Gender Responsive Agricultural Services for Rural Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia: Scoping study

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Gender Responsive Agricultural Services for Rural Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia

Scoping study

African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Service – AFAAS

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADLI</td>
<td>Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGP</td>
<td>Agricultural Growth Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARDPLAC</td>
<td>Agricultural Research and Development partners Linkage Advisor Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASARECA</td>
<td>The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATVET</td>
<td>Agricultural Technical, Vocational, Education Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Conservation Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIGs</td>
<td>Common Interest Groups</td>
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<td>CSA</td>
<td>Central Statistic Agency</td>
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<td>DAs</td>
<td>Development Agents</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>Ethiopian Economic Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEPRI</td>
<td>Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIAR</td>
<td>Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDRE</td>
<td>Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTC</td>
<td>Farmers Training Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender Based Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDD</td>
<td>Gender Disaggregated Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTP</td>
<td>Growth and Transformation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTP</td>
<td>Harmful Traditional Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoA</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOFED</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance &amp; Economic Development</td>
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<td>MoWYCA</td>
<td>Ministry of Women’s Youth and Children Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>National Population Policy</td>
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<td>NPW</td>
<td>National Policy on Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PASDEP</td>
<td>Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAS</td>
<td>Rural Advisory Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDD</td>
<td>Sex Disaggregated Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDPRP</td>
<td>Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMLESA</td>
<td>The Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume cropping systems for food security in Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGE</td>
<td>Transitional Government of Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAD</td>
<td>Women’s Affairs Department</td>
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<td>WAO</td>
<td>Women’s Affairs Office</td>
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1 Background

Rural women throughout the developing world are engaged in multiple economic and social activities that are crucial for survival of the poor households. Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Various empirical studies have shown that rural women produce between 60 and 80% of the food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world’s food production (Ashby et al., 2009; Mehra and Rojas, 2008; and FAO, 1997). Women comprise just over 40 percent of the agricultural labour force in the developing world, a figure that has risen slightly since 1980 and ranges from about 20 percent in the Americas to almost 50 percent in Africa (FAO, 2011a). However, women’s contributions to the sector have been overlooked, underrepresented and underserved.

Furthermore, in view of the gender division of labor, rural women, especially those from poor households, spend considerable time in fetching water, getting health care for their children, and reaching markets (Cohen and Lemma, 2011). Rural women in developing countries are heavily burdened by their triple roles as paid or unpaid workers, family care providers and the roles played in the community. Aside from this, unequal intra-household power relations can undermine women’s benefits from and incentives to engage in value chains if thus, providing involves unpaid labor on family farms managed by husbands or male relatives (Bolzani, et-al., 2010).

Women face gender-specific constraints in access to productive resources as compared to men, such as insecure land tenure and poorer quality, less number of animals, low level of modern input utilization, less credit, education and extension access, etc. As it is stated in UN women (2013) document, gender inequality when it comes to land and other productive resources is intimately related to women’s exclusion and poverty. Barriers which prevent women’s access to, control and use of land and other productive resources often include inadequate legal standards and/or ineffective implementation at national and local levels, as well as discriminatory cultural attitudes and practices at the institutional and community level. These actually, reduce their
productivity and limit their contributions to agricultural production and cause many disparities in development outcomes.

Significant gender inequalities have been observed in access to key productive assets and services: land, financial services, rural infrastructure, technology, and other inputs (UNDP 2002). Failure to recognize these problems and their associated impact will also affect the achievement of development. FAO (2011b) stated that if women farmers used the same level of resources as men on the land they farm, they would achieve the same yield levels. The yield gap between men and women averages around 20–30 percent and most research findings indicate that the gap is due to differences in resource use. Closing the gender gap could raise total agricultural production in developing countries by 2.5 to 4 percent, and thereby reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 to 17 percent, or 100 to 150 million people.

In Ethiopia, although women constitute almost half of the total population, they have limited access to productive resources, suffer from socio-cultural discrimination and have fewer opportunities as compared to men for personal growth, education, employment etc. About half of the population in Ethiopia (49.5%) is women and one-fourth of (26%) of the Ethiopian households are headed by women of which, more than 80% of them live in rural areas (CSA and ICF, 2012). In general, women in Ethiopian rural context are involved in numerous agricultural tasks including weeding, harvesting, preparing storage containers, managing all aspects of home gardens and poultry raising, transporting farm inputs to the field, and procuring water for household use and some on-farm uses (EEA/EEPRI, 2006). Cohen and Lemma (2011), confirmed that in rural Ethiopia, women are intimately involved in all aspects of agricultural production, marketing, food procurement, and household nutrition, but certain tasks are considered culturally inappropriate for women, notably plowing, even though female household heads often do their own plowing.

The labor contribution of women in rural Ethiopia is often valued from the dimension of productive activities of which goods and income are generated. However, women have multiple roles in their lives, such as reproductive activities that is maintenance and caring of family, survival of human life (cooking, child bearing, etc.) and community management role, for example, provision and maintenance of scarce resources (road construction, community
leadership, water harvesting). Even though time allocation studies are scant in Ethiopia, it is estimated that rural women work in Ethiopia for about 13-17 hours per day with some variability of responsibility from place to place and season to season. A study by Mohammed (2014) conducted in West Showa zone, revealed that rural women in Ethiopia spent 26 hours per week in farm activities showing high rate of involvement in agriculture production activities. Rural Ethiopian women must work up to twice as many hours per day compared to men, since they are primarily responsible for their households, including gathering firewood and water, cooking, cleaning, and providing child care (Frank, 2009).

Women in rural part of Ethiopia are identified as disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. They have limited access to and control over land and other productive resources. The gender dimension of food insecurity is again critical in Ethiopia; thought the overall poverty level is estimated to decline from 29.6 percent in 2010/11 to 26 percent in 2012/13 (MoFED 2014), women form the majority of the poor.

Cognizant of this fact, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has drafted and adopted different gender sensitive policies and development programs to address the historical legacy of women inequality and discrimination. In FDRE constitution, adopted in 1995, Article 35 clearly states that women shall have equal rights with men in every sphere be it political, economical and social aspects. The government has demonstrated its commitment further to the equitable development of women by: establishing Women’s Affairs Office, with a ministerial portfolio, under the social sector of the Office of the Prime Minister in 1992; issuing the National Policy on Ethiopian Women which aims to institutionalise the political, economic and social rights of women in 1993; and mainstreaming of gender in all policy and program interventions.

This scoping report presents (i) the main public policies, programs and implementation tools in the provision of gender responsive rural advisory services (RAS) with due focus on agriculture, (ii) best practices in agricultural advisory services provision, and (iii) key drivers and challenges for wider scaling up in the country. The required data and information were extracted from review of available documents (policy, guidelines and directives, published and unpublished research reports) and key informant interviews (KII) with relevant stakeholders (See Annex 1).
2 Overview of National development policies, Institutions, and programme for gender equality

The gender responsive existing policies, programmes, approaches and tools that are put in place in providing socioeconomic services in general and RAS in particular emanate from the national development policies, institutions, and programs put in place to ensure gender equality starting from the country's constitution, the institutional setup, and national development programs and plans, and the specific women empowerment packages.

