

Evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to Women’s Economic Empowerment in the West and Central Africa Region

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) evaluates the work of UN Women to enhance organizational accountability, provide evidence-based information for decision-making and to contribute to learning on gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is currently undertaking various corporate and IES-led evaluations as part of its corporate evaluation plan for 2022.

As part of its 2022 evaluation plan, IES is conducting one corporate evaluation and two regional evaluations in the Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) thematic area. These evaluations are conducted under the direct leadership of evaluation specialists at headquarters and regional level. The evaluation specialists act as the team leader for IES-led evaluations and are supported, where needed and where relevant, by thematic and methodological consultants as well as research assistants that adhere to UN Women’s Evaluation Policy and UNEG Norms, Standards, Ethical and other relevant guidelines.

Quality assurance of outputs and deliverables are measured against the UN Women’s Evaluation Policy and UNEG Norms, Standards, Ethical guidelines as well as guided by the UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability/evaluation/decentralized-evaluations>.

2. Description of the thematic area

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (UN Women). The mandate of UN Women is guided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); UN Security Council resolutions; the recommendations and resolutions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); and other applicable United Nations instruments, standards and resolutions.

UN Women’s work is focused on responding to its integrated mandate:

- a. **Normative work:** to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms ;
- b. **Operational work:** to help Member States to implement international standards and to forge effective partnerships with civil society; and
- c. **Coordination work:** to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress, and also the broader role of the entity in mobilizing and convening key stakeholders and partnerships.

The **UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025** outlines strategic direction, objectives and approaches to support efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Strategic Plan outlines five strategic priorities for UN Women in 2022–2025:

- A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies, and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women is strengthened and implemented.
- Women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from governance systems.
- Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy.
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence.
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action.

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) is one of the core thematic priorities and has been included as a stand-alone goal area within its current and previous strategic plans. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its SDG 5 includes specific targets (and indicators) directly related to Women's Economic Empowerment: 5.4) recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate; and 5.a) undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

Women's participation in the economy in WCA

In West and Central Africa, women participate actively in economic life, but they are concentrated in the most vulnerable forms of employment. 95% of the women in West and Central Africa are in informal employment (compared to 89.8 and 87.1 per cent of men, respectively)¹. Moreover, they are subject to vulnerable employment (for example, between 69.8% in Senegal to 98% in Niger have vulnerable jobs in 2018). By sector, women work mainly in the tertiary sector (46.82%) and the agricultural sector (43.91%)². Women's work in agriculture concentrate in the lowest stages of the value chain and is largely impacted by the effects of climate change in the region. Recent estimates suggest that 40-60% of the Sahel's land is severely degraded, with serious implications for land productivity, and thus for people's livelihoods. Agriculture remains one of the predominant livelihood strategies in West and Central Africa, making the economy within the region vulnerable to climate shocks.

Most of the countries in the region have national gender policies which acknowledge the role of women in the economy, and include actions to support women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses. The majority of economic policies to support women's economic empowerment focus on strengthening capacity and leveraging opportunities for women entrepreneurs, enhancing women's access to finance (and access to other productive resources), and reducing gender-based violence. Only a few strategies and policies recognize and address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by women over the life course and other structural gender inequalities (unpaid care, limited access to social protection, etc.). Capacity of policy makers in the area of gender and economic policy is weak. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, countries in WCA have implemented several measures to mitigate and tackle the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic (economic and financial support; social protection; medical response, etc.). Only 35% of these measures were gender-sensitive. The COVID-19 policy responses that have integrated a gender lens

¹ ILO, The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy in Africa, Background paper for the GEPR Chapter 5 "The transition to formality: Comparing policy approaches in Africa, Asia and Latin America", Background Paper N°2 December 2020

² World Bank, Word Development Indicators

targeted mainly women's economic security (51%) and Gender-based violence (46%). Less than 3% of these policies addressed unpaid care³.

