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COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

OF AGRICULTURE AND THE RURAL SECTOR IN --- TONGA

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THE RURAL SECTOR IN

TONGA

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARD	agriculture and rural development
CCA	climate change adaptation
CDD	Community Development Division of Ministry of Internal Affairs
CCDRM	climate change and disaster risk management
CDP	Community Development Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer (equivalent to Ministry Director)
CFRGA	Climate Financing and Risk Governance Assessment
CGA	Country Gender Assessment
CSO	civil society organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DCC	Department of Climate Change of the Ministry of Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Communication and Climate Change
DEMP	district emergency management plan
DRM	disaster risk management
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPA	Family Protection Act 2013
GAP	gender action plan
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	gross domestic product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GSI	gender and social inclusion
HDI	Human Development Index
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management
LLEE	Live and Learn Environmental Education
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests
MAFFF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forests and Fisheries (until 2016)
MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Climate Change and Communications

MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOF	Ministry of Fisheries
MEIDECC	Ministry of Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Communication and Climate Change
MEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
MORDI	Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation Tonga Trust
NACGAD	National Advisory Committee on Gender and Development
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
Niuas	Outer islands region consisting of Niuafo'ou Island, Niuatopu'tapu Island and smaller islands
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PRRP	Pacific Risk Resilience Programme
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights
PSC	Public Service Commission
RNPGAD	Revised National Policy on Gender and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMA	Special Management Area
SPC	Pacific Community (formerly Secretariat of the Pacific Community)
TASP	Tonga Agricultural Sector Plan
TC	tropical cyclone
TFAFS	Tonga Framework for Action on Food Security
TFSP	Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan
TNCWC	Tonga National Centre for Women and Children
TO	Town Officer (elected local government position)
TOP	Tongan pa'anga
TSDF	Tonga Strategic Development Framework
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WAD	Women's Affairs Division (formerly Division of Women's Affairs, DWA)
WCCC	Women and Children Crisis Centre

Glossary of Tongan terms

fahu	Usually the eldest sister of a male who, ceremonially, is revered as the most highly ranked in the family structure.
kātoanga	Informal but organized exchange where groups of women from the diaspora visit specific villages to buy mats and tapa, which is a type of bark cloth, for ceremonial use in their countries of migration.
misinale	Traditional annual celebration of donations of money to the church.
ngatu	Tapa cloth made from mulberry fibre.
Ongo Niua	Designated island division for the purpose of the national census, the northernmost group of islands consisting of Niuafu'ou, Niuatopu'tapu and other small islands.
pa'anga	The currency of Tonga.
'ulumotu'a	Tradition that gives ultimate decision-making power to males, usually the eldest male family member.

Executive summary

This Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector (CGA-ARS) provides in-depth insights into the gender dimensions of agriculture and rural development (ARD) in Tonga. Based on the research findings, the Assessment also aims to provide guidance to the Government of Tonga and its development partners, notably the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Pacific Community (SPC), through the identification of priority areas that need to be strengthened.

Key findings

- 1. Policy framework:** The implementation of Tonga's Revised National Policy on Gender and Development (RNPAGD), the overarching policy for mainstreaming gender across the government, requires greater commitment by the National Advisory Committee on Gender and Development (NACGAD), which is composed of key ministries. Progress on gender mainstreaming has thus far been slow. The government agencies consulted for this Assessment have generally not considered it necessary to analyse and discuss gender impacts in policy and strategy documents.
- 2. Political will:** Political will for mainstreaming gender in agriculture and the rural sector varies, but it is generally low. There is lack of recognition of the ways in which gender shapes diverse roles, needs and constraints of rural women and men and lack of acknowledgment that gender is a factor directly affecting people's agency. Tonga has not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obstructs the overall work of governmental institutions on the promotion of gender equality in ARD and rural women's empowerment (RWE) at all levels.
- 3. Organizational culture:** Gender perspectives in ARD-related ministries are for the most part marginalized. Even in institutions that are implementing projects that integrate some elements of a gender perspective, gender issues are not discussed at staff meetings and there are few gender champions. Some senior officials in various ministries do not believe there are gender discrimination issues in Tonga, and some officials are not willing to consider the possibility that their work may impact rural women and men differently.
- 4. Accountability and responsibility:** Progress on gender mainstreaming is entirely driven by externally-funded projects and project staff, who carry out implementation and collect sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and evaluation to the best of their abilities. Overall, there is little to no collection of sex-disaggregated data by government staff, nor are information management systems in place to easily store and retrieve the required data.
- 5. Technical capacity:** Technical capacity for gender mainstreaming is low across the government. There are no active gender focal points, and very few governmental or project staff have received adequate gender training. While some technical support is being provided to the government, it is not sufficiently sustained to support consistent action between inputs. There is an urgent need for widespread gender training of government staff at every level, as part of current non-performance can be attributed to lack of knowhow.
- 6. Adequate resources:** The government does not provide adequate resources for gender mainstreaming. While the budget for the Women's Affairs Division (WAD) has increased from 0.07 percent to 0.16 percent of the national budget, this is still very low. No sectorial budgets include funds for gender mainstreaming activities, nor is there any mechanism at present for ensuring that sectorial gender issues are incorporated into the national budgetary process. Donor-funded projects to mainstream gender appear to be adequately resourced, but all governmental institutions consulted for this Assessment were found to be understaffed and under-resourced.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this Assessment, the following recommendations are targeted to the Government of Tonga, FAO and SPC to align their commitments to address gender equality and work towards rural women's empowerment in agriculture and the rural economy. These recommendations, which also reflect commitments made by the Government of Tonga at the international, regional and national levels, include the following:



To make rural women's contributions to households and rural economies visible and to support the acknowledgement of their needs:

- Improve the production and analysis of sex-, age- and location- (rural/urban) disaggregated data relevant for gender equality and RWE in ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes.
- Mandate all ministries and strengthen their capacity to monitor and report on the impacts of their policies, plans, programmes and services on the rural population using age- and sex-disaggregated data and indicators.
- Strengthen the gender mainstreaming capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MOFF), the Ministry of Fisheries (MOF) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) through provision training, including training on gender and statistics, to senior management staff, followed by a programme of similar training for all staff.
- Provide training on gender equality, RWE and social inclusion for all District and Town Officers.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation, including through a regular tracking and auditing of expenses related to gender-responsive budgeting in order to assess changes in women's status. Periodically review the indicators of gender-responsive budgets (including their criteria and weightage) to make them more effective and relevant from a gender, social and geographical perspective;
- Conduct studies to identify economic opportunities for women in the context of the green economy, including through value chain development of agriculture and fisheries' products, to support their resilience and participation in sustainable development.

To address gender inequalities in the rural sector and support the empowerment of rural women:

- Promote policy research and analysis on gender equality and RWE in the agricultural sector to inform policies and strategic planning, and conduct systematic gender analyses of legislation and policies, including macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and aid and trade agreements.
- Put in place concrete measures for the improvement of rural women's access to technical support, extension services, technologies,

transport, productive resources and financial services, including credit, loans and saving schemes to support the financial inclusion of rural women.

- Build rural women's resilience to climate change impacts and their abilities to sustain their livelihoods in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture through recognizing and building upon their traditional knowledge and sustainable, traditional adaptation and mitigation practices.
- Prioritize the needs of rural women in relation to their livelihood activities in disaster recovery programmes and empower them as actors of food and nutrition security and conservators of local environmental knowledge and practices.
- Increase rural women's access to extension and development programmes and access to support services and justice for survivors of domestic violence.
- Improve the delivery of quality rural services to alleviate the burdens of women's unpaid care work, including accessible services such as child care, elderly care, mental health care and disability care.

To support the systematic integration of gender perspectives in public policies and programmes:

- Ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to commit ending discrimination against women in all forms and put the Convention provisions into practice.
- Enhance the preparation of stand-alone gender policies by the agricultural line ministries.
- Based on evidence, recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in farming, forestry and fishing activities as agriculture producers in their own right so that ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes are designed and implemented in a gender-responsive manner to effectively contribute to the sustainable empowerment of rural women.
- Engage with MIA on gender and social inclusion technical assistance to support the initiative to reform Tonga's sub-national policy frameworks.
- Support the MOF senior management to create an enabling environment to achieve the gender and social inclusion objectives of the Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan (TSFP) 2016–2024.



- Support MOF to revise the new draft fisheries policy to reflect the TFSP and to conduct a review of the Special Management Area (SMA) programme from a gender perspective.
- Establish an intra-governmental coordination mechanism on gender equality and RWE to take full charge of the coordination of gender equality and RWE across the governmental system (central and local) and, as part of this mechanism, set up a structure of gender focal points in all agricultural line ministries and other relevant ministries and institutions.
- Assess impacts of legislation and policies, including macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and aid and trade agreements, on women's productive assets and economic empowerment.
- Design gender-responsive policies and strategies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management that support rural women's activities and needs in small-scale agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and cultural industries.
- Strengthen the capacity of ministries relevant to ARD to mainstream gender equality and RWE across their policies, programmes, budgets and services, including extension services.
- Support the MAFF to conduct an assessment of its extension services, including those under the Women's Section, to identify the effectiveness of services to men and women farmers; revise the extension services accordingly.

1

INTRODUCTION



FAO recognizes that gender equality is both a human right and an absolute necessity for achieving the Organization's mandate to eradicate hunger and poverty worldwide. In 2013, FAO published its policy on gender equality for the attainment of food security goals in agriculture and rural development.¹ In this policy document, gender mainstreaming and women-targeted actions are the components of a two-pronged strategy for promoting gender equality in agriculture and the rural sector.² The set of minimum standards for gender mainstreaming laid out in the FAO policy document include a requirement to undertake a Country Gender Assessment (CGA). The CGA contributes to the formulation of the Country Programme that is established between FAO and a member country government and expressed in the Country Programming Framework. The CGA also supports gender analysis at the identification and formulation stages of technical assistance projects. The 2012 FAO Guide to the Project Cycle states that a gender analysis is essential for the preparation of concept notes for programmes and projects and it is recommended by FAO that a gender assessment be carried out prior to any project formulation.³

1.1 Background and rationale

The Kingdom of Tonga is a Polynesian country composed of over 170 coral and volcanic islands, of which 36 are permanently inhabited. Its total land area is 747 km² while the Tongan Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is 640 050 km² (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

Tonga's main island of Tongatapu constitutes 35 percent of the country's land area and hosts 74 percent of the population (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries *et al.*, 2015). The island is formed from uplifted limestone to a height of 70 m in some places (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries, 2017). The four main island groups are Tongatapu and 'Eua (370 km²), Ha'apai (119 km²), Vava'u (143 km²) and the two Niua (71 km²).

The capital, Nuku'alofa, is situated on the main island of Tongatapu and has a population of 100 651, of which 77 percent lives in rural areas (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

Tonga is a constitutional monarchy with a unicameral legislative assembly consisting of 26 seats. Nine seats are reserved for nobles that are elected by the country's 29 nobles, and 17 additional members are elected by a popular vote, with a four-year term of service (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2016).

This Country Gender Assessment (CGA) of Agriculture and the Rural Sector in Tonga aims to improve awareness and understanding of gender perspectives in rural livelihoods in order to develop effective strategies to support food security, nutrition and resilience in Tonga. Topics covered include gender roles in rural livelihoods vis-à-vis environmental, social and economic trends; men's and women's assets and constraints, including traditional knowledge and skills; men's and women's needs for improving livelihoods; the challenges to addressing gender issues; and the

Box 1: Gender mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997

¹ FAO Policy on Gender Equality: Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development is available at: www.fao.org/policy-support/resources/resources-details/en/c/427024.

² Both the policy document and this report use a broad definition of agriculture which comprises crop production, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry.

³ FAO's Guide to the Project Cycle is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/ap105e/ap105e.pdf>.

entry points to empower rural women and address gender issues through rural development initiatives.

The objectives of the CGA-ARS are to:

- Inform the Government of Tonga's support for the development of gender-responsive policies and programmes in agriculture and rural development sectors;
- Inform FAO's and SPC's country-level planning and programming;
- Facilitate FAO's contributions to the United Nations (UN) Country Team reporting and to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework formulation and implementation through provision of up-to-date and objective information on the situation of rural women in Tonga.
- Support the formulation of the second phase of SPC's Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (PGEPP) programme.

1.2 Scope and methodology

Information for the production of this CGA-ARS has been collected through a combination of literature review, analysis of public policies and development programmes, interviews with stakeholders from the government and civil society, and focus group discussions with rural women and men.

The analytical framework used in this Assessment has two components – a situational analysis and an enabling environment analysis. The situational analysis of gender issues in the rural sector is based on desk research and supplemented by information from site visits and consultations with government ministries and civil society organizations (CSOs). The analysis includes a qualitative examination of women's and men's access to and control of resources, including economic and political resources, time, and knowledge. Family and community decision-making and leadership are considered components of political influence at the family and community levels. This qualitative information is supported with available quantitative data.

The analysis of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming employs the methodology developed by SPC for taking stock of governments' capacities for mainstreaming gender across their policies and programmes and is consistent with FAO's approach outlined in its 2013 Policy on Gender Equality. This Assessment looks at the enabling environment for mainstreaming gender, which includes: 1) legal and policy frameworks that uphold and promote gender equality; 2) demonstrated government commitment; 3) clear accountability mechanisms; 4) strong technical capacity; and 5) adequate financial resources.

Four methods have been used to collect data and inform the analysis behind the Assessment.

- 1) A desk review of national, regional and global literature relevant to gender equality and advancement of rural women across natural resource management sectors. The desk review included reports, policies, programme documents and other information from the government, development partners and CSOs.
- 2) In-depth interviews with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MAFF), the Ministry of Fisheries (MOF), the Ministry of Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Communication and Climate Change (MEIDECC) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA).⁴
- 3) Consultations with CSOs, private sector representatives and development partners engaged in promoting sustainable resource management and gender equality.
- 4) Field visits to two geographically distinct rural communities in Tongatapu in May 2018.⁵ It is to be noted that the two case studies are not intended to be representative of a country as diverse as Tonga, but rather are intended to provide some context-specific snapshots of rural life for women and men in Tongatapu. These site visits included the use of rapid appraisal tools designed to
 - 1) assess women's and men's respective knowledge and roles in relation to environmental decision-making;
 - 2) clarify women's and men's respective activities and responsibilities in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and climate change

⁴ Note that a 2012 Stocktake of Gender Mainstreaming in Tonga was completed by SPC with the assistance of the Women's Development Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other ministries. The information from the 2012 stocktake can serve as a baseline against which to compare information gathered through the stocktake for this CGA-ARS to clarify where attitudes, accountability, organizational culture, and technical capacity to advance gender mainstream have, or have not, improved.

⁵ A field visit to Vava'u was scheduled for 19–23 February 2018 but, due to the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Gita, which hit Tonga on 13 February, it was not possible to proceed with the scheduled plan.

adaptation; and 3) gain some understanding of what factors are associated with different levels of gender equality. Information from the site visits was used to both supplement and validate the desk review findings while providing some specific empirical examples. Six women and six men participated in the focus group discussions in Matahau, and six women and six men from Haveluliku and four women and two men from Lavengatonga took part in the second round of focus group discussions.

Limitations of the analysis

The collection of data for the production of this Tonga CGA-ARS was constrained by difficulties in securing interviews with a wide range of government stakeholders during the period dedicated to this component of the research in February 2018.

1.3 FAO in Tonga

The cooperation between Tonga and FAO has been ongoing since the country joined the Organization in 1981. In 2014, the partnership strengthened with the establishment of a FAO country office in Tonga. Aiming to sustainably increase the availability of domestic agriculture products and the healthy *consumption of safe and nutritious food*, FAO assistance in Tonga is focused on:

- development and promotion of evidence-based recommendations to incentivize the production and consumption of safe and healthy food;
- promotion of sustainable and climate-smart practices to help build resilient agriculture, fisheries and forestry production systems; and
- identification and promotion of food control and business practices to facilitate efficient agri-food value chains providing safe, nutritious and affordable food.

1.4 Organization of the Assessment

This report is divided into six chapters. The country context in Chapter 2 provides information on the overall national social and economic situation, on agriculture and rural development, and on human development, including population dynamics, health, education, employment, infrastructure and gender equality.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the enabling environment to mainstream gender in agriculture and rural development (ARD). Information has been generated by the analysis of key policies and strategies made available during a consultative exercise involving multiple government ministries. Consultations were held with central and line ministries including the MAFF, MOF and the MEIDECC.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of agriculture and the rural sector from a gender perspective. Information comes from a variety of reports and interviews with resource-persons. Information from the focus group discussions with rural women and men conducted in Tongatapu is included to illustrate some of the assets and constraints of rural women in Tonga.

Chapter 5 presents a case study on gendered aspects of two rural communities on the main island of Tongatapu in the villages of Matahau, Haveluliku and Lavengatonga. Analysis is focused on gendered roles in agricultural production, division of labour and control over and access to resources, as well as gendered impacts of food and nutrition security and climate change.

The conclusion summarizes key findings and proposes recommendations to support gender equality and the empowerment of rural women through agriculture and other rural development sectors.

2

COUNTRY CONTEXT



Tonga is composed of 170 volcanic islands – only 36 of which are inhabited – divided into the main islands groups of Tongatapu, Ha’apai, Vava’u, and Niuafo’ou (Sione and Foster, 2018). Nuku’alofa, the capital city, is situated on Tongatapu, which is the largest and most populated island, where three out of four Tongans live.