The country's constitution adopted in 1995 assures women of equal rights with men in all spheres, including education, employment, access to resource and social services. The Constitution underlines affirmative action to remedy the past inequalities suffered by women and assert the rights of women to own and administer property as well as access to reproductive health service. To ensure the translation of the provisions in the constitution, there is an organizational setup from federal to kebele (the lowest administrative unit) levels responsible in protection and promotion of women’s rights in the country. At federal level, Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs is responsible to mainstream gender issues with Women's Affair directorates in each of the sectoral Ministries. This is aligned at regional, zonal, woreda and kebele levels, where there are offices responsible for women's affairs.

The organizational setup is a key instrument in designing specific gender related development programs and the consideration of them in the national development programs. In this regards, the consecutive five-year economic development plans had gender specific targets considering the different sectors of the economy including agriculture. For instance, empowering women and youth and ensuring their benefit is one the strategic pillar of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) that the Government issued for the 2011-2015 period. The main objective for gender development during the plan period is similar to that of SDPRP and PASDEP period i.e. ensure women’s active participation in the country’s economy and social development as well as political process and equal benefit to women from the resultant outcomes (MoFED, 2010). The GTP had also set a target of making 30% of agricultural extension service beneficiaries to be women.

The progress report of GTP for 2012/13 Ethiopian budget year indicates that in terms of promotion of women lead enterprise development, though the plan for the year was to engage 600,000 women in micro and macro enterprises and it
was possible to engage 723,275 women, indicating that the performance is about 21% higher than the planned target. About 0.89 and 4.2 million women have also been organized and benefited from self-help group and agricultural package, respectively. In the same period, 4.1 million women have been provided saving and credit services showing about 46 % higher performance than the planned target. In the fiscal year under review, 729,671 women have received training on management and business livelihood skills.

The consideration of gender responsive RAS is also found in different agriculture related programs there are either specific women’s development packages or with gender mainstreamed as component. The key such programs are:

a) **Federal and Regional Micro and Small Enterprise Development Agencies** that have specific women empowerment programs: the main interventions in this regard are related with organization of women into groups, skill development, and improved access to finance mainly in the form of credit. Main agriculture related micro and small enterprise are poultry, dairy, fattening, and agricultural product value addition.

b) **Improving access to finance for women**: the national initiatives related with Micro Finance institutions and Saving and Credit Cooperatives are playing important role in enhancing women access to finance that have link in RAS especially for promotion of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) in rural areas.

c) **Maga agricultural growth, food security and natural resource rehabilitation related programs**: these are the Agricultural Growth Program (AGP), Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP), Household Asset Building Programme (HABP), Sustainable Land Management (SLM) program. These are key pillar joint programs of the GoE and development partners that have a mainstreamed gender components. For instance AGP is a program that targeted to enhance agricultural growth mainly in potential areas of the country with diverse gender specific components and a target of making 19% of its beneficiaries women farmers. Though the SLM programs target community related interventions, the local intervention management decision making is made through committees that are composed of 50% of women in respective communities.
3 Gender and key components of rural advisory services

The rural advisory services can be categorized into two based on sectoral coverage. The first category of rural services is related to services that ensure general access to the main services like potable water, road, market centers etc. The second one focuses on gender specific services to enhance women's access to these services. In this report, the focus is on the second category of rural advisory services that are agricultural extension services and rural health services, which have national programs with associated gender dimension.

3.1 Gender and agricultural extension services

One of the biggest public agricultural investment in the country is in agricultural extension services, which provided by the MoA mainly focusing on four sub-sectors, which are agricultural development (field crops, coffee, horticulture, farm mechanization), livestock, natural resource, disaster risk management and food security. The extension delivery system operates under Agricultural Extension Directorate of the agricultural development sub-sector at the Ministry level and under the Extension Department of the Agricultural Office at the nine regional states and two city administrative councils. At the grass root level, 715 districts have their own agricultural offices with extension process owners and Subject Mater Specialists (SMSs), and 15,826 kebeles (the lowest administration level) with three Development agents. In each Kebele, farm households are organized in development group (20-30 members) and in each group there are sub-groups/social networks (1:5 - five people organized in one group where one of the members serves as the coordinator of the team). There are also women and youth groups in each Kebele.

The extension delivery system is designed by focusing on different issues, such as agro-ecology of the country, diversification and area based specialization, market based extension service, best practice, building the capacity of the farmers, family centered extension service, watershed based development, and participatory extension system. There is a Development task force, which is leading the development activities at the kebele level. In each kebele, there is one Farmers’ Training Centre (FTC) and in each FTC three development agents (DAs) specialized in crops, livestock and natural resource management are deployed to provide extension services to development groups. Each kebele is
further divided in to three centers and in each center, one DA is assigned to give extension service for the community. The DA gives both short and long term training, and demonstrates new technologies at FTC compounds and model farmers’ plot.

For every three kebeles, one supervisor is assigned to monitor and support development agents. In addition to the Development Agents, two peripatetic experts (trained in cooperatives management and veterinary medicine) are assigned for every three FTCs. Based on the potentiality of the kebele in addition to the three DAs such as irrigation, Artificial Insemination and Honey bee technicians are also assigned. Each FTC has its own management committee. FTCs serve as training, information, exhibition, workshop center. There is a considerable attempt in mainstreaming gender especially, in ensuring women's participation in the different management committees of the extension service delivery setup.

Before the launching of the Ethiopian Women’s Policy, the Women’s Affairs Team in the Ministry of Agriculture was organized under the extension Department. The team mainly worked on different projects, such as training of rural women, distribution of extension packages, and introduction of labour saving technologies like improved stoves. After the launching of the National Policy on Women (NPW), in 1993, the Women’s Affairs Team in the Ministry was upgraded to the level of a Department and was renamed the Women’s Affairs Department.

The Women’s Affairs Department (WAD) in the Ministry has the role of facilitating and mainstreaming women’s and gender development issues into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural development throughout the country. The WAD is responsible for promoting gender awareness and understanding in the agricultural sector and sub-sectors; integration of gender issues in the extension strategic plan; and negotiating internally for the rights of female employees.

