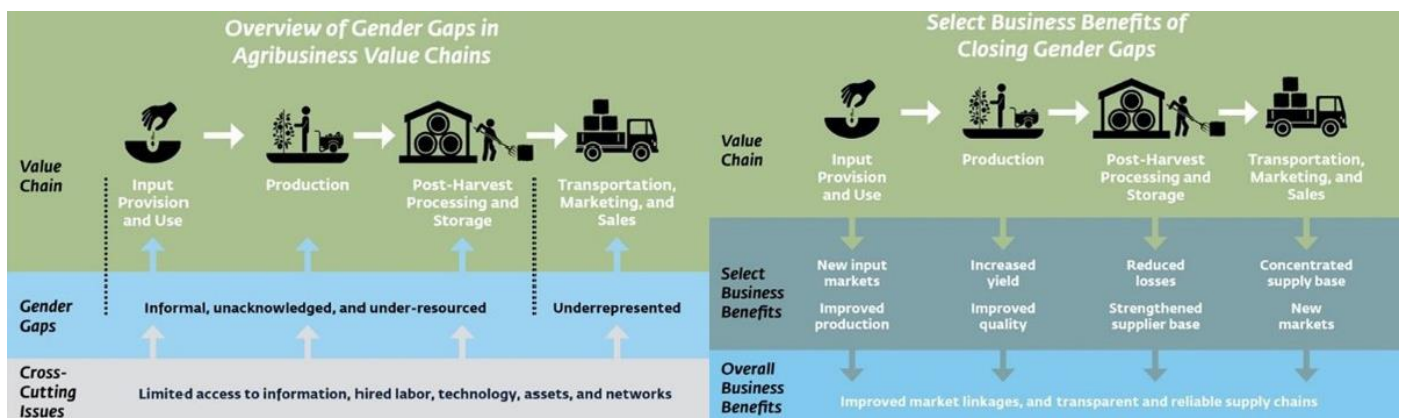
This gap does not only hinder women's productivity but

also reduces their contributions to the agricultural sector and the achievement of broader economic and social development goals (FAO, 2011).

Largely, gender-related bottlenecks to the involvement in agriculture have an impact on enterprise development, the productivity of both men and women, and competitiveness in Africa. Given that the 2016 Africa Human Development Report suggests that gender inequality costs Sub-Saharan Africa approximately 95 USD billion per year, investing in gender-smart approaches to agribusiness might lead to economic benefits. It is also observed by McKinsey Global Institute that 12-28 USD trillion could be added to the global economy if women achieved parity with men in economic outcomes.

With the increased demand for agricultural products, a decline in the availability of arable land, effects of climate change, a shift from global to regional value chains, technical advances, and decline in the traditional labor force, the continent will need to embrace new ways to increase the efficiency of agribusiness value chains. Figure 1 illustrates the shift from gender unresponsive value chains to business benefits of closing the gender gaps.

Figure 1. An Illustration of Agribusiness Benefits of Closing the Gender Gap.



Source: International Finance Corporation

To help address this challenging context, FARA together with the Sub Regional Organizations (ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF, and AFAAS) and in partnership with African Women in Agricultural Research & Development (AWARD) and the Young

Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) will convene an independent dialogue on Gender-Responsive Investments in Africa's Agriculture for Inclusive Food Systems under the UN Food Systems Summit.

AWARD has, for more than a decade, invested in African researchers, institutions, and agribusinesses to strengthen the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation across the continent. Through a highly successful pilot of its Gender in Agribusiness Investments in Africa (GAIA) initiative, AWARD has supported Africa's agricultural technology innovators to deliver gender-responsive, scalable and

sustainable agribusiness solutions.

This collaboration seeks to present a strategic platform that fosters continental and global collective actions towards strengthening gender-inclusive private sector engagement in African Agricultural Research and Development.

## Objectives

The main objective of this dialogue is to provide a platform for key stakeholders in agricultural research for development and the private sector to discuss game-changing options and solutions that will enhance gender-responsive investments in Africa's agricultural research and development for inclusive food systems.