The climate is semi-tropical on all islands except on the North islands, where the climate is tropical. There is very little temperature variation between seasons. The country receives between 1 520 mm of rain in the Ha’apai group to 2 450 mm in the Niuafo’ou group (Sione and Foster, 2018). The cyclone season extends from December to April. Tonga has been hit by three severe tropical cyclones in this decade (Asian Development Bank, 2018a). Tonga has a constitutional monarchy. The King appoints the cabinet, which is composed of the prime minister, ministers, and governors of Ha’apai and Vava’u. The Legislative Assembly has 26 seats. Nine seats are reserved for hereditary nobles elected by their peers, while 17 representatives are elected by the population for a four-year term (Sione and Foster, 2018).

Customary law in Tonga reinforces the class system and perpetuates gender inequalities and woman’s subordination at all levels of society. Rural women have limited ability to speak in public to influence land use and economic development and are more likely to experience hardship than their urban counterparts (Pacific Community, 2011).

2.1 Population dynamics

Tonga’s 2016 Census of Population and Housing revealed that the population of Tonga stood at 100 651, which represents a decrease of 2.6 percent compared to 2011 (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). Seventy-seven percent of the population lives in rural areas: 51 percent in rural Tongatapu; 14 percent in Vava’u; 6 percent in Ha’apai; 5 percent in Eua; and 1 percent in Ongo Niua (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

Over the past three decades, the outer islands have experienced out-migration to Tongatapu or abroad (IFAD, 2017). Yet, Tongatapu continues to lose population as well, mostly due to migration abroad. There are as many Tongans living abroad, mainly in New Zealand, the United States of America and Australia (Small and David, 2004). The lack of incentives for male youth to remain in rural areas has led to farm labour shortages, an aging farmer population and vacant land allotments (IFAD, 2017).

The population of Tonga is very young, with a median age of 22 years (20 years for rural males and 23 years for rural females) and with about 39 percent of the population aged 15 years and younger (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). About 19 percent of the total population falls in the youth category (15–24 years of age) of which over three quarters (76.4 percent) lives in rural areas. The total sex ratio in Tonga is 99 males per 100 females, and in rural areas the sex ratio stands at 100 males per

Table 1: Population by location and sex

Division/region	Total	Male	Female	Area (km ²)	Density per km ²
Tonga (total)	100 651	50 255	50 396	64 991	155
Urban	23 221	11 529	11 692	11 41	2 035
Rural	77 430	38 726	38 704	638 50	121
Greater Nuku’alofa	35 184	17 490	17 694	34 82	1 010

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a

100 females. Overall, there are some minor gender differences across the age groups in rural areas. However, it is noticeable that there is a slightly higher number of rural boys aged 14 years and under, compared to rural girls of the same age. Numbers of female and male youth are nearly equal. Within the working age population aged 25–59 years and the older population aged 60 and above, there are more rural women compared to rural men (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

2.2 National social and economic situation

The national gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at USD 450.35 million in 2017 (World Bank, 2018a). The estimate for per capita GDP in 2018 was USD 4 364. The agricultural sector contributed nearly 14 percent of the GDP in 2015/16 and represented over 65 percent of exports (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2016). The main products exported are kava, squash, pumpkins, root crops, coconuts, and fish (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017c).

In 2018, remittances represented over a third (35.2 percent) of the GDP (World Bank, 2019).

Tonga's economy is particularly vulnerable to external shocks such as natural disasters, rising food and fuel prices and global economic crises like the one in 2008, which had the effect of halving the amount of remittances received by Tongan families (WorldBank, 2015).

Tonga is one of the most exposed countries in the world to climate hazards and geohazards (Government of Tonga, 2016a). Cyclones, storm surges, tornados, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis are natural events that threaten Tonga. Costs associated with Tropical Cyclone (TC) Gita in February 2018 came to TOP 356 million,⁶ the equivalent of 38 percent of the GDP.

The Climate Financing and Risk Governance Assessment (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2015) reported that some specific risk factors are likely to impede the ability of women, girls, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to survive and cope with the adverse impacts of climate change and disaster. These include low levels of participation in decision making and limited access to productive resources and climate-sensitive livelihoods by women and other vulnerable groups.

Table 2: Contribution to the gross domestic product by industry (percentage)

Primary sector	2015/16
Agriculture	13.7
Forestry	0.4
Fishing	2.9
Total	17.0
Market	7.0
Non-market	10.0

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017c

2.2.1 Poverty and social protection

In 2015, the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line was 22.1 percent (Asian Development Bank, 2018b). The incidence of poverty is higher in the rural part of Tongatapu, where 50 percent of the total population of the poor lives, and in the outer islands, where 29 percent of the country's poor lives (WorldBank, 2015). Smallholder farmers are the most vulnerable to poverty (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016a). Remoteness is considered to be the main cause of poverty, as it limits access to basic services, income generation and employment opportunities (United Nations Children's Fund, 2011). The high vulnerability of Tonga to climate change impacts and natural disasters is expected to increase the incidence of poverty in the future (WorldBank, 2015).

The Social Protection and Disability Division was established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs in

⁶ TOP stands for Tongan pa'anga, the currency of Tonga. One Tongan pa'anga is equivalent to 0.43 United States dollars (USD) as of October 2019.

2015. Yet, to date, the Government of Tonga does not have any specific policies or strategies on poverty reduction or social protection (WorldBank, 2015).

Social protection programmes remain limited in Tonga.⁷ However, as in other Pacific Islands societies, the customary system in Tonga serves as a fundamental social safety net, playing a role of wealth redistribution and support to families. Traditional forms of social protection involve social and economic obligations that support a redistribution of resources and “ensure collective and individual well-being so that every member of the community is provided with adequate sustenance and care” (Jolly *et al.*, 2015). In terms of community social support networks, the church and civil society organizations also play an important role in Tonga.

The Tongan population also relies heavily on remittances from Tongans living overseas. Remittances represented over one-third (35.2 percent) of the GDP in 2018 (World Bank, 2019) and remain the main safety net for a great number of Tongan families. In 2014, 80 percent of all households reported receiving remittances, which were estimated to represent 21 percent of the households' incomes (Jolly *et al.*, 2015). A study conducted in 2012 on the impact of remittances on poverty reduction revealed that they contributed to the reduction of the incidence of poverty by 31 percent (Jimenez-Soto and Brown, 2012).

2.3 Agriculture and rural development

2.3.1 Agriculture

Agriculture, including forestry and fisheries, is the main sector of employment for Tongan women and men aged 15 years and above (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). The range of other sectors providing employment includes manufacturing, accommodation and food services, public administration and education (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

The 2016 Census reported that the main crops grown by households are cassava, different types of yam, taro, sweet potato and banana. Other crops include plantain, watermelon, vanilla, pineapple,

mulberry, peanuts and vegetables. Twelve percent of households grow kava (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

In 2015, agriculture represented approximately 19 percent of Tonga's GDP and constituted over 65 percent of the country's exports, valued at TOP 26 million (Pacific Agricultural & Forestry Policy Network, n.d.).

The rate of subsistence food production in Tonga is among the highest in the Pacific Island Countries (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016a). On average, about 40 percent of subsistence workers are rural women, with women comprising 35 percent of subsistence workers in rural Tongatapu, 47 percent in Vava'u, 45 percent in Ha'apai, 42 percent in 'Eua and 24 percent in Ongo Niua (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

The agricultural sector, primarily horticulture and to a lesser extent fisheries, is an important sector of the Tongan economy in terms of its contribution to family and household incomes in outer islands and in greater Tongatapu. In 2015, 86 percent of households were active in agriculture to meet their own food needs or for cash income through sale (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries *et al.*, 2015). Fewer than 10 percent of Tongan farmers are commercial producers (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016a).

Tonga has struggled to maintain agricultural competitiveness and to meet more stringent biosecurity requirements imposed by international trading partners. Agricultural potential is considered to lie in the export of root crops and higher-value horticultural crops to New Zealand, particularly during the winter season. These export crops include taro, cassava, yams, squash, watermelons, breadfruit, zucchinis, eggplant, vanilla, chilies and beans (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2015). There is also potential to increase the volume of crops exported to other parts of the Pacific and to Japan, China and Korea (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2015).

Commercial livestock production is very limited, although most rural households keep livestock

⁷ No recent information on social protection programmes coverage in Tonga was found during the research for this Assessment.

Table 3: Total subsistence income by type and area (urban/rural) (in '000 Tongan pa'anga)

Income source	Urban	Rural	Total
Agriculture	2 504	15 606	18 110
Livestock	1 727	12 046	13 773
Fish and seafood	2 724	4 638	7 363
Homemade produce	156	904	1 060
Handicrafts	4 870	21 658	26 528
Total subsistence income	11 981	54 853	66 834

Source: Kingdom of Tonga, HIES Survey, 2009

(mainly poultry and pigs) for their own consumption. In 2009/10, Tongan imports of agriculture products (mainly vegetables and animal products) were valued at TOP 48.8 million (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016a).

Table 3 provides a breakdown of income generated by different forms of subsistence livelihoods in both urban and rural areas. Interestingly, it reveals that a high number of rural households depend on handicrafts as a source of income.

2.3.2 Fisheries and aquaculture

The 2015/16 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) reported that 87 percent of Tongan households do not engage in fishing activities and that, nationally, only 1 percent of household incomes are derived from fishing activities (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017b). On average, 12 percent of national household expenditure goes toward fish and seafood, although in Ongo Niua households expenditure is at 23 percent (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017b).

In total, 4.5 percent of households sell all or part of their catch, which is a decline from 11 percent reported in the 2009 Census (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017c). Reasons for low levels of household fishing activity could be overfishing of inshore areas (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2014) as well as the availability of fish for purchase at markets and roadside stalls, much of which is bycatch from licensed foreign vessels (Cass, 2017). Another reason for low engagement in fisheries activities may be access to cheap imported tinned

fish (tuna, mackerel, sardines), which tends to be lower priced and more easily available than fresh fish (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b).

Women are not involved in large-scale fisheries, but they are very active in gleaning activities along the coast for the purposes of auto-consumption and sale of surplus to the market. The Fisheries Sector Plan 2016–2021 includes a specific component on the management and development of coastal fisheries which includes “organisation of small-scale commercial fishers into groups and associations with registers, codes of practice and reporting obligations, including boat owners, gleaners (collectors) and **women fishers**, owners of fish fences, divers and fish buyers” (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b: 33, emphasis added).

Aquaculture can be an income-generation source for rural women. Aquaculture industries in the development stage include seaweed, pearls, clams, sea cucumber and milkfish.

Cyclones are a major challenge to aquaculture industries. TC Winston, for example, wiped out both seaweed and milkfish trials in 2016 (Cass, 2017).

The in-depth interviews with Ministry of Fisheries representatives for this Assessment revealed that out of 34 fishing licences, only two are held by women. Between one and three women in Vava'u were estimated to have aquaculture businesses, one of those being a fish fin business. Women were said

Table 4: Household purpose of fishing by region

Region	Total number of households	No fishing	Fishing for home consumption and social obligations	Fishing for sale	Fishing mainly for home consumption but some sale	Fishing mainly for sale but some home consumption
Tongatapu	12 953	11 865	647	73	189	179
Vava'u	2 715	2 177	388	16	93	41
Ha'apai	1 179	712	309	39	65	54
'Eua	885	776	60	1	22	26
Ongo Niua	273	174	82	0	13	4
Total	18 005	15 704	1 486	129	382	304
Percentage	100.0	87.2	8.25	0.7	2.1	1.7

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a

to be involved in fish processing and at the export facility, although no data was made available to support this statement. MOF representatives stated that MOF is supporting pearl farming operations in Vava'u and that some pearl farmers are women. When starting the pearl farming trial, MOF made a public call for applications from people wanting to try oyster farming. Women came forward and attended the training. MOF observed that women aquaculture farmers use their husband's registration to farm—probably for convenience and to save on fees—which obscures the data. To date, there were no analyses of the social or gender aspects of aquaculture to inform the work of the Ministry. Anecdotally, women were observed to be more skilful than men in aquaculture-related craft design, such as oyster pearl jewellery.

2.3.3 Forestry

Besides livestock, forestry was the main commercial agricultural activity of households in 2015, surpassing crop cultivation, fisheries and handicrafts (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.). In 2009, a National Forest Policy for Tonga was finalized in response to “an urgent need in Tonga to control the indiscriminate removal of forest stands and to

restore tree stocks” (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries, 2009). The Policy identified the expansion of agriculture was seen as the biggest threat to forests. The squash industry was given as an example, with vast amounts of land stripped of trees to introduce squash as an export crop. In a first for the Pacific, the Policy also acknowledged the important role of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries, 2009).

Women's groups, along with youth, school, church and village groups, were identified in the Forest Policy as key stakeholder groups with which to engage in order to achieve economies of scale by planting and maintaining trees communally at the village level rather than the level of individual farmers (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries, 2009).

Forestry as an occupation is not disaggregated from agriculture in the Census, nor is it captured as an income category in the HIES. This poses a challenge to determining the role of women in forestry and the economic impacts of forestry on women.



2.4 Human development

Tonga's human development index (HDI) value for 2017 was 0.726, placing Tonga in the high human development category and positioning it at 98 out of 189 countries and UN-recognized territories (United Nations Development Programme, 2018).⁸ The HDI value for women was 0.707, which is lower than it was for men, at 0.736. The Gender Inequality Index (GII), measured in the same year, was 0.416, positioning Tonga at 96 out of 189 countries and UN-recognized territories.⁹ The Gender Development Index (GDI) value was 0.960, positioning Tonga as a country with medium to high equality in HDI achievements between women and men (United Nations Development Programme, 2018).¹⁰

2.4.1 Health

Non-communicable diseases are a major health issue in Tonga, affecting not only the health sector but the overall development of the country. Tonga has some of the highest rates of obesity in the world. The 2012 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) revealed that 90.7 percent of Tongan adults were overweight and 67.6 percent obese and that 34.4 percent of the population was suffering from diabetes (Community, Secretariat of the Pacific, last accessed Dec. 2018). A 2014 study supported by the World Health Organization (Kingdom of Tonga, 2014) found that incidences of overweight and obesity were higher among Tongan women aged 25–64 years than Tongan men of the same age (94 percent of women and 87.3 percent of men were overweight and 77.6 percent women and 57.2 percent of men were obese). The incidence of diabetes increases with age, particularly for women: within the age group of 25–44 years, 24.5 percent of men and 29.4 percent of women had diabetes, while within the age group of 45–64 years, 40.7 percent of men and 56.9 percent of women had diabetes (Kingdom of Tonga, 2014).

Over a quarter of respondents aged 25–64 years (26.7 percent) reported smoking daily, with men more than three times likelier than women to use

tobacco (42.1 percent and 12.4 percent, respectively). Nearly a quarter of respondents aged 25–64 years (23.7 percent) had a lower than recommended level of physical activity, which was the case for twice the amount of women than men (31.7 percent and 15.1 percent, respectively). Over a quarter of respondents aged 25–64 years (27.6 percent) had hypertension, with similar overall rates for both women and men. However, the incidence of hypertension is significantly higher for men than women in the age group of 25–44 years (22.1 percent and 14.3 percent, respectively) and significantly higher for women than men in the age group of 45–64 (52.9 percent and 41.3 percent, respectively) (Kingdom of Tonga, 2014).

The total fertility rate in 2012 stood at 4.1 children per woman. It was higher in rural areas, with 4.2 children per woman, than in urban areas, with 3.6 children per woman. The utilization of any family planning methods by married women aged 15–49 was 34.7 percent in rural areas, as compared to 31.9 percent in urban areas. About a quarter of Tongan women aged 15–49 years (25.2 percent) had their family planning needs unmet (24 percent of rural women and 28.9 percent of urban woman) (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014). The coverage of antenatal care across Tonga, in both urban and rural areas, was 99 percent. In 57 percent of the cases, the antenatal care was provided by a doctor and in 42 percent of the cases, by a nurse or midwife. A large majority of pregnant women, 70 percent, received more than four antenatal visits (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014).

In 2012, the infant mortality rate stood at 14 deaths of children under one year of age per 1 000 live births.¹¹

2.4.2 Education and literacy

The 2016 Census reported that 94.5 percent of all children aged 5–14 years attended school. The highest attendance rate was in Ha'apai (95.7 percent) and the lowest in Ongo Niua (88.2 percent). The national rate for female attendance was slightly higher than that of males, at 94.8 percent and

⁸ The Human Development Index (HDI), published by UNDP, assesses progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

⁹ The Gender Inequality Index (GII), published by UNDP, reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions – reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity.

¹⁰ The Gender Development Index (GDI) is the ratio of the HDIs calculated separately for females and males using the same methodology as in the HDI.

¹¹ The infant mortality rate is the probability of dying before the first birthday. It is measured by the number of deaths under one year of age per 1 000 live births of children.

94.3 percent, respectively. The same trend was seen in all island groups except 'Eua, where 94.3 percent of females and 96.3 percent of males attended school. Education in Tonga is free and compulsory until the age of 14. The Census found that school attendance rates decreased rapidly after the age of 15, with 29 percent of those aged 15–19 not attending school on Census night (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

The Ministry of Education's 2013 Annual Report identified that there were 113 government primary schools and 19 missionary primary schools, comprising 86 percent and 14 percent of the country's primary schools, respectively (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013).¹²

Overall, women represented 70 percent of teachers at the primary level and 57 percent of teachers at the secondary level (United Nations Children's Fund, 2006).

A Red Cross centre in Tongatapu provides special education for physically and mentally handicapped children and another associated centre offers the same for adults. The government provides these with a small grant to assist with the delivery of services (United Nations Children's Fund, 2006). There are no similar services in the outer islands.