The Women’s Affairs Department in MoA has been engaged in different development activities. Gender mainstreaming guidelines were developed in order to mainstream women’s needs in various development programmes and projects in the agricultural sector (MoA, 2009). Efforts have been made to incorporate gender in the curricula of Agricultural Colleges and Training
Centers. As already noted, the delivery of agricultural extension services is done by Development Agents (DA) who work closely with ‘development groups’ with membership of around 20 to 30 rural households and a ‘group leader’ to reach farmers (Farnworth and Tamene, 2010). However, according to the MoA (2011), the gender imbalance in project areas was wider where the ratio of female to male extension workers is very low, which is mainly associated with the limited intake of female trainees to ATVETs due to the low interest of females. In addition to this, women’s representation in the management committee of FTC remained to be almost insignificant. Female DAs account for only 26% in Amhara, 11% in SNNP, 13% in Oromiya and 17% in Tigray Regions (MoA and ATA, 2015)

According to the United Nation (2009)CEDAW country report, the country’s overall policy document, the PASDEP project document clearly stated that agricultural extension activities should take into account the problems of rural women. Towards that end, PASDEP targeted 100 percent of women headed households and 30 percent of women in men headed households would be beneficiaries of agricultural extension services. During the plan period a range of activities had been undertaken to achieve the target that included:

- Providing training to professionals to engage both women headed families and those in men headed household in extension services and evaluating the provision of the training thereto;
- Providing assistance to rural women to engage in such activities as smallscale animal husbandry and vegetable production;
- Giving priority for rural women to benefit from many projects especially in credit and saving services;
- Organizing rural women to undertake activities, which add value to the agricultural products and thereby enable them to benefit from the income generated from such products;
- Preparation of projects which particularly benefit rural women;
- Gender mainstreaming in the preparation of agricultural extension implementation plans and conducting monitoring and evaluation of the services from a gender perspective;
- Conducting pilot projects and celebrating farmers’ festivals on women farmland and ensuring women’s participation in these projects and festivals; and
- Awarding exemplary and strong women farmers.
The success cases of these interventions are related with the fact that they have created better situation, where one can see women in decision making positions (local committees, public positions, etc), having own micro-enterprises, other income generating engagements, and ensured relatively equal rights in resource ownership like farm land. For instance, the participation and gained benefits of women from agricultural extension package have been considerably increased. To ensure that equal benefits are accrued to wives and husbands, land utilization certificates were issued by regional governments with wife's and husband's name (MoFED, 2010).

The key challenges observed during the PASDEP implementation were highly associated with the limited implementation capacity. There were capacity constraints among leaders and public servants at all administrative levels from federal to Kebele level. This was also coupled with the limited capacity of women to request their right highly associated with cultural setting (MoFED, 2010).

Following its establishment in 2011, the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency has been engaged in transforming the agricultural extension system in the country by drafting a Five-year Strategy for Ethiopia’s Agricultural Extension System, which is considered as public policy document since Oct 2012. In this strategy, insufficient training for women farmers was identified as one of the key bottlenecks in the extension system and adequate measures were proposed for implementation. The most important measures proposed are related to: (i) development of extension packages that will address the needs of different groups of farmers mainly women farmers, subsistence farmers, youth, and commercial farmers; and (ii) development of group-based extension delivery models including through women farmers’ groups. Since improved access to agricultural technologies is one of the key measures, strengthening the national agricultural research system (NARS) with the agricultural extension is also considered as one measure to ensure effective transfer of generated agricultural technologies to farmers in general and women farmers in particular. In this regard, there have been a number of measures proposed to strengthen agricultural extension linkage in the country. The key ones are:

- institutional linkages with actors of formal agricultural technology delivery systems through provision of source technologies;
- technology demonstration and popularization to create demand for technologies;
• promotion of Farmers’ Research Groups (FRGs), which are meant to capacitate farmers to work in group and undertake experimentation for improved adaptation of technologies. This includes establishment of women farmers' research group;
• Strengthen Agricultural Development Partners’ Linkage Advisory Councils (ADPLACs) as research-extension linkage platforms, which was established at federal, regional, zonal, and woreda levels;
• Technology pre-scaling up approach, which targets areas with limited access to technologies along with enhancing local technology delivery systems; and
• Integrated agricultural technology demonstration (ENATT initiative).

### 3.2 Agriculture, Gender and health extension programs

In rural context, agricultural performance is highly associated with healthcare service provision. In recognition of this, the Ethiopian Government has put in place health extension programs run by the Ministry of Health. In general, the healthcare delivery system in the country is organized into a four-tier system: Primary Health Care Units (PHCUs); District Hospitals; Zonal Hospitals; and Specialized Hospitals. The PHCU, which comprises a cluster of 5 health posts and a referral health center, serves as the National Health Extension Program (HEP) implementation institutional framework for 25,000 people. This includes the construction of required infrastructure for health posts in each kebele of 5,000 people and expansion of referral health centers. Accordingly, about 3,300 PHCUs were required to cover approximately 75 million people, which entailed the construction of over 15,000 health posts and 3,300 health centers. A health post has two or three multipurpose rooms for provision of integrated health services, designed for efficient use of resources. The referral health centers were designed with adequate space for outpatient and inpatient care, as well as under-5 and maternal care including rooms for basic emergency obstetric care (CNHD and CU, 2011).

Availing basic health services has been recognized as one of the most important factors for rural welfare in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the government introduced the Health Extension Program (HEP) in 2004, which is a primary care delivery strategy to address the challenges and achieve the World Health Organization Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within a context of limited resources. The HEP is a national program with more emphasis to women and youth.
The HEP was designed as part of the national health system reform to create a platform for integration and institutionalization of the HEP with appropriate human capacity, infrastructure, and management structures. Human resources were developed through training of female health workers recruited from their prospective villages, designed to limit the high staff turnover and address gender, social and cultural factors in order to provide services acceptable to each community. The health extension workers receive training based on the curriculum and teaching materials developed for the 17 HEP service packages by a team of national and international experts. The service delivery modalities include household, community and health facility care. Thus, the most basic health post infrastructure, designed to rapidly and cost-effectively scale up HEP, was built in each village. In line with the country’s decentralized management system, the HEP service delivery is under the jurisdiction of the district authorities. The program is implemented through a comprehensive package of health interventions.

**Comprehensive package of health interventions:** The HEP service package targets mainly women and youth and it comprises a range of evidence based high-impact and cost-effective interventions targeting the major health problems in the country (Hailay and Awash, 2013). The services were selected on their suitability for delivery at household, outreach and health facility levels. Although the HEP service package includes limited basic curative services, it mainly focuses on promotional and preventive interventions designed to tackle cultural issues, develop personal and social skills, and increase health awareness that enables individuals to take action to promote their own health. The promotion and prevention premise of the HEP reduces the need for curative and rehabilitative care, and assures greater efficiency of services.

The HEP package includes 17 essential health services under 4 major program areas of care: (1) family health; (2) disease prevention and control; (3) hygiene and environmental sanitation; and (4) health education and communication (Table 1).
Table 1  Health service package included under the health extension program (HEP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major health areas</th>
<th>Health service package</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family health services</td>
<td>Maternal and child health, Family planning, Immunization, Adolescent reproductive health, and Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease prevention and control</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, Malaria, First aid, and HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene and environmental sanitation</td>
<td>Excreta disposal system, Solid and liquid waste management, Water supply safety measures, Food hygiene, Healthy home environment, Arthropods and rodent control, Personal hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and communication</td>
<td>Cross cutting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Hailay and Awash, 2013

To ensure the implementation of the HEP, 40 training institutions were established and over 30,000 Health Extension Workers were trained and deployed to more than 15,000 villages. As the result of the health extension service provision, the performance of the major health indicators demonstrated considerable improvement. The coverage of Family Planning services increased from 56% in 2010 to 60% in 2013, the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel increased from 15% in 2010 to 23% in 2013, and pentavalent vaccination coverage increased from 82% to 88% in 2013 (MoFED, 2014). This has contributed to the achievement of the MDG goals.