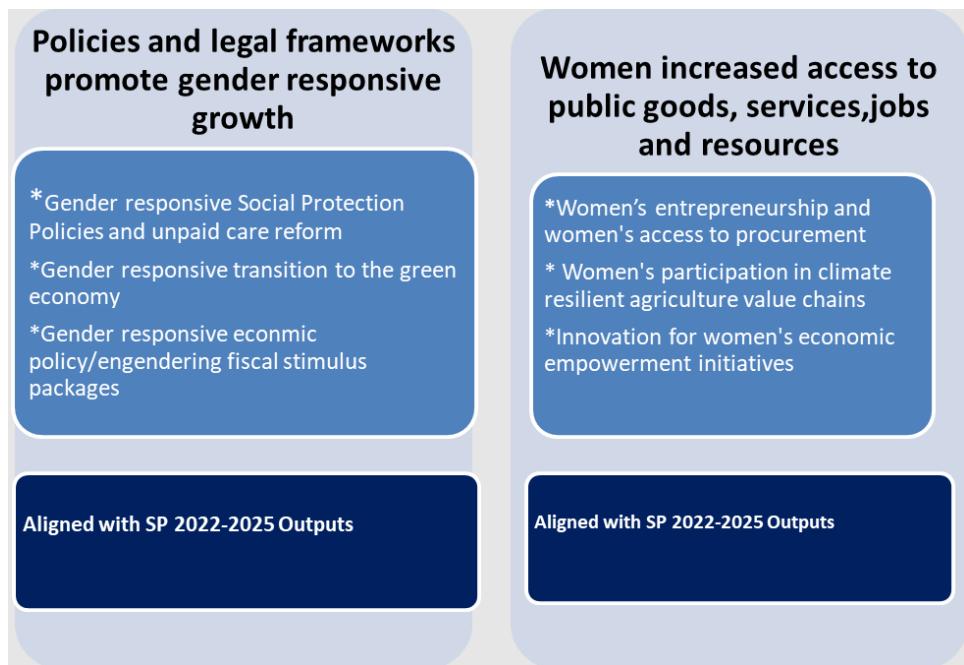
UN Women's programme on WEE in WCA

According to the Regional WEE Unit, the WEE portfolio UN Women's programmatic work to support women's economic empowerment in West and Central Africa is centered around the following pillars:

- Gender and Green economy transition, including women's access to climate resilient agricultural value chains;
- Promoting and strengthening women entrepreneurship, including through gender responsive procurement reform;
- Enhancing women's income security and social protection, including through unpaid care reform;
- Gender responsive economic policy reform including for post-COVID19 recovery.

Across areas, the program aims at leveraging innovation for women's economic empowerment, by using digital technology to advance women's economic empowerment solutions in different areas.

Between 2018 and 2020, the WEE program in WCA had a strong focus on the implementation of the flagship programme initiative on Women's participation in climate resilient agriculture value chains (SP 2018-2021). Since 2020, the WEE programme has consolidated results under this FPI and has initiated a number of interventions to strengthen normative and policy work for WEE by adding components on gender and green transition, social protection and unpaid care and gender and macroeconomic, in order to respond to regional priorities related to COVID19 and the climate emergency.



³ UNDP/UN Women Gender Tracker

3. Purpose, objectives and use of the evaluation

The main purpose of this regional evaluation is to contribute to enhancing UN Women's approach to women's economic empowerment in West and Central Africa. This thematic evaluation will be both a summative and formative evaluation as it will aim to assess the relationships between the various strategies and actual changes in women's lives and, at the same time, by identifying good practices it will contribute to organizational learning in the area of WEE (at the regional and corporate level) to inform future programming in the SP 2022-2025 (WEE strategies and signature interventions).

The specific objectives of this evaluation are:

1. To provide evidence-based analysis of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of UN Women work to economically empower women of West and Central Africa;
2. To identify what can be enhanced in the way Women Economic Empowerment interventions are designed and implemented in the region of West and Central Africa.
3. To identify lessons learned, strengths and current trends of West and Central Africa economic empowerment initiatives that have implications for future managerial and programmatic decisions;
4. To provide forward-looking recommendations and a potential Theory of Change to strengthen programming in the area of WEE in the region.