In 2016, the proportion of the population with tertiary qualifications was low, at only 10.8 percent of population. More women than men obtained tertiary-level qualification, at 11.8 percent and

9.8 percent, respectively). The greatest discrepancy by gender was observed at the vocational and technical level, with 8.7 percent of men and 6.9 percent of women obtaining qualifications at that level. At the primary and secondary levels, there were no or minimal observed gender differences (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

2.4.3 Labour force and employment

In 2016, the total labour force participation rate was 63.7 percent, with a participation rate of 71.2 percent for men and 56.7 percent for women (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). Among the main reasons for low participation of women in the labour force are home responsibilities and domestic duties, particularly for women in rural areas.

According to the 2016 Census, 9 693 or 30 percent of women aged over 15 years were working for pay or profit. About two-thirds of the labour force (6 345 or 65 percent) was employed in wage and salaried labour in the public and private sectors, and 2 723 or 28 percent were self-employed (producing goods or services for sale, including running a business without paid employees), mostly producing handicrafts for sale. About one in three employers were women (247 out of 710). The percentage of working women and men involved in unpaid work is nearly the same, at 29 percent of women compared with 25 percent of men. Women's share of those working for pay or profit was 39 percent.

The share of vulnerable employment¹³ out of total employment was about the same between men and

Table 5: Proportion of population aged 15 and above, by highest education attainment and sex

Level	Total	Female	Male
Primary (%)	5.1	5.1	5.1
Secondary (%)	75.8	75.7	76.0
Technical and vocational (%)	7.8	6.9	8.7
Tertiary (%)	10.8	11.8	9.8

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a

¹² This is the most recent available annual report of the Ministry of Education.

¹³ Vulnerable employment comprises own-account workers and contributing family workers. Both employment statuses have a lower likelihood of having formal work arrangements and are more likely to lack elements associated with decent employment, such as adequate social security and a voice at work (International Labour Organization, 1993).

Table 6: Tonga labour force, by gender and location

Indicator	Tonga	Tongatapu	Vava'u	Ha'apai	'Eua	Ongo Niu	Urban	Rural	Greater Nukualofa
Unemployment rate	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.2	1.4	0.9	1.4
Male	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.3	1.4	0.6	1.2
Female	1.4	1.8	0.9	0.4	0.1	0.0	1.5	1.4	1.6
Unemployment rate	34.8	31.2	46.5	42.1	45.9	24.2	23.3	38.1	24.7
Male	27.9	23.8	39.5	38.5	39.0	30.3	15.9	31.4	17.2
Female	42.9	39.9	54.4	46.3	54.8	16.7	31.9	46.1	33.4
Employment population ratio	36.6	38.1	29.5	36.5	30.9	43.0	43.2	34.5	42.2
Male	45.2	47.6	37.2	40.1	38.7	39.8	52.5	42.9	52.2
Female	28.4	29.2	22.3	32.8	23.1	46.7	34.4	26.6	32.8
Labour force participation rate	63.7	61.8	67.0	73.1	71.0	69.4	60.4	64.8	60.7
Male	71.2	69.5	74.0	77.6	80.1	72.2	66.9	72.5	67.9
Female	56.7	54.6	60.6	68.6	61.8	66.2	54.3	57.4	54.0
Not in labour force – not economically active									
Student (full and parttime)	9 309	7 144	1 173	447	446	99	2 359	6 950	3 612
Male	4 530	3 529	537	207	206	51	1 195	3 335	1 816
Female	4 779	3 615	636	240	240	48	1 164	3 615	1 796
Retired or too old	2 024	1 544	287	99	68	26	587	1 437	834
Male	947	740	129	36	27	15	273	674	391
Female	1 077	804	158	63	41	11	314	763	443
Physically/ mentally disabled	641	491	71	41	27	11	134	507	234
Male	378	291	39	26	15	7	87	291	150
Female	263	200	32	15	12	4	47	216	84
Home responsibilities or domestic duties	10 212	8 260	1 113	409	323	107	2 665	7 547	3 917
Male	2 472	1 965	283	140	41	43	723	1 749	972
Female	7 740	6 295	830	269	262	64	1 942	5 798	2 945

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a

women, with 31 percent of men and 32 percent of women either self-employed or working without pay in family businesses. Discrepancies by gender can be seen in unemployment rates, however. In 2016, 4 982 women or 26.8, of the total female population, reported that they were unemployed, compared to 7.6 percent of men unemployed.

Due to changes in the conceptual framework used to define work introduced in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, it is not possible to accurately show the evolution of the work force over time. However, two trends that can be seen are an increasing number of women working as employees or business owners and a decreasing number of those who are self-employed, e.g. producing goods for sale.

2.4.4 Basic infrastructure and sanitation

Access to Water

Overall, 88 percent of households have access to a piped water supply but only 10 percent use it as drinking water. The main sources of drinking water are water tanks (60 percent) and community sources and bottled water (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). During the Community Development Planning process led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, water quality emerged as a high priority for women, men and youth in many villages. Women are usually responsible for fetching water for drinking and cooking, which adds to the daily household labour burden.

Sanitation

Overall, 82 percent of households have flush toilets, 8 percent have manual toilets and 9 percent have pit toilets. Only 2 percent of the population shares a toilet with other households. Variations by region are striking. In Vava'u, 71 percent of households have flush toilets and 24 percent have pit toilets. In Ha'apai, 53 percent have flush toilets and 39 percent have pit toilets. In Eua, 77 percent have flush toilets and 15 percent have pit toilets. In Ongo Niua, 62 percent have flush toilets and 29 percent have pit toilets (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).

Energy

In 2014, 95.3 percent of the population had access to electricity (Asian Development Bank, 2016). It is to be noted that the 2016 Census did not report on access to electricity broadly but only in relation to energy for cooking (see Table 7).

The high proportion of households that use wood and coconut husk for cooking, especially outside of Tongatapu, may be a consequence of the cost of electricity and gas. Cooking over open fires, which is still quite prevalent outside of Tongatapu, has health repercussions, such as respiratory issues and glaucoma. Gathering fuel for cooking is usually the task of women, adding to women's household labour, which results in less time for economic activities or rest. Work is underway to increase access to solar energy as part of the Government's target to build "a resilient Tonga by 2035"

Table 7: Household main source of energy for cooking, by region

Outer Island	Total number of households	Electricity (%)	Propane gas (%)	Kerosene (%)	Solar power (%)	Wood and coconut husk (%)	Outside cooking area (%)
Tongatapu	12 953	11	72	0.4	0.1	16	19
Vava'u	2 715	15	56	0.3	0.9	28	35
Ha'apai	1 179	9	26	0.0	0.7	64	61
'Eua	885	3	38	0.1	0.1	59	50
Ongo Niua	273	0	12	0.4	1.0	86	55

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a

(Government of Tonga, 2016b), although the affordability of solar energy will remain a deciding factor in the spread of this technology.

Access to services

District and Town Officers that are part of local governments are responsible for coordinating between communities and governmental service providers. Most ministries make field visits to rural areas, but travel budgets are usually small, so the visits can be irregular. Some ministries have offices in regional centres, such as the MAFF offices in Vava'u and Ha'apai.

A Community Development Plan (CDP) process conducted on behalf of the Government by the Non-governmental Organization (NGO) Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation Tonga Trust (MORDI)¹⁴ over a five-year period (2012–2017) identified a range of problems not being addressed by governmental services. These included poor and expensive transportation services, roads needing repair, non-functional rural health services, lack of quality water supply and other concerns. The poor condition of roads was amongst the top priorities in the 'Eua and Niuas CDPs. Many farmers in 'Eua expressed concern about the state of the agricultural roads, which currently provide only dry-weather vehicle access to farmland and to allow crops to be brought to markets.

Access to markets

In the Niuas, access to markets is limited due to remoteness and intermittent and expensive shipping links. Niuatopu'tapu Island (NTT) has a wharf, but the channel through the reef is shallow, narrow and without navigation lights since the 2009 tsunami (Niua Development Committee and Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2015). There is no wharf at Niuafu'ou Island (NFO) and cargo unloading can be very dangerous at either low tide or in big seas (Niua Development Committee and Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2015). Consumables, medical supplies and health staff are supplied by boat, hence, these maritime connections are very important for Niuans. Shipping was cited in the Community Development Plan as the area in greatest need of management, along with improved infrastructure, solar installation and disaster risk management (Niua Development Committee and Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2015).

In the absence of freezer facilities, finding enough ice for transporting fish and loading the cargo from small boats into larger ships, which is a manual activity, were among the challenges identified by Tongan women.

In 'Eua, it was reported that crops grown on family farms are brought by women to Nuku'alofa for sale at the main market. The same is the case in Ha'apai, whereas in Vava'u, only men deal with crops for markets.

2.4.5 Gender equality and women's empowerment

Culture plays a significant part in shaping gender roles within Tongan society. Beliefs and values are also influenced by Christianity (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2007). While never colonized, Tonga has been heavily influenced since the 17th century by expatriates working in governmental advisory roles and as missionaries. As a result, Tonga became increasingly patriarchal, both in law and in practice (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2016). Traditional equality between women and men was eroded, though traces of matrilineality remain in parts of the culture such as the brother-sister relationship (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2016).

Under the *fahu* tradition, the sister (particularly the eldest sister) of a male is revered as the most highly ranked in the family structure and can only be superseded by her father's sister (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2007). The oldest sister has strong influence over the brother's wife when he marries and on how the children are brought up. While the *fahu* is the most highly ranked in her extended family, the most senior male of the extended family, the *'ulumotu'a*, has the highest power and is responsible for making the final decisions and distributing instructions to be carried out by family members (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2007). While the *fahu* tradition gives status to some women in the social sphere and on ceremonial occasions, it is the *'ulumotu'a* tradition that gives decision-making power to men.

Women and decision making

Decision-making mechanisms within the community and villages are largely dominated by men (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2007). These mechanisms are reinforced by both cultural and social norms.

¹⁴ MORDI, an NGO with significant rural presence, has established links through the Tonga Rural Innovation Project (TRIP) funded by IFAD.

The kava circle is regarded as the place where politics, economics and social issues are discussed.¹⁵ Men of all levels – senior government officials, nobility, workers and farmers – come together at the kava circle to debate information brought to the circle. Women do not have the same access to this information because it is not culturally acceptable for them to participate in the kava circle (Guttenbeil-Likiliki, 2007). Such gender-biased norms and perceptions obstruct women's engagement in politics and decision making, which is reflected in a low representation of women in local and national political spheres. Currently, there are only two women out of 30 members of parliament and 2 women in local government positions. In 2014, the legislative assembly held the first ever Practice Parliament for Women in Tonga in the lead-up to the first election for the 17 'open' seats. One of the main purposes of this initiative was to increase women's political participation and for women to contribute effectively at the highest level of decision making. This was an initiative supported by a range of development partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Decision-making mechanisms within villages remain largely dominated by men, and it was not until the 2004 local government election that Tonga had its first woman elected as town officer. More recently, only two women were elected to local government – to district officer and town officer positions – despite 18 women standing for office (Ministry of Information and Communications).

Violence against women

A study of prevalence of family and sexual violence conducted in 2009 found that, overall, more than three out of four women (77 percent) in Tonga have experienced physical or sexual violence in their life by either a partner or non-partner (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012). One in three women that are or have been in a relationship have experienced physical violence through it. Three-quarters of abused women never sought help from formal services or people in authority (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

Women in the outer islands and women with lower education levels were more likely to report physical violence compared to more educated women

and/or women in Tongatapu. Despite different levels of reporting, rates of experience of sexual partner violence did not differ much by geographical area or educational level of the respondent (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012). However, manifestations of partner violence were relatively more severe in Tongatapu compared to the other islands (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

Additionally, more than two out of every three women (68 percent) reported experiencing physical violence by someone other than a partner from the age of 15 onward. Perpetrators were, in most cases, fathers and teachers (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

Perceptions of the causes of domestic violence in Tongatapu included shifting values of extended family life; shifting nature of kinship relations; extra-marital affairs; alcohol; and economic hardship (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012). In Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua, perceptions of causes included shifting values of extended family life, sometimes involving change in location; economic factors that drive people to separate from their families, such as migration for work; having children outside of marriage; and gender roles and power dynamics between men and women in Tongan society (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

The study found that a majority of women believe that men are the decision makers in the family, that women have to obey their husbands and that they cannot refuse sex. Such findings were consistent for all geographical regions and age groups and were interpreted as an indication that women generally accept their subordinate status vis-à-vis men within the marital relationship (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

The study also found that a portion of women believe that a man has the right to beat his wife under some circumstances, such as not completing housework (7 percent); disobedience (17 percent); refusing sex (8 percent); a woman asking about her partner's girlfriends (11 percent); suspicion of unfaithfulness (33 percent); proven unfaithfulness (56 percent); and inability to become pregnant (3 percent) (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

¹⁵ Kava is a ceremonial drink that only men are allowed to consume, although women who serve it may be present. Important occasions such as weddings, funerals, and church-related functions are marked by drinking kava.



Acceptance of male dominance was concluded to be widespread in Tongan society (Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc., 2012).

The only Tongan shelter for women and children In Nuku'alofa currently operates. The shelter is managed by the Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC), which also provides counselling services, legal advice and medical attention. In 2017, WCCC initiated a limited mobile counselling service for the outer islands and more recently started a 24/7 telephone help line, which receives many calls from women in the outer islands. There are few other services for women and children experiencing family violence outside of Tongatapu. The Tonga National Centre for Women and Children (TNCWC) also provides counselling and undertakes public awareness raising. In 2018, the TNCWC changed its operational focus to supporting survivors wishing to pursue economic independence. Initially, the service has been only available in Tongatapu.

Since the above-mentioned 2009 study, the situation regarding gender-based violence does not appear to have improved, although more women are reporting incidences of such violence to the authorities. This is the result of awareness-raising work conducted by several NGOs. Additionally, the Family Protection Act (FPA) 2013 came into force in 2014, with an allocation of TOP 100 000 (about USD 40 000) by the Government for the implementation of activities under the Act.

While there has not been significant progress on implementation to date, implementation efforts are being strengthened through the Access to Justice Programme launched in 2017 and supported by SPC, the UN Women Eliminating Violence Against Women programme launched in 2018 and the Families Free of Violence programme launched in 2018 and funded by Pacific Women in partnership with the Australian Government and the Australian Federal Police (since the programme includes provision of police training).

3

POLICY, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT



3.1 Commitments to gender equality

The Government of Tonga has committed itself to advancing gender equality through the endorsement of a variety of international and regional conventions and agreements.

3.1.1 International commitments

Tonga has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995) and is a member of the International Labour Organization, having joined in 2016. It has also endorsed several major international development agreements, including the The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014), the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) and the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women. However, Tonga is one of only two Pacific countries that have not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

the SAMOA Pathway promotes gender equality, women's empowerment, and the full realization of human rights of women and girls and makes recommendations to states for the elimination all forms of discrimination against women and girls, the strengthening women's economic empowerment, the ending all forms of violence against women, measures to ensure women's full, equal and effective participation at all levels of decision making, and the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (United Nations General Assembly, 2014).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are significant for rural women in Tonga because they respond to different facets of their lives and provide high-level guidance and support to the Tongan Government in addressing issues of critical importance to them. Among the many challenges they face, rural women in Tonga have limited access to health services and information on their rights to live lives free from violence, are up against rigid discriminatory beliefs about domestic roles and responsibilities, and face constraints in participating in the economy and decision making. The SDGs provide a framework for policy development and indicators for monitoring progress and function as an advocacy tool for development agencies and civil society groups. The Government of Tonga regularly attends the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of

Women (CSW). The negotiated agreed conclusions provide recommendations to support progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the SDGs and overall human rights of women and girls. The priority theme of the 62nd session of CSW held in 2018 was on the empowerment of rural women and girls, and the agreed conclusions make recommendations relevant to improving the lives of Tongan women and girls living in the rural areas, including supporting their roles in agriculture and fisheries (UN Women, 2018).

3.1.2 Regional gender equality agreements

Tonga has endorsed key regional agreements on gender equality, more specifically, the Pacific Platform for Action (1994, 2004, 2017) and the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (2012). These regional agreements identify priorities for the region and provide guidance to countries in developing their own national gender policies, strategies, plans and programmes.

The Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (PPA) was the first regional charter on gender equality endorsed by 22 Pacific Islands countries and territories in 1994. It included 13 critical areas mirroring the critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. It was revised in 2004 and the priority areas were clustered into four strategic themes: 1) mechanisms to promote the advancement of women; 2) women's legal and human rights; 3) women's access to services; and 4) women's economic empowerment. The PPA was once more reviewed in 2015 and reformulated around strategic outcomes for accelerating progress towards gender equality, as committed by the Pacific governments through the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and the SDGs. The name of the PPA also changed slightly to better reflect the importance of promoting human rights – to the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030. The revised PPA is focussed on means of implementation around knowledge generation and information sharing, gender mainstreaming, partnerships, investments and accountability.

The triennial conferences of Pacific Women and Ministers for Women's Meetings are regional conferences convened by SPC. Senior officials responsible for women's affairs from Pacific Island governments, NGO representatives, development partners, researchers and academics meet to

review progress, discuss challenges and make recommendations to further advance gender equality across the region. Through the triennial outcomes document, countries identify priorities for advancing gender equality.

The Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration was endorsed by the Forum Leaders in 2012 and renewed the involved countries' commitments to gender equality while identifying five priorities: 1) gender-responsive policies and programmes; 2) leadership and decision making; 3) women's economic empowerment; 4) ending violence against women; and 5) health and education.

3.1.3 National commitments

At the national level, the Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015–2025 (TSDF II) has seven national outcomes, the third of which is “a more inclusive, sustainable and empowering human development with gender equality” (Government of Tonga, 2015). This is to be achieved by “implementing the government's gender development policy and ensuring a more balanced and effective engagement by both men and women in decision-making and social, economic and political institutions” (Government of Tonga, 2015). The collection of sex-disaggregated data is intended to inform the implementation progress of the TSDF II. UNDP has supported the Tongan Government in aligning TSDF II with the SDGs. A monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF) is said to have been drafted but was not available for review during for this Assessment.