The key drivers for improved health services under the HEP are: the established decentralized management; the established health information system to support HEP; political and partner commitment to support the program technically and financially; community engagement; and the felt immediate benefits.

The availability of the health extension service in parallel with agricultural extension services at each kebele level has created the opportunity to provide integrated health and agricultural extension services to rural households and communities. The success stories of a project "Empowering New Generations with Improved Nutrition and Economic Opportunity (ENGINE)" in piloting integrated health and agricultural extension has created mechanism of jointly working between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture (see part 4.3 for details).
4 Good Practices of Gender Responsive Approach in Agricultural Extension Delivery System

Good practices were identified based on the current and potential impact demonstrated, the possibility of the approaches/practices for wider scaling up, and the potential sustainability through consultation with gender experts. Accordingly, four cases were identified as good practices in agricultural/rural advisory service delivery. These are the women interest groups (CIGs) and Innovation Groups (IGs) approach promoted by AGP, the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in the national agricultural research system, the integrated agricultural and health extension services promoted by ENGINE project, and the Farmers Research Group (FRG) approach promoted by EIAR.

4.1 Women Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and Innovation Groups (IGs): the case of Agricultural Growth Program (AGP)

Agricultural Growth Program (AGP) is one of the development programs of Ethiopia initiated in 2010, designed with a special focus on selected and relatively potential areas. The development objective of the programme is related to increasing agricultural productivity and market access for key crop and livestock products in targeted woredas with increased participation of women and youth. The program is operational in 84 pilot woredas (administration districts) in four regional states, namely Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. In target woreda, the program is planned to address 1.9 million households in 2116 kebele throughout the program life span (2010 - 2015).

AGP supports in different forms the national agricultural extension delivery system. It works to strengthen and make functional the Agricultural Development Partners’ Linkage Advisory Councils (ADPLACs) at different levels. The council meetings are conducted bi-annually at woreda, zonal, regional and federal levels. The key agenda of the meetings are priority agriculture and rural development issues specific to respective levels and often mechanism for addressing the discussed issues are set forward and reports on the status are given in subsequent council meeting. In these meetings, gender issues and mainstreaming approaches are presented and often stakeholders are asked to report gender disaggregated information. In addition to promotion of small-scale agricultural water and small-scale market infrastructure development and
management, the program invests to promote agricultural production and commercialization mainly by strengthening agricultural extension service.

**Gender mainstreaming approach in AGP:** an independent gender mainstreaming focal person from the gender team members under Women’s Affairs Department of MoA is assigned to oversee and facilitate the integration of gender in all of the project components, such as agricultural production and commercialization, small scale rural infrastructure development and management, program management, and institutional arrangement, and monitoring and evaluation. The main approaches and procedures followed within AGP to ensure mainstreaming of gender in various project components and sub-components are:

- Approaching women in a separate groups so that their needs and voices can be heard in selection of sub-projects;
- Capacity development towards how to integrate women and youth issues;
- Enhance women and youth leadership skill through iterative trainings;
- Ensure that DAs and subject matter specialists properly serve women and youth beneficiaries at the project pilot woredas through frequent follow up and feedback system; and
- Empower women and youth through Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and Innovation Groups (IGs): The CIGs and IGs are reported to be the success stories in empowering women.

**CIGs and IGs:** During project design, of the total CIGs and IGs that were planned to be established, 32%, 34%, and 34% were women, youth and mixed CIGS, respectively. Likewise, 40%, 40%, and 20% were women, youth, mixed IGs. In addition to this, based on the context of the division of labour in the target woredas, 100% of Female Headed Households, and 30% of women in Male headed Households were targeted in the program design to participate and benefit from different training, and experience sharing events by the project. In order to support and follow up, gender focal persons in each Innovation platforms were assigned at federal and regional levels up to district agricultural and women’s affairs office.

**Gender mainstreaming guideline:** For the purpose of integrating gender into the program activities, a guideline was developed and different orientation forums were organized at federal (involving 24 farmers of which 12 were
females), regional (622 Total /201 Females), woreda (3942 Total /1430 Females, and 218 Youth) and kebele (1999 Totals/869 Females) level. The objective of the orientation was related to creating an understanding on how to incorporate gender factors while implementing, monitoring and evaluating the program activities.

**Capacity building and experience sharing:** A number of gender trainings were also conducted on gender related topic, women and youth development package and HTPs by participating a total of 520 (181 female) agricultural experts at regional level and 639 (265 females) agricultural experts and DAs at woreda level. The broad objective of the trainings was to show how to link women and youth packages with AGP component activities. Experience sharing is also one of the approaches to exchange knowledge and skills on best practices among the target regions and program innovation woredas. The experience sharing were undertaken both at federal level (46/17 female) and regional level taking specific woreda (104/27 Females) into account. The events were mainly focusing on how to scale up best practices and results registered by some CIGs and IGs on agro-processing and to exchange information on how to tackle identified challenges. Moreover, different consultative meeting were also conducted at federal (51 Total /17Females), regional (498 Total/139Females), woreda (230 Total /115Females) and kebele level (368 Total /142 Females and 82 Youth).

**Periodic gender performance assessment:** Performance assessment was periodically carried out to: measure the participation of women and youth in CIGs and IGs; identify the challenges they faced; and suggest recommendations for possible solutions. As per the 2011/2012 project implementation report, 6,611 CIGs were established consisting of a total of 97,554 members, of which 41% were female members. Of the total CIGs established during the same year, 31%, 32%, 37% were Women CIGS, Youth CIGs and Mixed CIGs, respectively, with little variation against the target in the plan for Women and youth CIGs. In general, a total of 1,496 Innovation Groups were established and they involving 23,024 members, of which 64% were female members. More precisely, of the total of established IGs, 35%, 38%, and 27% were Women, Youth, and Mixed IGs, respectively.
4.2 Institutionalizing gender in technology generation and pre-extension delivery system: the case of Ethiopian agricultural research system

Formal agricultural research in Ethiopia commenced when the Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) was established in 1966. The IAR was established with a mission to formulate national agricultural research guidelines, coordinate National Agricultural Research System, and undertake research in its centers and sub centers located in various agro-ecological zones of Ethiopia.