Findings will be used by the Regional Office West and Central Africa to refine its focus and approaches to women economic empowerment in the next four years. Knowledge generated by the evaluation will be used for strategic policy and programmatic decisions, organizational learning and accountability as well as for the identification of good practices addressing the structural impediments to gender equality and the women's economic empowerment. Findings will also inform the general reflection that will follow IEAS' thematic evaluation at global and regional level, and feed into UN Women's efforts to promote 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the agenda 2063 of the African Union.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women Senior Management, and key stakeholders. Ultimately, the results of the evaluation will be publicly accessible through the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (or GATE) system for global learning.

4. Scope of the evaluation

This thematic evaluation will be focused on WEE interventions implemented in the region of WCA between 2018 and the third quarter of 2022, which means that one full Strategic Plan (2018-2021) will be covered, as well as part of the first year of implementation of another (2022-2025). Including 2022 in the evaluation will be particularly important for the formative dimension as a number of new initiatives were launched in 2021. Geographically, 3-4 criteria (i.e., thematic interest, volume of investment, innovation etc) will be used to select countries where the WEE evaluation will be conducted. Specific countries will be selected in consultation between IES and the RO at the beginning of the evaluation, depending on the specific dimension/area to be evaluated. Possible countries include Senegal, Nigeria, Mali, Niger and DRC. All the country offices have extensive programming on WEE during the period covered by the evaluation, and include a variety of different WEE interventions which can serve well the evaluation purposes.

The 3 dimensions of UN Women's integrated mandate will be assessed in the WEE area of work during the evaluation. While the normative and operational components of UN Women's mandate are clearly identified by most stakeholders, coordination is often understood as restricted to the coordination of the United Nations contribution to gender equality and women empowerment. In this evaluation, UN Women

coordination work in the WEE area will encompass joint action with United Nations agencies, Regional and International Financial Institutions and key Civil Society Organizations. The evaluation will explore linkages with other impact areas since many programmes are multi-thematic (ex.: WEE and Elimination of Violence Against Women; WEE and Women Peace, Security).

5. Methodology

The evaluation methodology will use mixed methods, including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. The detailed methodology for the evaluation will be developed and presented at the inception of the evaluation. Participatory and gender sensitive evaluation methodologies will support active participation of women and girls, men and boys benefiting from the project interventions. The Evaluation Team will undertake the following tasks: review of documents, key informant Interviews, country visits, online surveys, preliminary finding presentation and report writing.

The Inception Report will include details on how the evaluation team will guarantee protection of subjects and respect for confidentiality . During the inception stage, the evaluation team will also develop a sampling frame of interventions in the region and specify how it will engage with respondents.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with UN Women evaluation Policy, the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS evaluation report quality checklist), the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan Evaluation Performance Indicators (UN-SWAP EP) and UN Women Evaluation handbook. All the documents will be provided by UN Women at the onset of the evaluation.

The following data sources will be utilized, and data will be triangulated to ensure validity and reliability:

- Review of key documents: Policy reports produced by UN Women WCARO in the area of WEE, UN Women Strategic Plans, Strategic Notes, AWPs, Annual Reports, donor reports, financial reports, UN policies, global and regional intergovernmental agreements, monitoring and reporting information for specific regional and national programmes and initiatives, corporate and decentralized evaluations, etc.
- Interviews/focus groups with a purposive sample of UN Women staff, UN system partners, national level partners, civil society partners and beneficiaries, main donors, and regional entities and mechanisms, including regional, sub-regional and national women's machineries, among others.
- Survey of key partners and staff to assess UN Women's comparative advantage in WEE work.
- In-depth document review of all UN Women Regional, Multi-country, Country Offices and programme presences in the region, including strategic notes, annual reports, relevant evaluations, and monitoring and reporting information on specific relevant programmes and initiatives in this thematic area.

6. Indicative evaluation questions and criteria

The evaluation should be guided but not limited to the evaluation questions listed below. During the inception phase, the Evaluation Team, members of the Evaluation Management Group and the Evaluation Reference Group will have the opportunity to raise any other relevant issues

Relevance:

- To what extent has UN Women established a relevant, realistic, strategic, innovative and clear approach for its work in support of women's economic empowerment?
- To what extent is UN Women strategically positioned to enhance WEE?
- To what extent initiatives launched recently (2020 onwards) are relevant to promote WEE in the region in the next 4 years?