The first National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGAD) came into effect in 2000. The policy was revised in 2014 and entitled the Revised National Policy on Gender and Development (RNPGAD) 2014–2018¹⁶ and was accompanied with an implementation plan and a MEF. The RNPGAD had six outcome areas: i) an enabling familial and social environment for gender equality; ii) equitable access to economic assets and employment; iii) increased women's leadership and equitable political representation; iv) creation of equal conditions to respond to natural disasters and climate change; v) increased focus on addressing the additional vulnerability experienced by female-headed households, women with disabilities and women in rural areas, especially in the outer islands; and vi) an enabling environment for mainstreaming gender across government policies, programmes and services.

3.2 Assessment of the institutional enabling environment

3.2.1 Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) has nine divisions but only two are discussed here due to their specific relevance to rural development and gender equality for rural women. An important omission is the Division of Social Protection and Disability, which was not consulted due to unavailability in the time frame of the Assessment.

Information is not available on the number of staff employed by MIA, but four divisions are headed by women.

The 2016 Climate Financing and Risk Governance Assessment (CFRGA) reported that Tonga's sub-national policy framework was undergoing a major reform initiative led by MIA through what was said to be a 'bottom-up' development planning process to improve government systems at the local government (district and village) level in a community needs-responsive manner (Government of Tonga, 2016a).

Women's Affairs Division

The Women's Affairs Division (WAD) is the national machinery for women's affairs and receives only 0.16 percent of the national budget. Most of WAD's budget is for salaries and recurrent costs, but the Division is understaffed and under-resourced. Project funds are mostly sourced from donors. WAD has a Director and five other staff members, all of whom are women. There is one project staff member, a MEF Officer, a policy/legislation officer and a coordinator for implementation of the Family Protection Act 2013. These positions are funded by the Government of Australia's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) programme.

WAD is reasonably well situated inside MIA, after having been based in the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Office prior. Strategically, the ideal place for a national women's machinery is the Prime Minister's Office because the work cuts across the whole of the Government. However, as part of MIA, WAD is connected to social vulnerability portfolios, including for disability and youth, and to the local government systems for reaching isolated and/or rural communities with information, consultations and training.

¹⁶ For a recent review of progress, please refer to: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division. 2019. Gender equality: Where do we stand? The Kingdom of Tonga.

WAD has an overall mandate to support the mainstreaming of gender issues across the Government. The mandate comes from the RNPGAD (2014–2018), specifically its outcome number six on an “enabling environment for mainstreaming gender across government policies, programs and services.”

At the time that the Cabinet approved the RNPGAD, it also revised the mandate of the National Advisory Committee on Gender and Development (NACGAD). The Advisory Committee is made up of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of relevant ministries and is chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs. Civil society is represented by Langafonua ‘a Fafine Tonga (National Council of Women), Civil Society Forum Tonga and Tonga National Youth Congress. The NACGAD is charged with implementation of the RNPGAD. The WAD is the secretariat. NACGAD is also responsible for annual reporting of progress to the Cabinet. NACGAD is supposed to meet quarterly but, as years have passed, it meets increasingly less frequently, the last meeting to date being in June 2016. IN recent years there have been five different MIA Ministers and two changes of CEO, which has contributed to the lack of high-level focus on the Gender Policy. WAD sees its role as coordinating gender mainstreaming through the ministries and civil society organizations represented on NACGAD and beyond.

Since 2014, WAD has conducted numerous community seminars around the country on the contents of the Gender Policy and the contents of the Family Protection Act. While it is good for communities to be aware of the information, more emphasis needs to be directed towards socializing the Policy with the ministries.

WAD receives mainstreaming technical support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Pacific Women programme and from SPC. Technical support in other areas is provided on an ad hoc basis, for instance, UNDP’s assistance in training of women candidates for elections. Four gender programming trainings for public service officials are due to be delivered by mid-2019. Senior staff of the Public Service Commission (PSC), Ministry Finance and National Planning and the justice sector are likely to be targeted for the first training.

WAD is also the secretariat for the Family Protection Advisory Council, responsible for implementing the Family Protection Act 2013. UN Women provides technical support in this area. Progress has been slow

and sex-disaggregated data collection has been limited because of weak knowledge-management systems in most of the ministries. Most qualitative and quantitative sex-disaggregated data is collected by local NGOs that provide services for the elimination of violence against women. In the 2017/18 Budget Estimate, WAD received about TOP 100 000 as seeding funding for the FPA trust fund. The purpose of the trust fund is to distribute small grants to stakeholder ministries and NGOs for projects aimed at achieving the FPA. While the amount of funding is small, it demonstrates a commitment by the Government to make progress on achieving the goals of the FPA and eliminating violence against women.

WAD works through local government to strengthen economic livelihoods of women, mostly through handicrafts, and works closely with village women’s committees. WAD has a register of women’s handicraft groups and supports the groups in various ways, including through attendance of trade fairs (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program, 2016).

Table 8 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the MIA and its Women’s Affairs Division.

Community Development Division

Formerly the Division of Local Level Government and Community Development, this division’s title was shortened in the past year to the Community Development Division, although there is still a budget allocation for local governance-related recurrent costs. TOP 2 million (35 percent) is provided by donors in the form of grants or as technical support. Much of this is for the UNDP Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP) and some is for implementation of Community Development Plans (CDPs).

The Community Development Division (CDD) has four staff members (three women and one man) and the director is a woman. The assistant secretary (a man) is a gender champion. The Division joins with WAD and Corporate Services to share costs for ‘16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence’ activities in villages.

A CDD representative highlighted during the CGA-ARS consultations that gender is not integrated into divisional policies or strategies. However, the UNDP PRRP programme, delivered by the Division, mainstreams

Table 8: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Women's Affairs Division for advancing gender equality¹⁷

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of the National Gender Policy and WAD demonstrates the Government's commitment to gender equality. • RNPAGAD's outcome 6 represents the Government's commitment to gender mainstreaming across the governmental system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has not yet ratified CEDAW, which obstructs the work of MIA/WAD and the Government as a whole. • WAD is located in a social welfare-focused line ministry rather than within a central agency like the Prime Minister's Office or the Ministry of Finance. This limits the authority, reach and effectiveness of WAD and inhibits broader gender mainstreaming efforts. • The Government's NACGAD does not consistently fulfil its role of driving gender mainstreaming. • Frequent changes of MIA Ministers disrupt progress on gender mainstreaming.
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three WAD staff members have roles linked to implementation of the National Gender Policy, but progress is inhibited by lack of gender focal points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low staff numbers, limited budget and competing priorities create challenges for effective management of WAD's mandate.
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAD provides semi-annual reports to donors based on activities completed during the period and semi-annual reports to MIA that sometimes outline progress with implementation of the Gender Policy. • WAD has a MEF to guide the collection of information to track progress on the Gender Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAD is often unaware of the gender mainstreaming work of other ministries and struggles to collect information for monitoring and evaluation. Consequently, its coordination role is compromised.
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAD staff has some capacity to address gender inclusion and receives sporadic support from external technical advisers; one staff position is dedicated to gender mainstreaming work. • WAD collaborates with NGOs on advancing gender issues, e.g. training of women candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff lacks skills for gender analysis of issues across sectors and lacks the experience required to influence transformational change or facilitate 'whole of government' mainstreaming. • MIA/WAD does not have a gender focal point for gender mainstreaming.
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small budget is available to support FPA-related activities. • A small project budget exists for some of the work required to implement the RNPAGAD, mostly for women's economic empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operational budget of WAD is low and restricts implementation of cross-sector activities. Budgets for staffing are also low and limit WAD's ability to advocate for and achieve coordination of the stated outcomes of the National Gender Policy. • Limited donor support is available.

¹⁷ Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with the WAD representatives and the review of relevant documents.

gender, and the representative expressed support of gender mainstreaming across all MIA divisions.

Between 2012 and 2017, the NGO Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation Tonga Trust (MORDI) and local governments developed 136 CDPs across the country. The work was financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Tongan Government. District and Town Officers played an important role in mobilizing communities during the consultation stage, and there was a requirement that 80 percent of each community must be present to certify what was written into the plan (Pacific Islands Report, 2016). Separate consultations were held with women, men and youth. Many of the priorities between groups were similar and of a practical nature, such as access to quality water and fencing of livestock. Gender training was provided to the 12 facilitators (seven women and five men) of the CDP information gathering process. The CDPs were developed into island development plan to guide funding allocations. In 2017, IFAD committed additional funding (Pacific Islands Report, 2016) for the implementation of the plans through MORDI, with assistance from local governments.

Two Island Developments Plans were viewed for this Assessment, those of 'Eua and the Niuas. Of 52 people involved in consolidating the 'Eua plan, only 11 (21 percent) were women. Ten of those were public servants, mostly from Nuku'alofa, and the eleventh was from the tourism private sector. CDP information fed into the planning process. The only mention of gender in the island development plan for 'Eua is in relation to gender and social inclusion being built into the community consultation tools. There is no discussion on the different impacts of the plan's priorities on women and men or on vulnerable populations. The island development plan for the Niuas included 35 people in the consultations, of which 15 (43 percent) were women from the Government, NGOs and donor groups. There was no discussion on gender or disability, and vulnerability was only discussed in relation to the environment. Mention was made of training women on producing non-traditional handicrafts to meet market demand. The effort made to consult with women and vulnerable groups at the CDP stage was not carried through to the next level up for the Island Development Plans.

The Community Development Division (CDD) works with village women's committees. Recently, a funding agreement was signed between the Division, MORDI

and Live and Learn Environmental Education (LLEE) to provide new toilets to 26 households, replacing pit toilets. The village women's committee is responsible for implementation. Women's committees are considered to be a driving force behind development. Nonetheless, general village committees and councils are acknowledged to still be dominated by men and, as the community consultations found, neither women nor youth are represented in Village Development Committees.

Since the CDPs were completed, 166 projects have been implemented by village committees, with support from MORDI and LLEE. Commercial agriculture has been a focus for women, along with handicrafts, vanilla production and sandalwood planting. In-kind contributions have been made through an IFAD programme delivered by MORDI for planting food crops, seedlings and forests.

The Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP) is a regional programme funded by the Australian Government, which commenced in 2012. It provides assistance to support and identify existing and new opportunities within evolving national climate change and disaster risk management (CCDRM) processes (Pacific Risk Resilience Programme, 2015). PRRP primarily operates from the Community Development Division but works across the Government where relevant. For instance, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP) is supported to build capacity to improve access to and manage global climate change and disaster funds through the Climate Financing and Risk Governance Assessment (CFRGA) process. This includes the integration of climate change and disaster risk in national corporate planning so that CCDRM and gender and social inclusion (GSI) considerations are a prerequisite for annual funding approval (Pacific Risk Resilience Programme, 2015). Capacity is being developed across sectors to ensure that risk is integrated across plans, budgets and processes.

PRRP addresses GSI so that the different needs and strengths of men and women and other groups (including people with disabilities, youth and the elderly) are integrated into CCDRM. This approach acknowledges that increasing the participation of different social groups, and accounting for traditional knowledge and governance systems, results in better protection for communities and increases national capacities for resilience (Pacific Risk Resilience Programme, 2015). This involves working with partners

Table 9: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Community Development Division for advancing gender equality¹⁸

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assistant permanent secretary is a gender champion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government has not yet ratified CEDAW, which obstructs the work of MIA/CDD and the Government as a whole. Community Development Plans capture women's immediate needs but not longer-term, more strategic needs. Village decision-making bodies are dominated by men (social norms tolerated). Gender is not mainstreamed in core policies and plans.
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender indicators are included in job descriptions. The Division participates in gender awareness activities, such as the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender issues are not discussed at staff meetings. There is a perception of there being no barriers or challenges for women in community development.
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The donor-funded Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP) collects sex-disaggregated data and monitors gender progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No divisional gender mainstreaming is in place.
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a gender adviser for PRRP (funded by UNDP). The PRRP integrates gender. CDP consultations are held with women, men and youth (driven by an NGO partner). The Division works with village women's groups to deliver services, e.g. improved sanitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff lacks skills for gender analysis, strategic gender programming and collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data. Town and District Officers lack skills for identifying different impacts experienced by women and men. MIA/CDD does not have a gender focal point for gender mainstreaming.
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PRRP is working with MOF on integrating CDDRM and gender and social inclusion in corporate plans and for annual funding approval. Gender indicators are present in the corporate plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited budget for the implementation of gender activities.

¹⁸ Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with CDD representatives and the review of relevant documents.

to build national capacity for the integration of risk into GSI institutions, as well as management of GSI issues across sectors.

Table 9 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the Community Development Division.

3.2.2 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests

Agriculture, food and forests are combined into one ministry. Until 2016, fisheries were included as well too but then became an independent ministry. In the 2017/18 Budget Estimate, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests (MAFF) was budgeted to receive TOP 17 499 000, or 3 percent of the national budget (Government of Tonga, 2017a). TOP 5 355 900 was available for programming and TOP 556 900 was available for grants and transfers, funded by donors. The Government's contribution is absorbed by salaries and other core costs.

The budget is not gender-disaggregated and there is no specific gender budget line. Notably, there is a Women's Section of Extension Services, although its specific budget was not identifiable during the CGA-ARS process. MAFF's extension services department is well positioned to advance gender equality in communities because of its outreach to

all districts. However, currently the focus is on larger-scale farming for men and subsistence farming for women. Food production is a family activity, with even children involved at peak times, but the primary recipients of technical support are predominantly men.

In 2015, nearly half of MAFF employees (43 percent, or 79 out of 182) were women. The technical divisions in Nuku'alofa employed considerably more men, with the exception of extension services, which include the women's section. The lack of women in MAFF's technical divisions may reflect the stereotyping of women as being better suited for administrative roles and/or it may reflect the lack of women training in technical areas such as forestry. In 2015, the CEO of MAFF was a woman.

At the time of the preparation of this Assessment, the CEO of MAFF was a man. While current staff numbers were not available, the 2014 Corporate Plan identified understaffing, lack of trained staff, poor staff performance, staff retention and staff capacity building as barriers to the effectiveness of the Ministry (Ministry of Agriculture & Food, Forests and Fisheries, 2014).

The extension services and livestock divisions conduct combined village extension through Town and District Offices. There are eight female and seven male extension officers. Female extension officers always

Table 10: Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests staffing by division and sex in 2015

Division	Total	Women	Men
Corporate services	30	20	10
Livestock	13	2	11
Research and information	25	8	17
Forestry	11	2	9
Extension and women's section	29	14	15
Quarantine and quality management	21	9	12
Outer islands	53	24	29
Total	182	79	103

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries *et al.*, 2015

go to villages with a male officer in order to be taken seriously. There has never been an assessment of the outcome of extension services, so staff is not fully aware of problems, or whether their programmes are effective. The 2014 Corporate Plan noted the lack of a working system for proper maintenance of records of services provided and the effects of advice given. Crop surveys are conducted annually, looking at household food security and where improvements need to be made. The raw data is given to corporate services for inclusion in MAFF reports. There is no disaggregated data on crops grown by men and those grown by women. This was not considered necessary because women do not have access to larger plots of land. Farming activities by widows were raised in discussions but dismissed as irrelevant. In some circumstances, widows can inherit bush land from their deceased husband and, anecdotally, some are known to farm the bush land that is otherwise farmed by men.

Livestock

The 2016–2020 Tonga Agricultural Sector Plan (TASP) reported that most Tongan households keep livestock, although productivity is very low, and cattle in particular suffers from inadequate supplies of feed and water (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forests and Fisheries, 2016). Commercial livestock operations were few, consisting mainly of egg and small-scale pig production for local sale (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forests and Fisheries, 2016). Livestock is mostly for home consumption or gifted as part of social obligations (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forests and Fisheries, 2016). Technical support is provided to male farmers mostly for larger animals, such as pigs, or cattle, sheep and goats where these exist. Women are excluded from any training or information sharing.

The Livestock Division engages with rural women farmers through a nutrition programme funded by the Ministry of Health aimed at improving household nutrition and encouraging consumption of local food. Within this program, specially chickens and ducks (and their eggs) are distributed to rural women for household food production, not for breeding or income generation.

By excluding women from general training, the Livestock Division appears to be overlooking the role rural women play in animal farming. If training is provided to men farmers and the knowledge is not passed on to women in the village, the outcomes will not be as effective. At a time of drought recovery and

adaptation to climate change, both women and men will need to be fully informed on measures to improve livestock production outcomes.

Food Division

Rural poverty, rural out-migration and ageing of the rural population, together with the impacts of extreme weather events, are considered the main factors affecting Tonga's food security (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016a). Rural women play critical roles in achieving the pillars of food security – availability, access, utilization and stability – throughout the agricultural value chain, from production on the family plot to food preparation to distribution within the household (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Women's roles are usually undervalued and limited by lack of access to resources, services, and labour market opportunities (Asian Development Bank, 2013). In Tonga, women and men have culturally defined roles in principle, although in practice women's roles change to meet needs. The lack of acknowledgement by authorities of the full scopes of roles played by women in agriculture and food production could undermine achievement of food and nutrition security (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Mainstreaming gender in project design, implementation and evaluation is required to be sure that results meet the priorities expressed by women and men (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

A draft Tonga Framework for Action on Food Security (TFAFS) 2015–2020 was released for consultation in 2014 by the then Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFFF). The TFAFS aims to harmonize approaches to address both immediate and longer-term food security issues in Tonga (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.). A multi-sectorial and multi-partnership approach is a guiding principle. Sectors identified included agriculture, education, health, trade, industry and infrastructure, with implementation called for at the household, community, national, regional and international levels (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.).