Until its replacement by the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization in 1997, the IAR had been the only organization in the country with a clear mandate solely for agricultural research. Over the years other organizations, which had been involved in agriculture related research activities, had been established. In addition to these organizations, other organizations, such as some divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture like the Coffee and Tea Development Authority had been engaged in experimental work in support of their development activities. Moreover, some institutions of higher learning have been doing some agriculture related research. Agricultural research underwent significant reform in the 1990s when the new government committed itself to put in place a decentralized political system in the country. More precisely, in 1993, some IAR centres were decentralised to create independent research institutes run by the respective regional governments, and became the Regional Agricultural Research Institutes (RARIs) generally under their respective regional bureaus of agriculture. At present, seven of the nine Regional States have established their respective Regional Agricultural Research Institutes (RARIs), which have agricultural research as their central mandate and coordinate research activities of agricultural research centres within their respective regions. The Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) as a federal institute has a mandate of research and national coordination and currently it has 16 research centres.

Responding to the different needs of technology users, that include both women and men, gender related activities have been undertaken in the research system since the mid 1990s with the overall objective of integrating gender perspective in agricultural research and development.

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1 These included: the Plant Protection Research Centre (PPRC), which was established in 1972 and operated under the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission and was merged with IAR in 1995; the Plant Genetic Resources Centre of Ethiopia, which was founded in 1974, which later became the Biodiversity Institute (BDI); the Forestry Research Centre (FRC), which was established in 1975; the Wood Utilization Research Centre (WURC), which was founded in 1979; the National Soils Laboratory (NSL), which was established in 1989; and the Institute of Animal Health Research (IAHR), which became operational in 1992.
endeavors for improving livelihood of farming and pastoral communities. However, formal gender mainstreaming aspect was commenced during the first sensitization workshop in 1999 at the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization, with the support of CIDA. The aim of the workshop was to start a firm foundation for the introduction of gender concerns in the Ethiopian Agricultural Research System for making research activities more gender sensitive and responsive and thereby institutionalize gender perspective in the agricultural research system. The major activities undertaken during the workshop were gender mainstreaming action plan development, identification of priority areas and proposal of means of implementation for effective integration gender in the research planning. As the result, the gender issues seems to be well considered and a number of technological as well as process innovations that have empowered women were put in place as resulted as best practice.

The key steps and factors for the achievements made are the different gender mainstreaming approaches followed:

a) **Establishment of gender unit at the EIAR HQs:** The attempt was to create gender awareness among agricultural researchers and develop a strategy to integrate gender in agricultural research activities. To this effect, a gender focal unit was established under the Research Extension and Farmers Linkage Department (REFLD) at the Headquarter level in 2003.

The rationale of linking the focal point to REFLD was due to the fact that, gender issue encompasses all aspects of extension activities such as need assessment & behavior identification, and REFLD was also facilitating participatory and farmers’ led research and technology transfer activities. Though this created opportunities to consider gender aspect in the different field activities, it was limited in its effect particularly in getting linked to range of activities. Furthermore, the wider scope of gender mainstreaming to fulfill the institutional and national expectations called for the unit to stand by its own. Consequently, the unit was set up independent in October 2006 being directly answerable the Director General of the institute. Recently, after the institute has gone through new reform and redesigning of the research system, the gender unit obtained additional support and fertile ground for facilitation of the mainstreaming process in the NARS. Thus, the unit was given the status of Gender Research Coordination Office and was
officially mandated to coordinate and facilitate gender related activities in the research system beginning December 2009.

b) **Gender auditing:** An organizational assessment was carried out in 2005. The objectives of the assessment were to: assess the technical, behavioral and cultural dimensions of the EIAR in mainstreaming gender; identify the problems that hampered the implementation of gender-responsive research in the organization; and suggest appropriate intervention options to overcome the constraints and facilitate the process of institutionalizing gender. The findings of the assessment revealed the following organizational shortcomings: lack of understanding about gender, gender was perceived as non-technical issue; uncertainty and reservations on the relevance of gender to agricultural research; limited technical capacity on how to collect gender disaggregated information; and limited financial support to conduct gender related activities.

c) **Gender Analysis:** Sex Disaggregated Data and Gender Disaggregated Data were collected based on case studies conducted in different parts of the country (2006). The gender analysis study led to the development of users guide entitled “Gender analysis tools: users’ guide in Agricultural Research for development”

d) **Capacity building:** Gender analysis training was given to technical and administrative staff including centre managers, programme and project leaders, researchers from different disciplines and management staffs at different levels. A total of 1487 technical and administrative staff was trained, of which 333 were women. The training was given at three levels considering the gaps: (1) Gender awareness and its relevance in agricultural research; (2) Gender mainstreaming in Agricultural research using simulation exercises; and (3) Gender analysis training both in theoretically and practically on specific commodity. The practical training was conducted at local community level to apply the tools through active learning processes together with farmers.
Table 2: Gender training provided for Federal and Regional Research Institutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Institutes</th>
<th>Number of trainees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal research centers</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional research institutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afar</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amhara</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambella</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNNP</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoRPARP</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARI</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OARI</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EIAR documentation, 2013

e) Promotions of women specific empowerment interventions: Women specific empowerment activities for increased access to improved agricultural technologies were used. The specific objectives of these activities were to: evaluate feasibility and gender responsiveness of the technologies, enhance women’s access to improved technology; empower women economically and see the implication of the technologies on gender relations. The technologies that were used and found to be more suitable for women empowerment are:

- Improved cereal (QPM) and pulse varieties;
- Improved vegetable and fruit varieties;
- Modern beekeeping technologies;
- Improved root and tuber crops;
- Labour and time saving agricultural mechanization technologies (milk churner, feed chopper, Enset processing, etc.);
- Sericulture/Silk products;
- Improved sheep and goat breeds and management; and
- Improved poultry technologies and management.

Some of the projects and community interventions implemented by the national agricultural research system that made perceptible contributions in terms of empowering women farmers are:

- Project implemented with RCBP financial support;
- The Sasakawa Africa Association agro-processing program (which is a value-adding program for groups of women farmer and housewives);
- Community based seed multiplication scheme;
- Project on Farmers Research Group (FRG), JICA financial support;
- Tsion Dessie Memorial Gender Fund (CIDA);
- Integrated women in the development of model Moringa value chain;
- Other projects (SIMLESA, EAAP, etc.).

f) **National gender mainstreaming team:** The national gender mainstreaming team (which has 21 members) is composed of focal persons who are assigned at each of the federal research centers (14 members in total) and other members representing regional research institutes (7 members) with a responsibility of facilitating gender mainstreaming in technology generation and pre-extension technology delivery system. The gender mainstreaming unit at the national level supervises and supports the team to integrate gender issue in the research planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation process in both in the federal and regional research systems.

The key outcomes of the institutionalization of gender in the research system are related with (i) increased number of gender specific technology promotion activities, (ii) increased adoption of some of gender specific technologies like quality protein maize, and (iii) relatively better monitoring and evaluation for mainstreaming of gender in the research process.