Coherence:

- How are WEE interventions at country level aligned with approaches recommended by relevant UN Women's regional and headquarters units?
- To what extent are country level WEE interventions strategically consistent with similar interventions by other key players, including United Nations agencies ?

Effectiveness:

- What is the progress towards results (normative, operational and coordination) at, regional and national levels that UN Women has contributed to so far?
- What are enabling and limiting factors?

Organizational Efficiency:

- What operational mechanisms are needed to make UN Women's approach to WEE more efficient and effective?
- To what extent is learning from initiatives implemented in the field feeding into the regional approach and vice-versa?

Sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of enduring results or program continuation over the long run after UN Women support?
- How have partnerships (with governments, NGOs, civil society organizations, UN agencies, IFIs, regional institutions, etc.) been established to foster sustainability of results?

Gender Equality and Human Rights (GE&HR)

- To what extent has gender and human rights considerations been integrated into program design and implementation?
- Were the processes and activities implemented during the intervention free from discrimination to all stakeholders, including those living with disability?

The questions above are a suggestion and could be changed during the inception phase in consultation with members of the Reference Group. The evaluation will be gender sensitive and human rights focused.

7. Scope of work and tasks

Under the overall guidance of the Regional Evaluation Specialist as a team leader, the **Evaluation Consultant** will work with the Women Economic Empowerment Consultant to complete the following tasks, duties and responsibilities:.

- Inception phase:
 - Support the scoping and design of the evaluations by supporting document collection, management and review.
 - Conduct scoping interviews to inform the evaluation design.
 - Facilitate theory of change workshops to inform the analytical approach.
 - Contribute to the design of data collection instruments including the evaluation matrix and other gender analytical frameworks from a WEE lens.
- Conduct phase:
 - Lead interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders.
 - Lead assigned case study (to be determined) and summary reports.
 - Work with team members to produce data visualization, data analysis, coding and synthesis of data.
 - Support synthesis of findings from data coding and analysis for input into evaluations reports.
- Reporting phase:
 - Preliminary analysis of data collected, including providing inputs to the evidence map and other analyses.
 - Lead the drafting of assigned sections of evaluation report.
 - Support drafting of sections of the evaluation report and provide inputs to the annexes and for final evaluation report

8. Timing and duration of the assignment

The evaluation will take place during Q3 of 2022 and will require 45 working days over the span of five months. This includes both in-country and home-based assignments.

9. Stakeholder Participation

Ideally, rights holders who have directly participated in or are affected by UN Women programming efforts will be engaged in discussing the outcomes of the programming efforts from their perspective. However, the cost/benefits to the participation of rights holders as evaluation participants will be assessed during the inception phase, as the evaluation does not want to take time away from livelihoods activities and a do no harm approach will be applied also considering the current COVID-19 pandemic. In case it would be too costly for rights holders to participate, a representative of the rights holders engaged by UN Women will

be contacted for feedback and this may need to be done remotely. Limitations to the evaluation will be clearly explained in the final report.

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established representing UN Women RO, key government, civil society, donor and UN system partners. The ERG will be asked to engage and provide input at every stage of the evaluation process, from design to preliminary results and final draft report. The ERG plays a critical role through remote and in-person meetings in ensuring a high quality, transparent process, providing insights on the key questions and approach, ensuring factual accuracy, ensuring gaps and misinterpretation of information is avoided. They will also be key informants. The ERG also plays a key role in the dissemination of the evaluation findings and recommendations and ensuring the use of the information by UN Women and key partners.