There are six guiding principles of the TFAFS. The second one is “an equity and gender-based approach” to focus actions and investments on more vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, especially women, youth and children (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.). The strategy acknowledges the vulnerability to food insecurity of communities and households with limited resources, including land, income and transportation (Ministry of



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Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.). The TFAFS states equity and gender-based right to food principles need to be in the design and implementation of food security strategies, policies and programmes.

There are currently no gender indicators in the MEF attached to the TFAFS, so there is a risk that the gender-related guiding principles could be ignored. That said, a priority action for strengthening food security information systems is to identify key indicators, including special and specific indicators (vulnerable, poverty, children and women) appropriate for monitoring and evaluation of national food security activities, outputs and policies (Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.). It will be crucial that this action receive full attention. A gender action plan would be a useful addition. The status of the report is unknown.

Opportunities should be sought to include a gender mainstreaming approach to guide all food security stakeholders, be they government, private sector or civil society, so that vulnerability can be properly addressed.

Forests

A management plan for the Forests and Tree Resources of Tonga was produced in 2017 (Government of Tonga, 2017b). It contains no mention of women's roles in forestry management or the gendered impacts of forestry and tree management.¹⁹ The 2014 Corporate Plan identified Forestry's challenges as: a poor legislative, policy and strategy environment; understaffing and lack of qualified staff; worn out nursery shade and watering systems; shortages of seeds and planting materials; insufficient budget allocation; lack of forestry extension services, and lack of information and data, among others (Ministry of Agriculture & Food, Forests and Fisheries, 2014).

MAFF's enabling environment for gender equality

In conclusion, women's potential to contribute to the economy, beyond the household, is diminished by lack of awareness of what some women actually do, for example, farming fruit and vegetables on the family bush land. As the village visits conducted for this Assessment have shown, women are more active in farming than ever before, and in some cases, equally

as active as men. Furthermore, if the husband joins a seasonal work programme overseas, the wife takes on all the farming. SPC's 2012 gender stocktake found that support for women was confined to home industries (Pacific Community, 2012), and little has changed in recent years.

A challenge for MAFF that emerged from this Assessment was the belief that men are the farmers so the impacts of drought, for instance, do not need to be gender-differentiated.

As one Ministry official expressed, having gender technical advice is something new and might take time for the Ministry to accept. Nonetheless, the Government of Tonga has committed to gender mainstreaming and eventually ministries like MAFF will be expected to respond. Considerable support will be required to reorient the culture of the organization towards gender awareness and to open communication both horizontally and vertically toward such ends.

A new discussion is required that includes a cost-benefit analysis of boosting key ministries in the short term to contribute to strengthening the economy to the point where the government can at least maintain adequate core costs to function effectively, and eventually maintain all costs, without budget support. Of course, performance management will need to be part of the discussion. The Public Service Commission is in the process of rolling out a performance management programme, which will be important for making progress on the government's economic objectives.

Table 11 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within MAFF.

3.2.3 Ministry of Fisheries

As of February 2018, there were 61 Ministry of Fisheries (MOF) staff, of which 27, or 44 percent, were women. Among MOF's four Deputy CEOs, one was a woman. At the Principal Programme Officer level, there two women and one man.²⁰ Women are welcome to apply for positions at MOF and there is a reasonable balance of roles by gender, except for Fisheries Officers, all of whom are men. Women with fisheries qualifications and experience are in demand around the region,

¹⁹ This is particularly disappointing as the management plan is a recent document to which a regional agency provided technical support, including on gendered aspects of forests and tree resources.

²⁰ This information was provided by the Ministry of Fisheries during the consultation process for this Assessment.

Table 11: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests for advancing gender equality²¹

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Tonga Framework for Action on Food Security 2015–2020 has gender equity as a guiding principle. • Women were consulted for the Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan 2016–2020 in the design phase and the Plan acknowledges the insufficient recognition of the indirect roles of women in Tonga's agriculture sector. • Extension Services has a Women's Section that works with village women's committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a general lack of acknowledgement by the leadership of the importance of gender equality, rural women's empowerment and women's and men's different roles in agriculture, including livestock, food security and forestry. • Support for women farmers focuses on subsistence farming and handicrafts only.
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no apparent barriers to employing and promoting women. • Senior staff are open to gender training for all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender champions and gender focal points are non-existent. • Gender is not discussed at staff meetings. There is a general perception that there are no gender issues in agriculture because only men are farmers. • A forest and tree management plan finalized in 2017 is gender-blind.
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no collection of sex-disaggregated data. • There is no evidence of accountability mechanisms.
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence of technical capacity to address gender issues. • Staff lacks skills for gender analysis, strategic gender programming and collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no budget allocation for gender mainstreaming and empowerment of rural women in agriculture.

²¹ Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with MAFF representatives and the review of relevant documents.

making it challenging to have a balanced workforce at the senior level. Selection panels were reported to be made up of both men and women.

There appears to be receptivity towards being more gender-inclusive at the operations level of MOF, but gender is generally not considered relevant in policies or strategies, such as the recently drafted National Fisheries Policy. The Policy is largely gender-blind, albeit with the term 'fishermen' used multiple times. In this respect, the Policy is inconsistent with the Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan 2016–2024, which sees women as integral to the sector's success. Similarly, the Marine Aquarium Fishery Management and Development Plan 2017–2019 does not address gender dynamics or women's roles.

The Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan (TFSP) 2016–2024 (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b) states that its primary stakeholders, due to their numbers, poverty levels and vulnerability, are coastal fishing communities, particularly women. It acknowledges that women have virtually no role in large-scale fisheries and proposes that the Special Management Area (SMA) process, discussed below, could undertake specific initiatives to empower women in the fisheries sector. One proposal cited is leadership training for women that is sensitive to the shifting of the traditional roles of women in fisheries (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b). Such a proposal is in keeping with best practices, as long as both women and men receive training of this nature. Traditional roles of women (and men) are expressions of gendered social norms, including women's unequal burdens of reproductive, domestic and community work.

The TFSP acknowledges the role of women fishers in gathering giant clams, octopus and cockles as part of the subsistence diet, noting that in some areas women account for over 75 percent of invertebrate harvesters (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b). It proposes that attention could also be directed to improving the role of women in fisheries businesses. Indeed, included under Goal 1 of the TFSP is increased incomes for sector workers, including women and outer island communities (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b). The TFSP also clearly states the intention for women to be involved in governance groups overseeing the Plan's implementation by MOF.

Each division of MOF collects its own data, which is then combined into MOF's annual report.

Sex-disaggregation of data is not required for internal purposes and no training on gender and statistics could be recalled during the in-depth consultations held for this Assessment. The most recent annual report available is from 2012.

Overall, there is a general impression among staff at senior levels that there are no gender issues in Tonga or in the fisheries sector in particular.

Special Management Areas

Special Management Areas (SMAs) for coastal communities are a response to declining coastal fisheries resources, which communities rely on for food and income. Communities take the leading role in managing their coastal fisheries resources with assistance from the MOF. Coastal community management committees and coastal community management plans are developed to assist in their management role.

The SMA process incorporates many of elements of gender mainstreaming. Monthly and quarterly social and economic surveys are conducted, which collect sex-disaggregated data and identify the different needs of women and men.²² The purpose is to monitor improvements in livelihoods in the coastal villages in the SMA programme and the level of involvement of women in the fisheries activities. Community councils, of which women comprise about 40 percent of membership, oversee the surveying process. Both men and women staff carry out the surveys, although they do not receive any specific gender training. A significant expansion of the SMA network is planned, with a target of more than 100 SMA communities by 2025, up from 28 at the end of 2017 (Ministry of Fisheries, 2018).

Eleven SMA communities were in place and another 32 were on the waiting list in various parts of the country, including the outer islands, at the time of a FAO review in 2017 (Gillet, 2017). The review found staff to be effective, with good community interaction skills, but they were still struggling to keep up with the workload. The review recommended a much larger budgetary allocation to make progress with the 32 wait-listed communities, while continuing support for the 11 established communities. Overall, the review was overwhelmingly positive about the impacts of SMAs, but recommendations were made to enhance the SMA unit in the MOF and to improve gender

²² Past surveys were not available for review for this Assessment.

Table 12: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Ministry of Fisheries for advancing gender equality²³

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan (TSFP) 2016–2024 acknowledges women as integral for the successful implementation of the Plan. • In the roll-out of Special Management Areas (SMAs), the importance of including women at every level, including in decision making, has been acknowledged. • The MOF's pearl farming project includes women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other MOF policies and strategies are not consistent with the TSFP and are gender-blind. The National Fisheries Policy acknowledges fishermen but ignores women.
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOF representatives have indicated receptivity towards being more gender-inclusive at the operational level. • Gender training for staff would be welcomed, including in gender and statistics. • There is no apparent discrimination in employment practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The belief is held by some in senior management that there are no gender issues in Tonga. • Gender is generally not considered relevant in policies or strategies by senior management, despite gender commitments in the TSFP. • Gender champions and gender focal points are non-existent. • Gender impacts are not discussed at staff meetings.
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA surveys collect sex-disaggregated data and use survey results to measure impacts on livelihoods. • MOF's pearl farming project collects sex-disaggregated data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no overall collection of sex-disaggregated data. • The Ministry's MEF appears to be weak and does not include gender indicators.
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff lack skills for gender analysis and gender-sensitive programming across sectors. • Staff lacks skills for collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coastal Fisheries Section is understaffed and under-funded to achieve planned SMA expansion. • There is no budget allocation for gender mainstreaming and empowerment of rural women in agriculture.

²³ Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with MOF representatives and the review of relevant documents.

balance issues. Ensuring the involvement of women fishers was advocated, as was community leadership training, including for youth and women's group leaders. These recommendations imply that women were not being involved in the manner intended, which could undermine the success of the SMA process. All the recommendations of the FAO review have been taken up in the National Fisheries Policy, but there is no mention of women in the Policy.

In conclusion, opportunities for women exist in fisheries, as long as the MOF is willing to implement the TFSP as intended and to undertake specific initiatives to empower women in fisheries to increase the sustainable shared benefits for Tonga from optimal use of living marine resources (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b). Shared benefits include incomes, employment and food security; the spiritual and cultural values associated with fisheries and the sea; and the capacity to make provisions for climate change and natural disasters (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016b).

The MOF does not appear to discriminate against women in the workplace and the SMA project acknowledges the important role of women in fisheries and is designed to include women at every level of decision making. The Ministry seems open to introducing gender training for all staff and training in the collection of sex-disaggregated data for relevant staff. This opportunity fits within the mandates of both SPC and FAO and would be a useful contribution towards the mainstreaming of gender in fisheries. Support to revise the new draft fisheries policy would also be useful so that the policy aligns with TFSP and so that it does not favour one sex and ignore the other.

Table 12 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the Ministry of Fisheries.

3.2.4 Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Climate Change and Communications

The Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) was formed through a restructuring of ministries in 2014. It is one of the largest ministries.

The Budget Estimate FY2017/18 for MEIDECC is TOP 60 260 100, or 10 percent of the national budget.

MEIDECC is one of a very few ministries projected to increase its budget share in the coming years. This is due mostly to donor commitments to (renewable) energy and climate change response, including the commencement of funding through the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Tonga was the first Pacific Island Country to develop a combined disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) policy and planning framework. However, translating this into cohesive and prioritized strategic investments has been a challenge (World Bank, 2015). Consultative meetings during the production of this Assessment were held with the Department of Climate Change and the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO).

Department of Climate Change

The Department of Climate Change (DCC) has seven divisions, five of which are headed by women. There are 12 permanent staff (three men and nine women) and 30 project technical advisory staff (half women and half men). The DCC director is a woman and was identified as a gender champion, as was the Principal Climate Finance Analyst and a project staff member working on a Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the second Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP II).²⁴ During the in-depth consultations for this Assessment, it was highlighted that gender training for all staff would be welcomed, especially with a focus on gender analysis, planning and budgeting, if a gender and climate change trainer were available. Sex-disaggregated data had not been collected in the past but now is. A gender and climate change toolkit has been provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), but no training on using the toolkit has been provided. All staff are encouraged to read and engage in the toolkit, even if just by consulting the toolkit on an issues basis, but this optional.

A revised Climate Change Policy was completed in 2016 with the goal of achieving 'A Resilient Tonga by 2035'. The approach of the Policy is described as multi-faceted, cross-sectorial, gender-inclusive, equitable and with a strong emphasis on community ownership supported by strong governance (Government of Tonga, 2016b). The Policy aims to align with the national outcomes of the Tonga Strategic Development Framework II 2016–2025,

²⁴ The JNAP II is a 10-year plan which aims to propose a realistic time frame for gender activities.

which includes “a more inclusive, sustainable and empowering human development with gender equality” (Government of Tonga, 2016b). It is also aligned with the Revised National Policy on Gender and Development (RNPAGD) 2014–2018. Among the 20 targets, one is focused on “a gender-responsive and equitable society” (Government of Tonga, 2016b). Policy guiding principles acknowledge that men and women face different social, environmental, and economic situations, necessitating that gender issues be considered in all planning and implementation processes. The Policy also promotes a better understanding of the vulnerabilities and capacities of different gender groups to deal with the adverse effects of climate change. Policy objectives include the boosting of national capacities to undertake gender analysis and the development of a strategy to support communities, including women, youth and other vulnerable groups, to directly access relevant funding to implement community development plans aligned with the goals and targets of ‘A Resilient Tonga by 2035’ (Government of Tonga, 2016b). Action on the Policy is reflected in JNAP II 2016–2026, which was close to completion at the time of this Assessment, although a draft was not available for viewing.

A new Climate Financing and Risk Governance Assessment (CFRGA) with a much stronger emphasis on gender was endorsed in 2016. The director of MIA’s WAD was part of the team that worked on the CFRGA, as was a gender specialist from UN Women. The DCC tries to regularly engage with WAD on gender activities in the JNAP.

Chapter 7 of the CFRGA is on gender and social inclusion, including mainstreaming gender in climate change activities. One of the aims of the CFRGA is to integrate gender and social inclusion into institutional arrangements for climate change and disaster risk management (Government of Tonga, 2016a). Improvements on gender and social analysis practices, data sharing and coordination of projects were included because these areas were considered to have a sizeable impact on the effectiveness of climate change and disaster risk management (CCDRM) and thus would enhance Tonga’s ability to access financing to respond to the human impacts of climate change and disasters (Government of Tonga, 2016a). The CFRGA includes a risk profiling recommendation to ensure future vulnerability assessments integrate social status, gender, poverty and disability.

The gender recommendations of the CFRGA have been turned into actions in JNAP II.²⁵ A JNAP Task Force will oversee implementation. Ideally the Task Force should be gender-balanced. Any climate change activities must now have a gender component, and DCC, with support from ADB, is developing a gender action plan (GAP) template for use by every project. The RNPAGD climate change-related outcome has also been included in these plans, and DCC is now the implementing agency for the outcome. DCC intends to eventually mainstream gender both horizontally and vertically in the Division.

A National Climate Change Fund was established by the Parliament in 2012 (Government of Tonga, 2016a). Grant applications can come from community groups, NGOs, public sector operators, government ministries, and local authorities. A focus on community-based women’s groups and NGOs is expected, and one-third of total grants are to be allocated to outer island projects (Government of Tonga, 2016a). At the time of the preparation of this Assessment, a Trust Fund Bill was drafted that aimed to codify a minimum of 30 percent of funds for women’s projects. The first round of funds was in the process of allocation.

DCC has held discussions with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) proposing that a grant of USD 50–100 million could be invested in an endowment fund so that interest would be available to fund more projects.

The CFRGA gender assessment noted that Tonga needs to demonstrate strong practices on inclusion of gender and social vulnerability into all stages of project design to satisfy the primary climate change and disaster management funding bodies and implementing agencies (Government of Tonga, 2016a).

In an analysis project documents relating to CCDRM projects across the core ministries conducted for the CFRGA, it was found that only 17 percent of documents were gender mainstreamed and a further 6 percent had targeted actions on gender equality. Almost half of all projects were assessed as completely gender-blind, with no social or gender analysis or other measure of human vulnerabilities and capacities, and no activities, indicators or outcomes designed to address sex-, age- or disability-differentiated needs (Government of Tonga, 2016a). Corporate plans and other documents governing the practical aspects of Tonga’s CCDRM work were found to contain very few

²⁵ JNAP I was silent on both women and gender.

Table 13: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the Department of Climate Change for advancing gender equality²⁶

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft JNAP II 2016–2026 includes a gender discussion and gender accountabilities. • The 2016 CFRGA has a strong emphasis on gender. • The 2016 Climate Change Policy is gender-inclusive; the Policy is aligned with the Government's gender and development policy. • All climate change activities are now mandated to have a gender component. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit is provided to staff, but without training on application; its use is optional. • Document analysis relating to CCDRM projects across core ministries found gender mainstreamed in only 17 percent and an additional 6 percent had targeted actions on gender equality.
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department is headed by a woman and its divisions are headed by five women and two men; the Department's staff is predominantly composed of women. • The Department's director is a gender champion, along with two other staff members. • Gender training for staff would be welcomed, including on gender and statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender impacts are not discussed at staff meetings. • There is no gender focal point.
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft JNAP II includes a gender action plan. • Disaggregated data has not been collected in the past but now is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JNAP I was gender-blind and did not monitor impacts on women and men.
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One gender specialist (project staff) has been assigned to JNAP II drafting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff lacks skills for gender analysis and gender programming across sectors. • Staff lack skills for collecting sex-disaggregated data.
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Climate Change Fund allocates at least 30 percent of funds to women's organizations. • There is some budget for gender training of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division has only 12 core staff, supplemented by 30 project staff (donor-funded). • There is no budget allocation for gender mainstreaming and empowerment of rural women in the corporate plan.