### 4.3 Integrated agricultural and health extension services: the case of ENGINE project

Empowering New Generations with Improved Nutrition and Economic Opportunity (ENGINE) is a USAID supported project, which is uniquely implemented jointly by two government ministries: Agriculture, Health. And it targets the four main regions (Amhara, SNNP, Oromia, Tigray) and macro level intervention at National level. The project mainly targeted poorer farmers with food and nutritional insecurity. The main interventions are related with agricultural production with due focus on vegetable production, shoats, training of nutrition and proper feeding practices, and also financial management. The successes of the project along the practices followed is
discussed below based on the case at Arbisi kebele of Bureworeda of Amhara region.

The Arbisi kebele of Bureworeda is one of the kebeles that has successfully implemented ENGINE interventions (agriculture, health and nutrition and financial management). The selection of beneficiaries was done by a development committee in each target kebele. The project established a women’s group consisting of 30 nutritionally vulnerable women members. The group was involved in diverse activities including (i) agriculture related (vegetable production, sheep and goats), where members were introduced to different vegetables, their production practices along with food preparation, (ii) training on nutrition and proper feeding practices, and (iii) saving practices through introducing to saving in formal banks to promote proper management of financial resources at household level. The approach has demonstrated a considerable improvement of agricultural performance, household nutrition and income (see Box below for the case of Mrs Muluye, one of the project beneficiary.

**Box 1 Mrs Muluye Fente’s experience with the ENGINE project**

Mulye Fente is a housewife and a mother of three, who is a beneficiary of the project in Abrisikebele, Bureworeda of Amhara region. She has received four sheep, seeds of vegetables (carrot, Swiss chard and cabbage) and grafted improved avocado seedlings for planting in her backyard. In addition to this, she and her family were provided with relevant training in production techniques, food preparation for better nutrition, and saving. She was happy with the benefits to date which she said have allowed her (i) to better feed her family due to improved knowledge and awareness about nutrition and access to nutritious food sources, particularly, vegetables, and (ii) saving money (ten birr monthly).

**4.4 Empowering women’s innovation through Farmers’ Research Group (FRG): the case of Farmers Research Group project**

Empowering farmers’ innovation through the Farmers’ Research Group (FRG) project had been implemented in East Showa zone of the Oromia Region since 2004 by the Melkasa Agricultural Research Center of EIAR and Adame Tulu Agricultural Research Center of the Oromia Agricultural Research Institute
OARI) with financial assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project followed farmers’ research group (FRG) approach in which the farmers participate actively in development, verification, transfer and adoption of improved agricultural technologies. The approach helps to: develop and adapt appropriate agricultural technologies that meet farmers’ need; refine available technologies to fit actual farmers’ situation; and develop problem solving capacity. The approach promotes gender equality and women empowerment through targeting women and men during every course of action and through promotion of women farmers groups (WFRGs).

Gender consideration is one of the cornerstones in FRG guideline. FRG members include husbands and wives to give greater emphasis for intra-household gender issues. FRG members are trained on production techniques and utilization of the technologies, record keeping, FRG concept and are encouraged to participate in a gender sensitization workshop organized at their locality for better gender relation. Both women and men FRG member are equally encouraged to actively participate in implementation, data collection, regular meetings, field days, exchange visits. Gender sensitization and integration of gender in the project cycle using different techniques of participatory approach benefited women FRG member to bring about change in overall women’s livelihood and gender relation, such as women’s knowledge and skill, and improved confidence in trying new technologies. Similarly, husbands developed confidence on women. Some women registered very high productivity and fetched additional income by selling produces and thereby their saving habit was improved (Women save money in bank by themselves).

The approach has been widely adopted in the country as it has allowed not only farmers but also women to innovate and question the status quo. Many Farmers Research Groups and Women Farmers Research Groups have evolved into business entities like Local Seed Businesses.
Box 2 Empowering married women through FRG approach

“...I believe that open discussion with family members, mutual understanding, hard work and determination are the key to success for me as a married woman...”

Mrs. Ehete Gizaw is a resident of the Awash Bishola village in Dodota Sire district of the Arsi Zone located in the Great Rift Valley in Oromia region. She is 42 years old and had completed her highschool studies. She has six children, (three girls and three boys). Crop production is the primary source of livelihood for her family. Her annual production was not enough to meet the family consumption requirements.

Mrs. Ehete was one of the beneficiaries of the Project on “Strengthening Technology Development, Verification, Transfer and Adoption through Farmers’ Research Group (FRG Project)”. The project is an initiative of EIAR, JICA, and OARI. The first phase of the project has been implemented by Melkassa and Adami Tulu Agricultural Research Centers since 2004. Mrs. Ehete was a chairperson of one of the Women Farmers’ Research Groups (FRGs) organized by the Melkassa Agricultural Research Center. Prior to their engagement in the intervention, members were provided with training on action plan development, production techniques, and record keeping. During the initial phase of the interventions the FRG members hosted 4 onion, 6 tomato, 3 pepper varieties on their farm, of which Mrs. Eshete tried onion varieties, namely 'Bombay Red', 'Adama Red', 'Melkam' and 'Deresselign'.

During the practice, Mrs. Ehete received proper technical support in the experimentation. The group members finally selected 'Bombay red' and 'Deresselign' in ranking order using criteria of yield, early maturity, size and color (deep red) shelf life and marketability. She also hosted on her farm different improved technology packages, such as market pepper ('MelkaZala', 'MelkaShote', and 'Woldhale'), onion seed multiplication, cross-bred dairy technology (performance evaluation and demonstration of F1 Jersy-Borana Heifer), Papaya and Coffee seedling multiplication, Melkassa-2 maize variety and modern bee hives technologies. She witnessed that all the technologies she tried were successful, profitable and impactful. She also reported that she supplied her produce to other farmers (as a seed source), consumers, and restaurants.

Source: EIAR documentation, 2012
5 Key drivers and challenges for improved consideration of gender issues in the agricultural extension services in Ethiopia

5.1 Key drivers for success stories
The key drivers for improved consideration of gender issues in the agricultural extension services and associated indicative impacts for the identified cases are:

- **The enabling policy and institutional support.** In order to ensure the implementation of gender policies, there are gender offices at different levels. In addition to facilitating gender specific interventions, they follow up the mainstreaming of gender in the agricultural extension services of the public and donor supported programs and projects;

- **Integration of main rural infrastructure development with agricultural extension service provision (road, telecommunication, health, irrigation etc).** The government has been investing in rural infrastructure development through specific programs like the National Rural Road program, National Rural Electrification program, etc. Improvement in infrastructure and access to technology are critical success factors for enhancing the provision of agricultural extension services;

- **Decentralized governance of rural service provision in general and agricultural extension services in particular.** The devolution of power and the political and economic empowerment of local communities has created an opportunity for improved commitment of local governments to strengthen agricultural extension service provisions;