The specific objectives are:

1. To facilitate a consultative e-forum to identify and discuss the main gender issues in AR4D.

2. To propose solutions to a gender-inclusive private sector engagement.
3. To contribute towards a framework for advocacy for increased investment in gender-responsive approaches in AR4D.
4. To highlight strategies for implementation of post-summit actions towards gender-responsive food systems.

## Output

The main outputs expected from these webinars include:

1. Endorsed set of actions on prioritizing gender-responsive and inclusive investments in agriculture.
2. A detailed report illustrating,
  - a. The interaction and communication between agriculture research practitioners and private sector partners on key areas of concern in gender-responsive investment in AR4D.
  - b. Compiled set of inputs to the development of gender-responsive approaches when engaging youth in AR4D.
  - c. Recommendations towards a framework for advocacy for increased investment in gender-responsive approaches for agribusinesses.
  - d. Policy brief on the subject matter for high-level advocacy at the UN-FSS.

**Desired outcome:**

A tool kit for strengthening a gender-responsive private sector engagement towards achieving SDGs by African countries. As a complimentary tool, a policy brief advocating for stronger gender equity and inclusivity in the AR4D space in Africa.

## Approach & Activities

- The structured dialogue will comprise discussions on gender inclusivity in the private sector engagement that will lead to the enhancement of enterprise development, the productivity of both women and men, and competitiveness in Africa.
- In line with the guidelines and provisions of the UN Food Systems Summit, the webinar will be led by a curator who will work in close collaboration with facilitators.
- The dialogue will include the participation of gender experts, research leaders, research funders, research institutions, agribusiness, and other private sector actors in Africa including financial institutions.
- There will be an opening presentation of the status of gender investment in Africa by the Executive Director of IFPRI, followed by discussion and validation by the stakeholders.
- Five breakout sessions will be organized following the plenary. The breakout sessions will be on the CAADP XP4 consortium, (CORAF, CCARDESA, ASARECA, and AFAAS), AWARD and YPARD.
- The breakout sessions will discuss the sub-regional status of gender awareness and investments in agricultural research and agribusiness, as well as discuss practical solutions to gender inclusivity in private sector engagement in the food system in Africa.
- A plenary session will follow the breakout session. The facilitator will lead discussions of the comments and discussions from the various groups.
- The post-summit strategies and action plans would be discussed during the plenary session.
- A robust publicity plan will be developed and implemented before, during, and after the webinar.
- The final Advocacy Briefing on Gender Investment in AR4D will be packaged for presentation at the UN Food Summit.

## Expected Participants

The envisaged partners and stakeholders include African Women in Agricultural Research for Development (AWARD), Private Sector Actors, CAADP-XP4 Partners (ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF, AFAAS, NAASRO, GFRAS, and FARA), IFPRI, Policymakers (Permanent Secretaries from Ministries of Agriculture and country-level selected focal persons to the UN Food Summit 2021), Researchers (DGs of the NARS), Youth networks such as YPARD, Farmer Associations (Continental, Regional and selected country-level), and other key partners within the food system space in Africa (TAAT, CG, etc).

## Activity, Location, Date

The dialogue will be a virtual activity co-hosted by the FARA secretariat in Accra, Ghana, and AWARD in Nairobi, Kenya.

The proposed date of the dialogue is, May 4, 2021.

The dialogue will be held in English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in French. The link to register for the webinar is:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_DOP\\_xoB9TwiA-2jmFMcj6A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DOP_xoB9TwiA-2jmFMcj6A).

The proposed programme outline for the dialogue is as follows:

Time (GMT)	Activity	Responsibility
09:00 – 09:05	Scene Setting, (moderator welcomes participants, announces housekeeping rules, introduces speakers)	SRO
09:05-09:10	Welcome Remarks	FARA
09:10-09:15	Opening Remarks	AWARD
09:15-09:20	Keynote presentation	Gender Equality Change Lever of the UN Food System Summit
09.20-09.40	Panel discussion: Gender-Responsive Investments in Africa’s Agriculture for Inclusive Food System	AfDB, United Nations University - Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA), Young Entrepreneur, Collaborative Centre for Gender, and Development
09.40 – 10.20	Breakout sessions discussion on collective actions and gender-responsive investments: recommendations and proposals on the advocacy framework	AWARD, ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF, AFAAS, (YPARD cuts across)
10.20-10.30	Wrap up and closing	FARA