²⁶ Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with representatives of the MEIDECC's DCC and the review of relevant documents.

references to vulnerabilities of human populations or to the differentiated needs of different social groups, and CC DRM project plans contained little or no meaningful reference to human vulnerabilities (Government of Tonga, 2016a). The gender and social inclusion analysis concluded that Tonga is not currently in a strong position to respond to the gender and social inclusion requirements of the main climate funds, nor to ensure that vulnerable groups are adequately supported to prepare for, survive and recover from the impacts of disasters and climate change (Government of Tonga, 2016a).

The CFRGA will be a useful guiding document during the implementation of JNAP II, but ongoing support will be required from all technical agencies to improve the gender and social inclusion capacity of staff in all climate change-related divisions if JNAP II is to meet the expectations of funding bodies and the needs of all urban and rural Tongans, regardless of gender, age, disability, remoteness or other vulnerability.

Table 13 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the MEIDECC's Department of Climate Change.

3.2.5 National Emergency Management Office

Like most other government offices, NEMO is understaffed and underfunded which limits its ability to achieve its mandate. NEMO has four male staff members funded from the recurrent budget: director, communications officer, community officer and emergency officer. Another 12 project staff members (five men and seven women) were added in 2017. Of the seven female project staff, two are in management roles, four are in mid-level roles and one is based in Ha'apai. There is a gender specialist among the project staff.

It was reported that gender had been mainstreamed into district emergency management plans (DEMPs) for the past two years, but a review of two DEMPs (for Vava'u and 'Eua) showed that women's committees and their roles as service deliverers in Community Emergency Management Committees were merely mentioned, alongside youth committees, community development committees and community disaster committees. All committees had a role in preparedness, relief, recovery, prevention and mitigation. The tasks were in Tongan language, but there was no evidence from the rest of the document that women have a role in macro-decision making

in any area and there was no analysis of the different impacts of emergencies on women and men, especially the vulnerable. The District Emergency Management Committee is made up of government representatives and there are no community representatives. All planning documents are gender-blind, including the Disaster Assessment Manual.

In discussions with NEMO representatives, it was noted that NEMO has not looked deeply into gender mainstreaming but would not be resistant to doing so, subject to external funding support. Gender training for staff would be welcomed, but there is no budget for it, so the training would have to be funded from another source. The director sends women to training and is reported to be supportive of women staff members at every level. Staff meetings always include discussions on women, children and the elderly because of their higher levels of risk, as with the disabled, widows and pregnant women.

The EU-funded Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific (BRSP) project, implemented by SPC, commenced in 2014. BRSP's focus is on reducing disaster risks and supporting climate change adaptation while strengthening the capacity of disaster agencies. NEMO is the partner agency from within the government.

BRSP has been introducing community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) to Town Officers (TOs) and District Officers (DOs) in Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua. There is an intention to mainstream gender over the next three to five years. A spokesperson said there is more to deal with than mainstreaming gender in community development plans (CDPs) but CDPs will be a start, not the end. Another focus is on collecting disaggregated data from the census and entering it into a desktop tool. The extent of NEMO's reach is heavily dependent on how much funding is available for travel.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is meant to be integrated into the CDPs for each community, but in Vava'u only two TOs have done so. TOs were reported to be resistant to the number of plans and consultations and had decided to work only with the existing contents of the CDPs. While it is understandable that DOs and TOs have heavy workloads, negotiation and training is required to ensure the best outcomes for communities. Gender training would also be desirable.



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In conclusion, there is receptivity to mainstreaming gender in NEMO's work, but inertia is apparent, seemingly due to high workloads and budget limitations. NEMO will need gender and social inclusion technical support to improve emergency response and to play its role in JNAP II.

There is a perception among some in NEMO that Island Disaster Emergency Management Plans are already gender-responsive because women's

committees are engaged in preparation, response and recovery. Yet nothing in the plans acknowledges the differentiated impacts of events on women and other vulnerable groups, or, conversely, how women can influence planning. While some of women's most immediate, practical gender needs may be met, other gender needs do not appear to be met due to exclusion from decision making at higher levels.

Table 14: Summary of the assessment of the enabling environment of the National Emergency Management Office for advancing gender equality²⁷

Indicative findings		
Enabling environment criteria	Enabling factors	Constraints
Commitment at leadership level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEMO leadership is open to gender mainstreaming, subject to additional budget and technical support. • There is the intention to mainstream gender over 3–5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All planning documents are gender-blind, including the Disaster Assessment Manual.
Organizational culture and internal willingness to address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings include discussions on women, youth and other vulnerable populations. • Gender training for staff would be welcomed, including on sex-disaggregated statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no women among the core staff, only (donor-funded) project staff. • There is no gender champion among core staff.
Accountability mechanisms and systems to enforce commitments to gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEMO is currently transposing disaggregated census data into a desktop tool. • Post-emergency rapid assessment data is sex-disaggregated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gender mainstreaming is in place. • There are no consistent vulnerability assessment methodologies that integrate gender, poverty and disability.
Technical capacity to identify and address gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is gender specialist (project staff). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff lack skills for gender analysis and gender programming. • Staff lacks skills for collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.
Adequate financial and human resources to implement gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEMO is understaffed and under-funded. • There is no budget allocation for gender mainstreaming and empowerment of rural women in the corporate plan.

The low levels of participation of women and other vulnerable groups in DRM decision making have negative implications for communities' survival strategies, coping mechanisms and access to resources (Government of Tonga, 2016a). The CFRGA recommends that NEMO develop vulnerability assessment methodologies to ensure a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability. A further recommendation

to the JNAP Secretariat was to ensure future vulnerability assessments integrate social status, gender, poverty and disability (Government of Tonga, 2016a).

Table 14 provides a summary of issues related to strengths and gaps of the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming within the NEMO.

²⁷ Note that the information provided in this table is indicative only and is based on interviews with NEMO representatives and the review of relevant documents.

4

GENDER ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURE AND THE RURAL SECTOR

ANCATA
TELESIA
'O AVILA



Social norms and expectations about the roles and responsibilities of women and men have a considerable influence on the respective roles of men and women in agriculture and rural development (ARD) in Tonga.

Men are considered to be the main 'bread winners' and decision-makers, while the role of women is to take care of the household. Women are in charge of performing most of the domestic chores and for providing care for the children and other family members in need of assistance. Farming and fishing are considered men's responsibilities, and there is very little recognition of women farmers and fishers. This view is reflected in the governance systems related to natural resources and land use management as well as in the services provided to farmers and fishers.

Every district in Tonga has an agricultural committee that meets monthly. These district agricultural committees are composed mostly of men, although women are allowed to become members. The MAFF extension services are planned with inputs from male farmers only. Extension services focus on growing crops for both subsistence and income, either from selling surpluses in local markets or selling to exporters.

Villages have separate men's and women's committees, plus a number of other committees, such as health committees and school committees, in which women are engaged as members. There are also women's agricultural sub-committees that focus on growing vegetables on town land (near their homes) and making handicrafts. There are barriers to women accessing bush land (which men access in 3-hectare allotments) that are mostly cultural constraints, but bad roads and lack of transportation are additional obstacles. Women also face time constraints due to their domestic and caregiving responsibilities.

4.1 Gender roles in rural livelihoods

Women and girls comprise 51 percent of the agricultural workforce. The Tonga Agriculture Sector Plan (TASP) acknowledges that the role of women in the agriculture sector is not recognized at its true value. Rural women are producers of both food and high-value handicrafts for additional income generation (Kingdom of Tonga, 2016a).

4.2 Access to and control over land and other productive resources

4.2.1 Land tenure system

Most land in Tonga belongs to the nobles. Every male Tongan is entitled to access a town allotment and a bush allotment for farming when they reach the age of 16. Men can "rent" land from a noble, and only a man can inherit land use rights. Tongan women do not have any rights over land, are not entitled to own land and can only have temporary access to land. Women can legally lease land, although it is difficult for them to do so.

Some bush land close to Nuku'alofa is being sold for new housing, although selling land is not legal so it is done covertly by pretending that it is being gifted to a relative. Land can be leased from the Government for TOP 80 per year, which is considered to be cheap, but the land cannot be owned.

The consultations in the two communities of Tongatapu illustrate the same patterns (see Chapter 5).

4.2.2 Agriculture extension services

As mentioned above, a Women's Section is part of the MAFF Extension Services. The Section works with women's groups on subsistence crops for food security and nutrition, as well as providing support for value-added products such as taro chips (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016). Unlike the extension services targeting men on cash crops for exportation, extension services for women focus on sale at local markets and supermarkets. A gender assessment of Tongatapu conducted in 2015 found that the Women's Section focuses on the same crops each year and that some women attend trainings to get free seeds but often do not return for the whole programme because they have had the same training in past years (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016).

Challenges for women identified by extension staff include lack of funds to buy seeds or pay for help with the harvest, difficulty in prioritizing farming activities due to household demands and a focus on handicrafts over subsistence farming by some women. In a discussion on balancing household and farm labour by women, agriculture extension officers commented that the mind-set of men would have to change first and noted that men with higher education levels have been observed to share more tasks around the house.

Extension Services and the Women's Section need a more strategic approach for work with women farmers that goes beyond growing techniques for subsistence crops. By developing an understanding of how to determine the setup costs for a future crop, such as the cost of seeds and other inputs, farming families could be encouraged to develop a savings habit to become more self-sufficient as growers. There would still be a training and monitoring role for Extension Services based on upskilling staff on a regular basis. Financial management training would be a useful addition to extension services and could be outsourced to CSOs. The 2014 MAFF Corporate Plan reported that the Women's Section lacks sound expertise in nutrition, food technology, home management and farming techniques (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014).

4.3 Entrepreneurship

There are a number of programmes being implemented to foster women's economic empowerment. These include entrepreneurial training projects delivered by Tonga Skills and the Business Advisory Centre of the Ministry of Labour and Commerce for income generation from handicrafts, cooking and sewing, with associated business and financial literacy training.

Tongan women have considerable entrepreneurship experience that is seldom recognized because most are involved in the informal economy. Rural women commonly sell surplus agriculture products, fish and handicrafts.

A growing number of women are also involved in the services sector, including in running restaurants and hotels in Nuku'alofa and the touristic areas of Vava'u.

4.3.1 Handicrafts

Handicrafts cut across both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The cultivation of the tree crop-based products and other raw materials is part of agriculture while post-harvest activities such as soaking (boiling), drying, painting and weaving are defined as manufacturing. There is some opportunity, albeit limited, for rural women to be paid to perform specific tasks such as pandanus preparation, weaving and mat making, but most handicrafts are produced by individual women or women's groups from start to finish to benefit from the full sale price of the item. Statistics on the value and quantity of handicrafts exported or sold locally is not available, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the price for handicrafts is increasing because of high demand from overseas markets, primarily in the United States, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. While this benefits the women producers, it is causing financial pressure on families and women who have to purchase handicrafts locally for their own needs, such as for dress codes and to meet ceremonial obligations.

In the 2016 Census, 25 percent of households reported that they produced handicrafts. Wide variations, however, exist across island groupings. For instance, approximately half of the households in Ha'apai, 'Eua, and Ongo Niua produce handicrafts.

Table 15: Private household production of handicrafts by island grouping

Population	Tonga	Tongatapu	Vava'u	Ha'apai	'Eua	Ongo Niua
Total (Number)	18 005	12 953	2 715	1 179	885	273
No (%)	75	81	65	51	52	47
Yes (%)	25	19	35	49	48	53
Yes, exclusively or mainly for sale (%)	8	7	9	15	18	10

Source: Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a



Rural women sell handicrafts on Facebook and make contact with groups of women in the diaspora to organize a *kātoanga* (a festive mat exchange that includes feasting and dancing, where groups of women from the diaspora visit Tonga to buy mats and tapa for ceremonial use in the countries to which they have migrated). Other gifts are exchanged with the handicraft communities, such as electrical goods. A record was set in 2009 when a group of women from the USA exchanged TOP 1 million at a *kātoanga* (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016). No data is available on the annual value of *kātoanga* events, but it is likely to be several million TOP (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2016).

Now that handicrafts are selling for higher prices than in the past, there are anecdotal reports that men are helping women with raw materials by, for example, planting and harvesting mulberry and pandanus. This may be indicative of men's increasing recognition and valuing of women's income-generating work.

4.4 Cooperatives

During the preparation of this Assessment, it was not possible to find any recent information on agricultural and women's cooperatives, although

there is documentation of past efforts, such as women's involvement in the Friendly Island Marketing Cooperative that used to market squash, vanilla, root crops and handicrafts products. Other past efforts include two important cooperatives that were run by women, the Paki moe To'i cooperative registered in 1977 and the Women Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd established in 1991 (Hakautapu, 1998).

4.5 Financial services

The Tonga Development Bank (TDB) has introduced loan products and financial support services for women's groups and individual women with interest rates from 4–8 percent aimed at supporting women's microenterprises. There are also numerous moneylenders operating with interest rates ranging from 10–25 percent. For example, the South Pacific Business Development (SPBD) offers women's groups microfinance with 25 percent interest rates. SPBD's current membership is 6 168 women ranging from 18–65 years of age. One commercial bank, ANZ, conducts 'business mind-set' training for women's groups throughout Tonga to encourage them into profitable undertakings.

5

CASE STUDY IN MATAHAU AND HAVELULIKU ON TONGATAPU ISLAND



Community consultations were carried out for this Assessment in May 2018 in the villages of Matahau and Haveluliku, both situated on the main island of Tongatapu. Matahau is on the western side (green text on left of map below) and is part of the western sub-division of the Nukunuku District comprised of about 11 villages. Haveluliku is on the eastern side (green text on right of map below) and is part of the Tatakamotonga sub-division comprised of about the same number of villages. Both are considered inland villages, although Haveluliku has access to the sea while Matahau does not. Those in the first consultation were from Matahau itself and from the nearby village of Lakepa, while the Haveluliku consultation included people from Haveluliku and the nearby village of Lavengatonga.

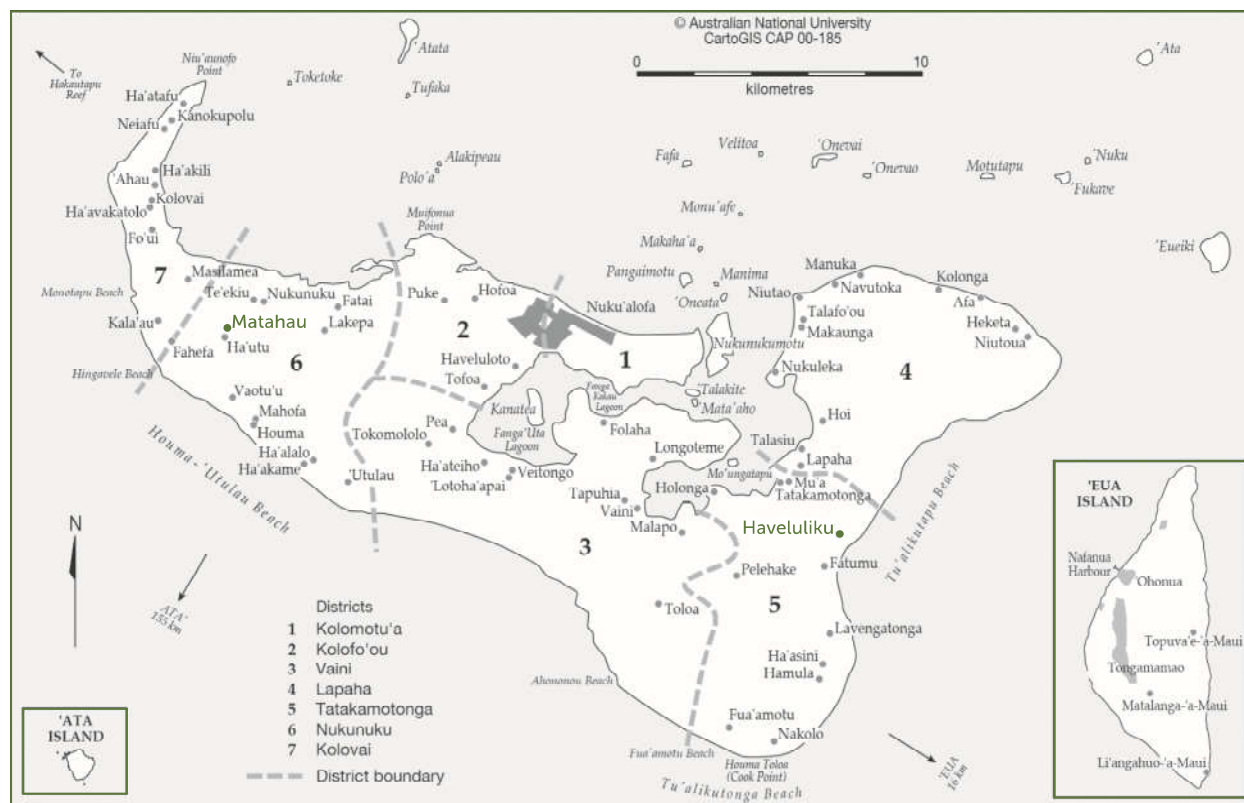
In Matahau, household income is derived mainly from selling poultry and pigs, and from the sale of handicrafts overseas. Subsistence crops include taro, yam, tapioca, sweet potato, spinach and cabbage. In Haveluliku, household income is mainly derived from paid work outside the house plus the sale of handicrafts overseas. Both men and women fish regularly to supplement their diets but not for income.

Subsistence crops include slippery cabbage, capsicum, tomatoes, cabbage, spinach, onions, taro, manioc, yam and sweet potato.