- **Alignment of interventions promoted by the government at different levels.** Economic and agricultural development interventions by public, private, NGOs and donors at different levels are aligned for greater impact and;

- **High level and systematic engagement of communities through group actions promoted by the government.** Following the good lessons gained from the national campaigns for rehabilitation and conservation of natural resources throughout the country, the government is promoting a group action where households are organized into groups, which is often called 1to 5 grouping (five people organized in one group where one of the members serves as the coordinator of the team) to ensure sharing of best practices in agricultural activities;

- **Immediate felt benefits.** Many success stories are associated with the felt benefits of beneficiaries.
5.2 Challenges for Gender Mainstreaming in the agricultural/rural advisory services

Even though, the government has put in place mechanisms to ensure gender equality in all aspects of public services in general and agricultural and rural advisory services in particular, there are still key challenges to ensure full gender equality. These are related with:

a) limited institutional capacity associated with limited human resources especially, the limited number of female extension workers seriously hinder the provision of the services specific to women;

b) limited and in some cases absence of gender budgeting and lack of adequate financial support for gender and development;

c) limited and in some cases absence sex disaggregated data in national statistics, which is important for evidence based policy making;

d) lack of awareness, misconception, and fatigue about gender issues among communities and employees at all levels and deep-rooted gender-insensitive socio-cultural norms, attitudes, values, awareness and practices throughout all levels of society;

e) Lack of strong coordination mechanisms among women machineries, stakeholders and partners, which results in duplication of efforts and resources and limited scaling up of best practices; and

f) Weak implementation and follow up of national policies, legal instruments and international and continental protocols, conventions and declarations

5.3 Summary of achievements, constraints and key lessons in promoting Gender Responsive Approach in RAS

As indicated in the above discussions, the gender dimensions of RAS and associated interventions have demonstrated their own achievements and constrains with key lessons learnt. Table 3 summarizes achievements, challenges and major lessons learnt in the promotion of gender responsive approach in RAS. The first three measures are related with macro level and the rest are program level.
Table 3 Summary of Gender Responsive Approach in RAS: achievements, constraints and key lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of gender responsive measures</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Practical constraints</th>
<th>Key lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of female to male extension workers</td>
<td>• Female DAs account for 26% in Amhara, 11% in SNNP, 13% in Oromiya and 17% in Tigray Regions</td>
<td>• Limited intake of females to ATVET</td>
<td>• Female extension workers are crucial for better RAS to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASDEP/GTP targeted 100 percent of women headed households and 30 percent of women in men headed households</td>
<td>Much lower but vary considerably from place to place</td>
<td>• Limited implementation capacity of leaders and public servants at all administration level</td>
<td>• Public sector implementation capacity is very crucial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of extension packages that will address the needs of different groups of farmers mainly women farmers</td>
<td>• Though the total number of women RAS beneficiaries increased from 2.7 in 2010 to 4.3 million, the proportion did not reach the 30% target</td>
<td>Though increased coverage of RAS, there are challenges related with (i) high turnover of extension staff, and (ii) challenges related with persisting cultural barriers for women participation</td>
<td>• It is important to address the constraining cultural norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and Innovation Groups (IGs): the case of Agricultural Growth Program (AGP)</td>
<td>• 32% of established CIGs • 40% of established IGs • All Female HH and 30% of women in Male HH targeted</td>
<td>• The performance of each CIG and IG is not the same given the local level opportunities and implementation capacity of the promoters</td>
<td>• Affirmative action in RAS are very crucial to empower and benefit women; • Strong monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of gender responsive measures</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Practical constraints</td>
<td>Key lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Institutionalizing gender in technology generation and pre-extension delivery system: the case of Ethiopian agricultural research system | • Improved consideration of gender by researchers in their day-to-day activities  
• Existence of women specific research-extension activities  
• Developed women targeted technologies like milk churner, feed chopper, Enset decorticators | • High research staff turn over  
• Challenges in sustaining benefits for women from improved access to agricultural technologies  
• Still limited access to women targeted agricultural technologies due to the poor performance of the national agricultural technology delivery system | • The need for continuous capacity building on gender  
• Need to link research-extension activities with the national extension system.  
• Further strengthening the consideration of gender related issues in the national extension packages  
• Technology access to women is highly affected by the efficiency of the overall technology delivery systems |
| Integrated agricultural and health extension services: the case of ENGINE project | • Women targeted agricultural extension linked with health services  
• The approach adapted in the national household extension package as package for backyard farming | • The level of scaling out the approach is still limited mainly linked with inaccessibility of required inputs like vegetable seeds, | • Integrated RAS is key for rural transformation (agriculture, health, access to technologies etc) |
| Empowering women’s innovation through Farmers’ Research Group (FRG): the case of Farmers Research Group project | • FRG approach well recognized in technology generation and promotion  
• Women FRGs more successful | • The FRG approach requires committed engagement by all actors mainly researchers and extensionists, which may be the case always; | • Group action helps women to overcome collectively household, location and/or community specific challenges in women empowerment |
6 Roadmap to Mainstreaming Gender in Agricultural Advisor Service

Despite its greater attention and commitments to the development equality of women in all spheres, gender issues and right of women havenot yet been fully mainstreamed and considered in agricultural research and development system in general and that of the rural advisory service in particular. This is due to many behavioral, technical, institutional, and capacity related factors. Given this state of affairs, in order to address gender issue and the rights of women in agricultural advisory service, the following are intervention areas to address gender sensitivity in approach, tools and practices.

- **Strengthened institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming:** Gaps still exist at ministerial and regional levels to mainstream gender. These gaps still remain highly visible in terms of availability of proper gender expert, infrastructure and facilities, and applying gender planning, gender analysis, and other instruments to strengthen gender mainstreaming, such as generating sex-disaggregated data in all sectors. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity at all levels starting from national gender machinery to the grass root level should be given greater emphasize.

- **Ensuring gender sensitization of extension service and extension staff:** In view of creating gender awareness, knowledge and skills on gender mainstreaming to address differences in roles and needs of men and women farmers, both women and men extension staff need gender training. In terms of content, gender training should highlight: the concept of gender in agriculture; relevance of gender in advisory services; how the gender division of labour and gender decision-making affect access to and control over resources; gender analysis tools and techniques; gender monitoring and evaluation etc.

- **Increasing the number of women extension workers:** The agricultural extension system is frequently characterized as lacking gender sensitivity and as a result of which it is reported to have failed to recognize the different roles and responsibility of women and men in farming. This situation coupled with the limited number of women extension agents is result limited access of women to extension services. It should be noted in passing that in the past decade agricultural extension has been widely implemented with due Government attention and with commendable results, and the number of agricultural extension workers has significantly increased. Despite these commendable achievements, in
some parts of the country, due to cultural and religious restrictions, women are unwilling or unable to benefit from the support of male agricultural extension workers. Therefore, a strategy should be devised to increase the number of women extension workers at grass root level for effective gender sensitive rural advisory services.