10. Expected Deliverables

The Consultant will produce the following deliverables:

#	products	Estimate number of days	Corresponding payments
1	Final Inception Report. The inception report should capture relevant information such as proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The inception report should also include an evaluation matrix, proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables and should also contain background information ⁴ .	15 days	30%
2	A briefing and report with preliminary findings and Power Point Presentation of preliminary findings presented to the Reference Group.	20 days	
3	Interim Evaluation Report. Report structure should follow UNEG evaluation reporting guidance and in line with UN Women's GERAAS parameters.	10 days	30%
4	Power point Presentation of interim report. A presentation of draft report should be done at a validation workshop.	1 day	
5	Final Evaluation Report. The final report will be aligned with UN Women's GERAAS parameters and will be structured as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Title - Executive summary - Background and purpose of the evaluation - Context / Background and project description - Evaluation objectives and scope - Evaluation methodology and limitations - Findings: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and gender and human rights - Conclusions - Recommendations 	6 days	40%

⁴ UN Women guidance on inception reports is available.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lessons learned and innovations - Proposed management response and Dissemination Strategy <p>Annexes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Terms of reference of the Evaluation b. List of documents/publications reviewed and cited c. Data collection instruments c. Lists of institutions interviewed or consulted and sites visited (without direct reference to individuals) a. Tools developed and used such as the evaluation matrix b. Any further information the IES deems appropriate <p>The final report should be submitted in both hard and in soft copies</p>		
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All the deliverables, including annexes, notes and reports should be submitted in writing in English.

All payment is subject to the approval of deliverables by the Evaluation Management Group, which will assess deliverables against UN Women's GERAAS evaluation parameters to verify that they meet expected quality standards

11. Management of evaluation

All evaluation processes at UN Women establish mechanisms to ensure high quality evaluation processes and products as outlined in the [UN Women Evaluation Policy](#) and [Handbook](#). The Evaluation Report will follow the standard outline as established in the [UN Women Evaluation Handbook](#). The UN Women Evaluation Report Quality Assurance (GERAAS) criteria will be used to assure quality (See Annex 1). All products are subject to quality assurance review by the peer reviewer, the ERG, and the evaluation management group.

This evaluation will have the following quality assurance structures:

- **Oversight:** The Director of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service and the Chief of Independent Evaluation Service are responsible for oversight of the evaluation, and will review its key products
- **Evaluation Team:**
 - the Regional Evaluation Specialist of the Independent Evaluation Service will be responsible for the coordination and day-to-day management, and serve as the team leaders, leading methodological approach, collection of data, analysis and writing; as Team Leader, they are also responsible for overseeing the work of the team members, managing the contracts and assuring quality of the work.
 - The Evaluation consultant will be responsible for key analytical tasks, systematization of information and contribution to analysis and report and presentation preparation;
- **Evaluation Management Group** for administrative support and accountability: this will include the Team Leader and the Regional Advisor on Women's Economic Empowerment,
- **Peer Review** for methodological guidance and feedback: 1-2 IEAS staff will be engaged as peer reviewers of the regional WEE evaluation

- **Evaluation Reference Group** for substantive technical support: UN Women programme, National government partners, Civil Society representatives, Development partners/donors, UNCT representatives.
- **Oversight:** The Director of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service and the Chief of Independent Evaluation Service are responsible for oversight of the evaluation, and will review its key products

12. Detailed Tasks of the Evaluation Consultant

13. Performance evaluation

Consultant's performance will be evaluated based on timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, accuracy, and quality of the products delivered.

14. Required experience and qualifications

The Consultant should fulfill the following requirements:

Education

- Master's degree in Economics, Political Science, Gender, Development Studies, Performance Management or a similar field.

Experience and Skills

- 5 to 7 years' professional experience in evaluation
- Experience/knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment issues, gender mainstreaming, normative frameworks to promote women's rights and economic empowerment at regional and global levels; gender analysis and knowledge of the related mandates within the UN system and particularly that of UN Women's;
- Experience or knowledge in gender-responsive social protection systems, domestic and non-remunerated care work, and women's income security and decent work;
- Strong analytical, facilitation and communications skills and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Familiarity with the West and Central Africa Region regional and country level.
- Knowledge of human rights issues, the human rights-based approach to programming, human rights analysis and related mandates within the UN system;

Language and other skills:

- Fluent in French and English

15. Submission of application

Interested candidates are requested to submit electronic application to ...@procurement.... no later than

16. Selection of applicants

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a competency-based interview. UN Women may ask shortlisted applicants to share a sample of a report they have recently authored.