Tongatapu is a flat lowland coral island. Both communities visited have similar surroundings in terms of flora and fauna. There are no hills, mountains or rivers on the island, so access to the two communities is fairly easy by a paved road. Access to the farms can be difficult in times of heavy rain, however, as no farm roads are paved. The soil is very fertile and is able to grow just about any sub-tropical crop including root crops, legume, vegetables and a wide diversity of fruits.

The main village area forms the focal point of each community's activities. It is where the churches, grocery shops and primary schools are located and where trading of foodstuffs and handicrafts is sometimes carried out. Public primary school is free, as are health services. For minor health concerns, people use the health clinics or health centres located in each district. For other health concerns, they travel to the main hospital in the capital.

Map of Tongatapu highlighting Matahau and Haveluliku



Normally the village has a chief or a representative and people also defer to Town Officers, church ministers, school principals and any central government officials like the agricultural officer or the police officer.

Subsistence farming can be undertaken by women on the family town land, where the house is located, or is done away from the village on a male's individual 3-hectare plot of bush land. Sometimes a man may farm a vacant piece of land in the village which is smaller, but the majority do their farming in their respective bush allotments, away from wandering pigs and dogs. Many male land owners have migrated overseas, so most of the men in the rural areas have no difficulty in appropriating a piece of their relatives' land for their own temporary use, should they not own bush land. The women may have some pandanus plants in the village (on town land) and usually mulberry trees are planted in the bush.

Matahau is an agricultural subsistence community. Some participants in Matahau, similar to Haveluliku, said they had salaried jobs outside the house, but others said they were able to attend the consultations during the day because they did not. In both communities there are relatives, usually offspring, in the household that have paid jobs that finance the day-to-day running of the household. All participants said they receive money (remittances) from relatives outside the country. No one fishes in Matahau, let alone relies on fishing for their income, simply because the sea is further away. Some of the women in Matahau grow vegetables, mainly for consumption, and some sell handicrafts, mainly ngatu (tapa) and mats, when there is a need to do so, such as for church obligations, school fees or ceremonial occasions. Most handicrafts are exported through private connections. A small number of women and men with disabilities live in both sub-districts and do unpaid work assisting in the garden or on the bush land. The most common disability was physical, such as difficulty walking, followed by hearing deficiencies.

In contrast to Matahau, the men and women of Haveluliku fish regularly to supplement their diets and claim there are no sickly people in the village as a result. The majority of men in Haveluliku are able to earn money by selling animals (mainly pigs and chicken) and doing odd jobs for others like plumbing and construction work.

Women unanimously expressed that they are doing more agricultural work today as compared to 20 years ago. When asked to elaborate further, they said that the men of many families are working in seasonal worker schemes in New Zealand and Australia. As a result, more women are doing the work that men used to do in crop production, or they depend on other male family members for assistance, sometimes paying them for extra work.

A new local governance structure was put in place approximately three years ago, but some women expressed that there was still confusion around how the new structure was meant to work. Under the structure, there exists a District Development Committee and under that a Village Development Committee (VDC). The VDC is made up of representatives of other committees in the village, such as the agriculture and school committees. The VDC meets once a month and submits reports to the District Committee at its meetings. The concern of women is that women's groups and youth groups are not represented on the VDC. Groups that are represented on the VDC tend to focus on their own issues rather than on the full range of issues affecting all community groups. As a result, the concerns of women and youth are not heard. This is not consistent with the information provided by the Community Development Division of MIA. This apparently unintentional discrimination should be of great concern to MIA and needs to be rectified if the whole community is to make progress. At least two positions on the VDC should be kept for women's groups and another two positions for youth groups.

5.1 Consultation context

The sub-district of Nukunuku is comprised of 8 001 people, with slightly more than half (4 032) male (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). Most people in the area live in timber or brick houses, the size of which normally corresponds to the amount of money they earn locally or from overseas work (including as seasonal workers in New Zealand or Australia) or sent by family members residing overseas in the form of remittances. In Matahau, 12 people (six men and six women) participated in the CGA-ARS consultations, although others, mainly males, drifted in during the group discussions.

The sub-district of Tatakamotonga has a population of 7 043, with slightly more than half (3 552) female (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a). In general, they live in abodes similar to people in the western district of the Nukunuku sub-division. The consultation was conducted in the Roman Catholic Church hall and most of the participants, at least the majority of ones from Haveluliku, belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. There were 18 participants – 12 (six men and six women) from Haveluliku and six (two men and four women) from the village of Lavengatonga.

Both the villages of Matahau and Haveluliku, as with the whole of Tongatapu, were affected by TC Gita. Most houses were damaged to a certain degree, about a third of the houses had major damage and a few were completely destroyed. Some of impacted families still live with relatives while they wait for assistance to repair their houses. All fruit trees were destroyed, and while all crops were affected, not all were spoiled, especially tapioca. But all crops had to be harvested immediately after the cyclone so that they did not rot in the ground.

5.2 Social and labour divisions

One indication of a seemingly clear demarcation of the roles of women and men in society was the way the participants seated themselves during the community consultations. In both villages, women and men sat opposite each other. The male District Agricultural Officer in Matahau was the exception, but this could be because he arrived late and sat in the nearest chair available, which was among the women. Even the only couple to attend sat separately in the Matahau consultation.

On the whole, the women dressed in their Tongan national dress while the men, except for the Town Officer, wore casual clothes which they could wear to the bush. Women dressed as they would for any meeting, not as they would dress for farming, but the men seemed to want to emphasize their roles as rural farmers.

It can be discerned from the responses of the participants in both villages that in fact there has been a real change in the division of farm labour over the years to such an extent that what was unusual, even unthinkable, decades ago is beginning to be the norm today. More and more women are not only seen working in the plantations (bush land) now but actually

carry out physical work like hoeing and cutting, which was not accepted twenty or thirty years ago. Some of the women, oftentimes in the absence of the male heads of household, are actually responsible for the full process of farming, from ploughing the land and preparing the seedlings to planting, maintaining and harvesting the crops. The division of farm labour is slowly but steadily becoming more fluid, although women are still primarily responsible for household labour. Men in both villages readily admit to helping the women to plant and look after pandanus plants and mulberry trees and are very much involved in preparing the leaves for weaving and making tapa. However, the actual act of weaving and making tapa remains the domain of the womenfolk. This is also true of cooking, sewing, ironing, washing dishes and other household chores. However, depending on the circumstances, such in the households in which there are few females, men sometimes pitch in to help where needed. Sunday cooking is shared, with the men taking up the bulk of the preparations.

More and more families appear to be sharing household decision making, although in Matahau men reported that they made the family decisions while women reported that decisions were either made jointly or solely by the woman. These conflicting reports illustrate different perceptions of men and women. An increasing number of women are active in the workforce, both in formal and informal sectors, and earning money for themselves, which may contribute to greater acceptance of shared household decision-making. Decisions with regard to children, such as where to send the children to school, are usually discussed between men and women, although in most cases, are finalized by men. Day-to-day decisions like how the children spend their after-school hours, normally rest with the women.

5.3 Impacts of social and economic changes

Recent decades have seen many changes in women's and men's livelihood activities and asset bases. Along with the social and economic evolution brought about by technology and other opportunities and upheavals, events like TC Gita create upheaval of a different type that tests and usually strengthens resilience.

Two or three decades ago, farming was slow, ponderous and time-consuming. Technology advances in transport (motor vehicles instead of horses and carts, ploughs instead of slashing and burning) have

Table 16: Agriculture-related gender roles in two sub-districts of Tongatapu

Activity	Mainly men's role	Mainly women's role	Both men and women
Clearing land			•
Ploughing			•
Construction of sheds, pens or other infrastructure for livestock	•		
Cash crop planting and harvesting (taro, cassava, tree fruits, coconuts)			•
Weeding and maintenance of market and subsistence gardens and cash-crop plantation (taro, cassava)		•	
Cash crop and market garden post-harvest processing			•
Market sales			•
Interaction with business intermediaries purchasing cash crops	•		
Raising poultry and small animals (pigs)		•	
Raising large livestock (cows, sheep, pigs)			•
Niche agricultural ventures in floriculture		•	
Planting and harvesting materials for handicrafts			•
Handicraft making (tapa, mats, baskets, sewing)		•	
Handicraft carving	•		

Source: Information is based on the community consultations for this Assessment.

facilitated efficiency. Instead of spending practically the whole day on the farm, today rural men and women are able to spend only half a day or less working in the bush. This allows them to spend more time at the town land (house) in the village and gives women more time for weaving and tapa making and men more time for sports and recreation.

There has also been a marked change in farming methods, including increased use of various types of chemicals. Some are not used properly, which has negatively affected some farmers and resulted in poor health and early retirement from active

farming. In turn, this has affected roles and relationships at home, with the women increasingly assuming more of the responsibilities and decision making in those households.

Climate change has altered planting and harvesting seasons by up to a month for some crops, but the most detrimental impacts of climate change are droughts and destruction of crops in the case of cyclones. Neither community reported receiving training in climate change adaptation or disaster risk management.

The immediate effects of TC Gita were felt most in villages, with the destruction of many houses. The destruction of crops and fruit trees affected the income of many of the participants' families, who now prioritize their daily food consumption needs over expenses. This has compelled families to readjust their plans for spending of everyday earnings to meet their immediate needs for shelter and food rather than buying equipment or other purchases. An anticipated scarcity of food crops was not fully experienced because root crops and other ground crops (cabbage, carrots) were not as badly damaged as expected and were available from markets. Immediately after the cyclone, MAFF extension staff advised farmers to start planting crops that could be harvested after a short period of time (around three months). Families in these two communities are likely continue to struggle for some time while they re-establish both subsistence and cash crops and fix their properties.

The consultations in both Matahau and Haveluliku revealed that people spend their money in the following areas (in order of greatest expenditure): church, electricity, transport, imported goods from the shop, school fees where applicable, vegetables, farm equipment, farm labour, raw materials for handicrafts and recreational items such as alcohol, kava and tobacco.

The above shows the dominance of the church in the lives of people. In Protestant churches, which have the largest populations, there are annual events to which members donate a lot of money, often over and above what they earn. This includes the annual misinale, where cash is given for church expenses, and the provision of food during the annual church conferences. Other priorities for household spending are healthy eating (vegetables) and purchase of equipment to help carry out income-earning tasks like farming, fishing, weaving or making tapa. Another area of expenditure is hired labour, especially when planting yams or undertaking commercial farming for export. Roughly half of participants said that they buy rice. Only some households pay school fees, which indicates that the majority of their children are still in primary school or have left high school and tertiary school. Over half of the men in both groups said they buy kava or alcohol and around a quarter

said they buy cigarettes, although this does not show how many actually drink or smoke when offered. Raw materials are essential for weaving and tapa making, but it appears that most of the participants in Matahau grow their own. Half of the women in the Haveluliku group said they purchase raw materials, which may be the result of mulberry and pandanus trees being accidentally burnt by men when clearing land.

The social problems brought about by economic and technological changes cannot be over-emphasized, even though the effect is not as prevalent as in the Nuku'alofa area. Participants observed that there is an increased taste for modern lifestyles, with better housing and greater access to TV, radio, mobile phones and internet. These observations are affirmed by the finding of the 2016 Census that 60 percent of the population aged 10 years and above had a mobile phone, with the outer islands roughly consistent with the national average (Tonga Statistics Department, 2017a).²⁸ Increased access to both mobile phones and the internet have profoundly impacted the lives of rural youth. Increased links with the outside world via the internet and social media and more frequent overseas travel for sports or seasonal work to New Zealand and Australia have brought Tongans increasingly in touch with the globalized world of which they are part.

The communities observed that the roles of men, women, boys and girls have changed markedly. Fewer youth are seeing any prospects in working the land, and girls in particular feel they do not have prospects for paid jobs in rural areas. Communities reported that many young people apply to participate in seasonal work schemes but are increasingly facing problems of their own overseas, having left their spouses and children behind, and some are known to have come back to broken homes. Concern was also expressed that once-forbidden plants are being grown and processed into drugs on bush land and youth in rural areas are said to be involved. There is a sense in villages that crimes are on the rise, many of which are alcohol- or drug-related. Increasing numbers of personal vehicles combined with alcohol and drug use and limited road space has led to media reports of increased numbers of road accidents in rural areas (Matangi Tonga, 2018).

²⁸ This census data was not sex-disaggregated, but observational evidence suggests that women and girls have ample access to the technology.



5.4 Access to and control over resources

Ownership of land is, by law, only possible for men. As a result, women are dependent on their father's land until they marry and then dependent on their husband for access to this most valuable resource. Control over land remains with the man and his male heirs, in the first instance. Women can lease land if they have financial assets, however. There are some notable examples of women who have leased land and put it to productive use, one being an exporter of root crops, although other examples are rare. Land is acceptable collateral for low-interest agriculture loans from banks, but few alternatives have been put in place for women to use as acceptable collateral for a bank loan, despite public rhetoric in recent years. As a result, some women in the community consultations expressed that they sometimes resort to high-interest loans that are often used to meet immediate needs, such as school fees or church obligations. Furthermore, the study on family violence discussed earlier found that among the reasons that women in violent relationships are known to remain in the relationship is that they have no means of support for themselves or their children if they leave since they have no access to land or other adequate income sources.

However, nobody dares to question traditional norms. For example, men and women in Haveluliku found it amusing to be even asked questions around access to productive assets. They reported that growing up in a community, everyone knows what is expected of them as they learn from their elders. It seems from this comment that gender norms condoning men's access to and control over productive resources and women's dependency upon men have been entrenched for generations in the way people are socialized.

The men in the consultation groups did not express any problems with access to land and in fact all seemed to own their respective plots. Women did not express any difficulty with accessing their husbands' land to plant pandanus or mulberry. The women in Haveluliku in particular expressed that the only barrier to their development was finance. They said they would like to be able to grow their plants in town for ease of access and to avoid the risk of damage by fires associated with land clearing. In order to do so, however, they need money to fence the town land to keep away pigs and other animals. This has led

them to be quite active in small loan schemes like the South Pacific Business Development (SPBD) program, especially aimed at low-income people who need small amounts of cash instantly. The women are well aware that in the long run they may end up paying back more than what they would have paid had they borrowed from a regular bank, but this did not bother them.²⁹ The appreciate that small loan schemes like SPBD meet their immediate needs, unlike the banks, whose application and approval process can drag on for months and require collateral. The women expressed disappointment that the Government had given the Development Bank a sum of money to start a very low-interest scheme targeting women in business and development, but that this was very hard to access because of the paperwork required and strict requirements for collateral. Accordingly, rural women in general do not borrow from the commercial banks.

Men and women in both villages expressed that they have access to the basic tools they need for farming and making tapa cloth and mat handicrafts. Where they need specialized tools like ploughs and tractors, they hire them. Since women work in groups to produce tapa, they rely on the group to make or rent the special table on which to work if they do not already own one.

Crop prices for locally grown and consumed crops are set by the local market and are generally considered favourable by the farmers. These farmers do not engage in formal exporting to markets overseas, but pathways seem to be arranged informally by the farmers themselves through family members in the diaspora. There is a need to investigate this practice to safeguard the farmers against being taken advantage of by these informal arrangements.

The local market for tapa and mats has been significantly impacted by overseas demand. Prices for these handicrafts have inflated considerably due mainly to overseas customers paying the local price in the currency of the country where they live. Good quality ngatu (tapa) that once sold for around TOP 500 is now selling for TOP 4 000 in the space of 10 or 15 years. In the case of purchases in U.S. dollars, the already high prices for mats and tapa are more than doubled in the local currency, which in turn sets the prices for sales to the rest of the world. Communities reported that it is this increase in value that has prompted men to support women in handicraft production.

²⁹ SPBD's interest rate amounts to 25% per annum.

5.5 Engagement in natural resource management

Decisions about natural resources may well be discussed in District Development Committee meetings or Village Development Committee meetings, but neither the men nor women consulted for this Assessment had been involved in such decisions.

Farmers will often be influenced by others, including the agricultural officers, in terms of what to plant and how to plant for export, in the event that a market is available. Sometimes this is at the expense of natural resources if forested land is cleared for agriculture. The final decision rests with the family as to how the land should be utilized, although the decision may not be fully informed. Discussions over such decisions often take place between men and women in a household, although the final decision rests with the person who will carry out the bulk of the work. In the case of commercial gardens out in the bush, men will have the final say. There is general understanding that land ownership belongs to the man and that his decision comes first.

When the male head of the family dies, the land goes to the widow, who becomes the new owner, but under certain specified conditions.³⁰ Women can also lease land, which can be passed on to their sons if need be. Women who choose to lease land tend to have an independent, non-traditional attitude that motivates them to acquire land. Although this is more common in urban areas, some women in rural areas have opted to do so as well.

5.6 Constraints affecting living conditions and well-being

In general, the women in the communities visited seem to be the drivers of change. They appear more articulate, know what they want, see the challenges ahead and make provisions for the future in terms of where they want their families to be financially situated. The men, on the other hand, appear to be hard workers, but on average do not appear to be as forward-focussed as the women. In many cases, women are better with managing money but don't always have control.

The community consultations indicated a tendency for women to flock to whatever opportunities are presented to them, in the hope of earning additional income. As the example in Box 2 demonstrates, however, new opportunities can draw women away from what they are already doing and good at and can earn money from, and can even lead them to incur losses, for instance, through high interest rates that are difficult to pay back.

Cultural influences also impact the ability of both men and women to progress financially because of the toll of traditional obligations. Some obligations, which before had no monetary implications except for time spent on feeding livestock and making handicrafts for contributions to special events, have become a burden on family incomes. Changes are underway, however, to minimize the expenses incurred in terms of both time and money. Families are deciding for themselves, for instance, how elaborate a funeral or wedding will be and how much they can afford to give to the church annually. Funerals, for instance, now tend to have a much shorter mourning period of one to two days or less, rather than the five to ten days of the past, where food had to be provided for mourners daily by the grieving family at the cost of many thousand TOP.