- **Promoting women based voluntary groups:** In order to bridge the gender gaps in accessing extension services, women’s associations, common interest groups and women research groups are extremely helpful in that they facilitate the linkage between extension workers and women farmers. This further helps to foster the scaling up of technologies and best practices to the wider women farmers.

- **Strengthening group level discussion methodologies:** Women’s needs and problems can be addressed through the promotion of group level discussion methodologies such as participatory rapid appraisal tools and techniques, and application of gender analysis tools. Participatory Rural Appraisals tools help to assess demand for new technologies; to reveal selection criteria for new technologies and preferences for established technologies as well as provide information on farming systems and insights on constraints to rural advisory services both at inter and intra household level. Moreover, application of gender analysis tools enables to conduct a systematic analysis of the differences based on gender roles of women and men ascribed by society. However, this requires knowledge and skills on how to use and apply the tools for gender sensitive and responsive rural agricultural advisor services so that capacity building towards gender analysis and participatory approaches should be given greater attention in any interventions.

- **Enhancing generation and adoption of gender responsive agricultural technologies:** Improving access to labour and energy saving technologies by women farmers is one of the strategies through which economic empowerment of rural women can be ensured. Hence, rural advisory services should focus on the demonstration and promotion of gender sensitive and responsive technologies to enhance women’s access to the technologies.

- **Proper and proportional targeting of women and youth:** In most communities, there are different types of households, the male headed household including married women and the female headed household, households headed by youth or grandparent in case both parents are absent. Each of them has different characteristics in terms of access and ownership of resources, education and agricultural technology and has different needs, concerns and capabilities as compared to male-
headed households. Targeting of beneficiaries, thus, should be based on appropriate proportional representation taking household type and resources base into account especially during:

- Selection of beneficiaries to participate in extension package and technology scaling up;
- Participatory variety selection;
- Method and result demonstration trials;
- Training activities;
- Field days and exchange visits; and
- Follow up of activities.

**Promoting the collection, dissemination and use of sex and gender disaggregated data:** Lack of sex and gender disaggregation in data collection, organization and management system both at micro and/or micro levels, result in gender blindness and poor targeting of beneficiaries. Data disaggregation by sex is a straightforward approach that specifies the number of males and females in a given sample of population. However, when data are disaggregated by gender, they provide highlight to the disparities in gender roles, gender concerns and their implications to the projects and programs by identifying the causes of imbalances. Therefore, acquiring and proper utilization sex and gender disaggregated information helps policy makers, programmers and development practitioners to design gender sensitive and responsive polices, programmes and interventions and thereby help to provide effective agricultural advisory services.

**Enhancing the use of gender responsive monitoring and evaluation indicators:** Monitoring and evaluation processes, in most instances, lack gender sensitivity largely because of poor targeting of gender indicators during the planning phase. If gender indicators are properly incorporated during the planning phase of the interventions, it is likely to ensure and easily capture that the changes brought up by the intervention are reflected by both women and men.

**Promotion of gender stakeholder platforms for adequate advocacy and relevant stakeholders linkages and coordination:** Considering the dynamic nature of development in general and gender issues in particular, it will be important to promote/strengthen gender stakeholders platforms at different levels. This can help in addressing emerging issues timely in a coordinated manner.
7 Conclusion

This scoping study revealed that as in many countries in Africa, women in Ethiopia tend to have less access than men to productive resources and skills as a result of gender-biased practices in the ownership of land, control of household assets and access to services, such as credit, input supply agricultural advisory services, etc. Even though a lot has been done over the past decade to mainstream gender in the preparation and implementation of development projects and programs, there is still a glaring difference between men and women farmers in access to agricultural extension and other advisory services. The problem of women’s limited access to agricultural extension and other advisory services is compounded by the fact that the proportion of women extension agents in the national agricultural extension system is very low. It should be noted that in addition to the conventional agricultural extension services, women extension agents could be commissioned to provide gender-specific advisory services.

In this respect, it is interesting to note that women farmers identified the shortage of women extension agents as one of the important problems that needs to be given the attention it merits. More precisely, in a letter that the Female Food Heroes wrote to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia on December 7, 2012, they underlined the need for increasing the number of female front-line extension workers:

In the past decade agricultural extension has been widely implemented with due Government attention and with commendable results, and the number of agricultural extension workers has significantly increased. Despite these commendable achievements, in some parts of the country, due to cultural and religious restrictions, women are unwilling or unable to benefit from the support of male agricultural extension workers. Therefore, we kindly request that this issue be given due attention and steps be taken to increase the number of female agricultural extension workers.

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2The Female Food Heroes is one of the activities of the Together for a Food Secure Ethiopia Initiative, which is a coalition of 10 non-governmental organizations. Since 2012, the coalition has been awarding proactive, exemplary and enterprising women farmers who have made a difference in terms of ensuring their food security and extricating themselves out of poverty through hard work and determination.
As women face multi-faceted challenges in society, concerted efforts need to be made by all concerned including government officials (at federal, regional and local levels), policy makers, development practitioners, non-governmental organizations, donor community etc. to see to it that women are empowered economically, socially and politically. In this respect, among the efforts that need to be made are:

- It is well known that in addition to the routine responsibility of household work and raising children, women also participate in arduous agricultural work in the farm. It is therefore important that mechanisms of saving women’s labor be taken into consideration in the transfer of technologies and development of innovations by agricultural researchers and other players;
- Since women play a crucial role in ensuring the food security of their family, they need to be included in various food security ventures so that they can improve their family’s life standards. Therefore, it is extremely important that steps be taken to assist them in this regard through, for example, capacity building activities, such as training, loan services, technical support, etc.
- Due to traditional and backward practices, women are not assigned to management/leadership positions in kebeles, associations and other mutual aid groups, and as a result can’t protect their interests in these forums. It is advisable that concrete steps be taken to ensure that women are fairly represented in different administrative positions;
- Water-fetching and fire-wood collecting are the hardest of all the daily chores of women. Especially due to climate change and degradation of the natural resources base, this job has become increasingly difficult with time, and the distance that women need to cover to collect wood and fetch water is increasing by the day. In order to tackle this problem, and reduce this extreme load on women, it is important that fuel-economizing stoves and biogas fuel be widely available at affordable prices in rural Ethiopia. It is also important that the efforts to provide clean water in rural areas continue with more vigor;
- Even though, the Government of Ethiopia has strengthened its efforts to provide education throughout the country, girl students continue to drop out of school due to traditional and other reasons. It is therefore imperative that the Government issue directives to responsible bodies to implement a system that ensures continued and increased participation of girls in education, and that follows up and ensures that girls do not drop out of school;
• Promotion of integrated agricultural and rural advisory service mainly by linking agriculture, nutrition, health and education needs due attention along with mechanism of strengthened institutionalized engagement of the different line ministries.
8 Reference


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9 Annex

Annex 1: List of individuals consulted (to be completed)