Church obligations can pose another constraint to financial well-being, for instance, when families are expected to make excessive contributions of food for church activities. Lavish banquets are usually called for to celebrate religious occasions, where each family of parishioners is told to bring 20 plates of food, resulting in large surpluses. In recent times, some families are opting to limit their contributions to what they consider to be enough, but to do so risks being gossiped about within the community.

5.7 Resilience to climate change and disaster impacts

Neither community mentioned receiving climate change or disaster risk management training. They expressed that in the lead up to TC Gita, they were reliant on public information for warnings, were as prepared as they could afford to be, benefitted from the response in limited ways and are still undergoing recovery.

³⁰ The widow must remain single and not engage in an intimate relationship with another man, or else the land is transferred to the eldest son or another son, or in the absence of sons, to a daughter.

Box 2: Snapshot of a rural woman farmer in Tongatapu

Tilisi is a farmer and mother of seven children. Her two oldest girls are married and live in separate homes. Tilisi's five other children, ranging from 5 to 16 years, live at home with her and her husband and attend local schools. According to Tilisi, she and her husband made the decision early on to only focus on manioke (cassava), talo (taro), coconut and taro leaves. These are mainly for daily subsistence, but at least ten baskets of crops are sold each week at the Nuku'alofa market.

Tilisi and her husband both work on the farm and farm the same crops. According to Tilisi, whatever her husband does, she also does. They don't have money to hire workers and this is their only income. With the income made from sales of their crops, they have been able to purchase eight roofing irons to fix their roof, which was partially damaged by Cyclone Gita.

The land is quite difficult to till, so the couple depends on friends who own ploughs to plough the land. Tilisi and her husband share 3 hectares of land with other family members, farming just under one hectare themselves.

An issue Tilisi has observed is that, while there seem to be many opportunities coming from NGOs and donors for village women to earn an income, she has learnt from experience that they need to be careful about what they sign up for. For example, some years ago a private agency started providing small loans to women to make tapa to sell for income generation. The women set up tapa-making groups and the groups then applied for loans, but the interest charged on the loans was too high, defeating the very purpose of income generation since the women found it difficult to repay the loans. This is one of the reasons Tilisi and her husband prefer to focus on crops they are familiar with and that are suitable for their land and are reliable for income generation.

As far as preparedness to TC Gita was concerned, the participants in both villages expressed that they had made certain minimum preparations, such as *purchasing candles, matches and lamps or torches*, making sure that mobile phones were charged and securing their roofs and other parts of their houses as best they could. Nearby trees that were seen as threats to houses and other structures were cut down. The communities acknowledged that more could have been done but that most people were constrained by finances. For instance, shutters are generally required to properly protect a house, but these could not be afforded. Similarly, the purchase of timber and nails to reinforce roofs or walls could not be afforded. Villagers resorted to waiting, praying and hoping for the best outcome.

There had been ample warning time through the official media, and the radio kept a running commentary on the path and strength of the cyclone. When it did strike, people were fully aware of its strength but were underprepared due to their circumstances. After the cyclone, official help was instant in terms of clearing the roads and restoring electricity. Restoring telephone communication took a lot longer, as did the distribution of water and basic

foodstuffs like rice, flour and sugar. Financial assistance from the government for recovery and repairs has not been received to date.

The damage done by TC Gita speaks to the need for cyclone and earthquake resistant homes with reinforcement shutters. A focus moving forward could be on building the strongest houses, rather than largest houses, affordable.

Regarding cyclone preparedness in terms of storage of emergency supplies such as bottled water, tinned meat/fish, rice, tea/coffee and instant noodles, participants expressed that they did not have such extra supplies on hand. After temporarily fixing damage to roofs and external walls, they first collected fallen coconuts, breadfruit and other fruits on the ground. Next, they made sure that their crops were harvested while they were still edible. They immediately turned their attention to replanting crops, starting with crops that would mature most quickly (within three months). Replacing plants used for plants handicrafts was not an immediate priority. Upon taking measures to make their homes as liveable and weatherproof as possible, everyone set about cleaning up the debris.

6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



This final chapter measures progress in the enabling environment for gender equality in Tonga against the gender stocktake conducted by SPC in 2012, based on the findings of this Assessment, and makes recommendations accordingly.

6.1 Key findings

Enabling environment

Tonga has not yet ratified CEDAW. This obstructs the work of key ministries, including MIA, MAFF and MOF, as well as the government as a whole, from effectively mainstreaming gender equality in ARD and promoting rural women's empowerment. The government, however, is attempting to pursue these objectives through some strategic policies, frameworks and plans. The Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015–2025 (TSDF II) includes the intended outcome of "a more inclusive, sustainable and empowering human development with gender equality" for Tonga, to be achieved through the implementation of the Revised National Policy on Gender and Development. All ministries have a role to play in the TSDF II, but none have incorporated the gender equality outcome of the TSDF II in a whole-of-ministry approach. JNAP II has the potential to catalyse gender mainstreaming because it has a strong gender focus and includes collaboration among several ministries.

Overall, the legal and policy framework related to gender in Tonga is still weak. Some constitutional provisions expressly discriminate against women, and there is still no anti-discrimination legislation. The Public Service Commission is strengthening its capacity for gender mainstreaming across the government, which should eventually improve coordination and collaboration in policy design and implementation. A revised Employment Relations Bill is meant to address workplace discrimination, although the Bill has been in the consultation phase since 2013.

Tonga's RNPGAD is the overarching policy for mainstreaming gender across the government, but commitment to its implementation by the NACGAD, which is made up of key ministries, needs to be strengthened. This means that progress on mainstreaming has been slow. The government

agencies consulted for this Assessment have generally not considered it necessary to analyse and discuss gender impacts in policy and strategy documents.

As found in 2012, the Women's Affairs Division (WAD) continues to face constraints that limit its effectiveness in mainstreaming gender and women's human rights. The focus of the WAD shifts between women's strategic needs and the government's general focus on a welfare and its service delivery approach to women's issues, including women's practical needs.³¹ Technical support is provided to strengthen staff skills on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming, but predominantly on an ad hoc basis. A more sustained approach is required from both the technical agencies and the senior staff at the WAD.

Addressing gender inequalities is not seen as relevant by many ministries or is regarded as the responsibility of the WAD alone. That said, the WAD has rarely been active in socializing the Gender Policy with ministries or in seeking out opportunities to collaborate. NGOs continue to play a valuable role as independent advocates and activists.

Organizational culture and political will

Gender perspectives are for the most part marginalized in the dominant culture of organizations addressing agriculture and rural livelihoods. Some, for instance, are not willing to contemplate the possibility of there being differentiated impacts of their work upon women and men. Where gender mainstreaming or accountabilities take place, this is the result of donor projects, which hire project staff who move out of the ministry at the end of the project. Hence, there is no sustainability or ownership of knowledge within the ministries. Even in agencies that are implementing gender mainstreaming projects, gender issues relevant to the agency are not discussed at staff meetings and there are few or no gender champions or gender focal points. Senior staff in some ministries do not believe that there are gender discrimination issues in Tonga, despite knowledge of land laws, family violence and imbalanced participation rates in the formal and informal economies, among other areas. Knowledge of the existence of the RNPGAD remains limited, and there is minimal contact between ministries and the Women's Affairs Division, as was also the case in 2012.

³¹ Refer to Maxine Molyneux (1985) definition of practical vs strategic gender needs.

Changes in organizational culture are appearing in some ministries. In 2012, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning did not consider gender equality to have any relevance to its economic division. By 2018, the Ministry was working towards gender budgeting of corporate plans and aligning the TSDF II with the SDGs in a national MEF—including the gender targets.

Very little political will for gender mainstreaming is being demonstrated in the agriculture line ministries, with the exception of project staff working on interventions that have gender components. Generally, there was no resistance to the suggestion of gender training for management and staff of ministries or training on gender and statistics for improved data collection, but only one division (climate change) offered to fund the training if a sectorial trainer could be found. Political will in the public service appears to have declined since 2012, when it was assessed as medium-high. Barriers remain the same: lack of awareness that gender equality and rural women's empowerment are an ARD issue, lack of institutional capacity and resources, and competing priorities. The level of political will may change as the Public Service Commission integrates gender mainstreaming.

It is too soon to assess the degree of political will of the government elected in November 2017, but recent governments have been open to discussions on reserved seats for women in Parliament and moving towards ratifying CEDAW and family protection legislation has been passed.

Accountability mechanisms

Progress with gender mainstreaming is entirely driven by externally-funded projects and project staff who carry out implementation to the best of their abilities and collect sex-disaggregated data. The same cannot be said for the governmental institutions consulted, including the Women's Affairs Division. There is little to no collection of sex-disaggregated data, and management information systems are not in place to easily store and retrieve data. In many cases, data is reportedly passed on to corporate services divisions for inclusion in reports, but staff do not then receive copies of these. As a result, there are no apparent measures of progress or change of any kind.

Monitoring for impacts is rare, and there do not appear to be ministry-wide frameworks for monitoring and evaluation.

The Women's Affairs Division has a MEF for the RNPGAD but has been lax in actively gathering information. An external review of the RNPGAD was due in the second half of 2018. This was the first comprehensive assessment of changes in gender equality outcomes aligned with the Policy.

Technical capacity

The 2012 gender stocktake found the technical capacity for gender mainstreaming to be low, which remains the case. There are no recognized gender focal points and very few government or project staff members appear to have received adequate gender training. Government staff do not generally receive professional development of any kind, though some are sent to external training provided by regional agencies on sector-specific topics. Project staff have technical resources to draw on through the project funder. Technical support is being provided to the Government from a range of directions but is not sufficiently sustained to support consistent action in between inputs. There is an urgent need for widespread gender training, including in gender analysis and gender and statistics, for government and project staff at every level. Part of current non-performance on gender equality can be attributed to lack of expertise.

Adequate resources

As in 2012, the government does not provide adequate resources for gender mainstreaming. While the budget for WAD has increased from 0.07 percent to 0.16 percent of national budget, this is still very low, one of the lowest budgets of any division. No sectorial budgets include funds for gender mainstreaming activities and there is currently no mechanism for ensuring that sectorial gender issues are incorporated into the national budgetary process.

Projects that mainstream gender appear to be adequately resourced by donors, but all governmental institutions consulted are understaffed and under-resourced. Many do not have adequate transportation budgets to concretely engage with rural communities. Most corporate plan budgets do not provide for specific gender activities.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations highlight specific areas of work that require attention and action from the Government of Tonga and development partners, notably FAO and SPC, to maximize their impacts in the promotion of rural women's empowerment and enhancement of gender equality in the Tongan agricultural and rural sector. They also reflect commitments made by the government at the international, regional and national levels in order to support the implementation of these comments.

To make rural women's contributions to households and rural economies visible and support the acknowledgement of their needs:

- Improve the production and analysis of sex-, age- and location- (rural/urban) disaggregated data relevant for gender equality and RWE in ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes.
- Mandate all ministries and strengthen their capacity to monitor and report on the impacts of their policies, plans, programmes and services on the rural population, using age- and sex-disaggregated data and indicators.
- Strengthen the capacities of MAFF, MOF and MIA in provision of gender training, including gender and statistics training, to senior management staff, followed by a programme of similar training for all staff.
- Systematically provide training on gender equality, rural women's empowerment and social inclusion for District and Town Officers.
- Implement a comprehensive monitoring framework on gender equality and rural women's empowerment in agriculture that covers all key economic, social and political aspects.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation, including through regular tracking and auditing of expenses on gender-responsive budgeting in order to understand changes in women's status. Periodically review the processes, criteria and weightage of indicators of gender-responsive budgets to make them more effective and relevant from gender, social and geographical perspectives.

- Advocate, where possible, for a budget assessment against delivery expectations with a view to strengthening the budget so that the concerned ministry has both the human resources and budgetary requirements needed to succeed.
- Improve statistical surveys to adequately measure rural women's contributions to the rural and national economies, including the informal economy, in a way that adequately captures the complexity of their contributions. In parallel, conduct age- and sex-disaggregated time-use surveys in rural areas to assess women's and men's amounts of time dedicated to productive and reproductive work (including unpaid household and care work, community-related activities, subsistence activities and incomes-generating activities).
- Conduct studies to identify economic opportunities for women in the context of the green economy, including through value-chain development of agriculture and fisheries' products, to support ecological resilience and contribute to sustainable development.

To address gender inequalities in the rural sector and support the empowerment of rural women:

- Promote policy research and analysis on gender equality and rural women's empowerment in the agricultural sector to inform policies and strategic planning, and conduct systematic gender analyses on legislation and policies, including macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and aid and trade agreements.
- Put in place concrete measures for the improvement of rural women's access to technical support, extension services, technologies, transport, productive resources and financial services, including credit, loans and saving schemes, to support the financial inclusion of rural women.
- Build rural women's resilience to climate change impacts in order to sustain their livelihoods in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, recognizing their traditional knowledge and sustainable, traditional adaptation and mitigation practices.

- Encourage governmental institutions and rural finance institutions, such as micro-finance and development banks, to offer special promotional packages that include group collateral, business literacy, insurance schemes with low premiums and assurance of markets for agricultural products to strengthen women's engagement in agriculture and in the rural non-farm economy (including in cultural industries) and to stimulate their access to markets and market infrastructure.
 - Promote accessible communications systems and use of radio, texting and other media as a way for rural women producers and sellers to access 1) agricultural extension, rural advisory services and weather information; 2) information on opportunities to apply for grants and in-kind services and support; and 3) support and information from other women growers (e.g. on how to produce products more effectively, use financial services, develop opportunities, etc.).
 - Prioritize the needs of rural women in relation to their livelihood activities in disaster recovery programmes and empower them as key actors in food and nutrition security and conservators of local ecological knowledge and practices.
 - Increase rural women's access programmes and services that support survivors of domestic violence and their access to justice.
 - Improve the delivery of quality rural services adapted to women's needs, including accessible child care, elderly care, mental health care and disability care to alleviate the burden of rural women's unpaid care work.
 - Improve rural infrastructure, including infrastructure for transportation, water sanitation and sustainable energy, with specific measures to promote accessible to women.
 - Stimulate the participation of rural women in decision making through dialogue and collaboration with customary institutions, including review of gender-biased norms and practices, adoption of measures to support women's representation in local and national institutions and governance mechanisms, and support for rural women's groups to increase their bargaining power to access resources, technology and markets.
 - Develop partnerships with civil society organizations and governmental mechanisms to transform gendered stereotypes and other adverse gender-biased norms and practices.
- To support the systematic integration of gender perspective in public policies and programmes**
- Ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
 - Enhance the preparation of stand-alone gender policies by the agricultural line ministries.
 - Engage with MIA on gender and social inclusion technical assistance to support the initiative to reform Tonga's sub-national policy frameworks.
 - Support MOF senior management to foster an enabling environment to achieve the gender and social inclusion objectives of the Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan (TFSP) 2016–2024.
 - Based on evidence, recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in farming, forestry and fishing activities as agriculture producers in their own right so that ARD policies, strategies, plans and programmes are designed and implemented in a gender-responsive manner to effectively contribute to the sustainable empowerment of rural women.
 - Support MOF to revise the new draft fisheries policy to reflect the TFSP and to conduct a review of the SMA programme from a gender perspective.
 - Establish an intra-governmental coordination mechanism on gender equality and RWE to fully take charge of the coordination of gender equality and RWE across the governmental system (central and local) and set up a structure of Gender Focal Points in all agricultural line ministries as well as all other relevant ministries and institutions.
 - Assess the impacts of legislation and policies, including macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and aid and trade agreements, on women's productive assets and economic empowerment.
 - Design gender-responsive policies and strategies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management that support rural women's activities in small-scale agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and cultural industries.
 - Adopt and implement gender mainstreaming strategies and plans in key ministries that provide rural services (agriculture, fisheries, infrastructure, women, justice, climate change and disaster risks management).
 - Engage with MEIDECC's Department of Climate Change on technical support requirements for the implementation of JNAP II, in particular for gender and social inclusion.

- Strengthen the capacities of ministries involved in ARD to mainstream gender equality and RWE across their policies, programmes, budgets and services, including extension services.
- Support MAFF to conduct an assessment of Extension Services, including the Women's Section, and its Livestock, Food and Forest divisions to identify the effectiveness of services to men and women farmers and revise them accordingly.
- Support the initiation of a gender-responsive training programme for Extension Services staff, either on a specific service basis or through a Farmer Field School model, or a combination of the two.
- Engage with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Climate Financing and Risk Governance Assessment (CFRGA) by coordinating and sourcing the technical advice that will be required across all the different stakeholder groups.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of governmental institutions consulted

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF)

Chief Executive Officer
Extension Senior Technical Officer
Livestock Agricultural Officer
Officer in Charge, Extension Services Women's Unit
Acting Director, Sustainable Development Division

Ministry of Fisheries (MOF)

Chief Executive Officer
Head of Economics Section

Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC)

Principal Climate Finance Analyst, Division of Climate Change

National Emergency Management Office (NEMO)

Coordinator, ACP-EU Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific Project

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)

Principal Programme Officer for Gender Mainstreaming, Women's Affairs Division
Assistant Secretary, Local Government and Community Development Division

Annex 2: List of community consultations

Matahau

12 participants (six men and six women)

Haveluliku and Lavengatonga

18 participants (eight men and ten women)

Annex 3: List of others consulted

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Assistant FAO Representative for Tonga

Ministry of Fisheries/USC Australia

Senior Project Scientist

ACIAR Pearl Project, Tropical Aquaculture

Tofa Ramsay Shipping

CEO



PACIFIC WOMEN

SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Representation in Tonga**

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